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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Seventh session

Budapest, 17–19 November 2015

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the Convention

Draft decision on establishing a framework for the implementation of the Convention at the global level

Submitted by the Bureau

Summary

The amendments opening the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) for accession by all United Nations Member States entered into force on 6 February 2013. In November 2012, at its sixth session, the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention had already paved the way for a prompt global membership of the Convention by adopting decision VI/3 approving all future requests for accession by countries from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region (see ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2). In the current intersessional period, more than 60 countries from outside the ECE region have participated in the Convention's meetings and the exchange with Parties was extremely appreciated and fruitful, demonstrating the added value of the Convention's globalization. Moreover, many regional and national awareness-raising and capacity-building activities on the Convention were carried out in response to specific requests by countries outside the ECE region and, as a result, a number of countries started national processes towards accession to the Convention.

In the light of the great interest in the Convention and of the global participation in its activities, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its tenth meeting (Geneva, 24–25 June 2015) entrusted the Bureau to prepare a draft decision for submission to the Meeting of the Parties on establishing a framework for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (see ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2015/2, forthcoming). The Meeting of the Parties is invited to consider the draft decision contained herein with a view to adopting it.



The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling that 60 per cent of all freshwater courses worldwide cross borders and that 40 per cent of the world's population live in shared basins,

Recognizing that, given the growing pressures on shared waters and the increasing impacts of climate change, cooperation among riparian States on transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters is key to ensure sustainable development and peace,

Seeking to create a global intergovernmental framework for transboundary water cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations, to foster advancement in this area at the policy, legal and technical levels, and to promote coherence and coordination of interventions by different actors,

Recalling decision III/1 amending the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) to enable the accession by all United Nations Member States and the amendment's entry into force on 6 February 2013,

Also recalling decision VI/3 approving any future request for accession to the Convention by any Member of the United Nations not a member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE),

Emphasizing the enrichment of the work under the Convention arising from its global opening, and the active participation and contributions since 2012 of over 60 countries from outside the ECE region, fostering broad exchanges of experience and good practices, to the benefit of both ECE and non-ECE countries,

Reaffirming therefore the value of global membership to the Convention and participation in its activities by countries worldwide,

Recognizing the importance of strong partnerships for building awareness and capacity and supporting implementation of the Convention at the global level, as reflected in decision VII/xx on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention,

Welcoming the entry into force of the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) on 17 August 2014,

Reaffirming the coherence and compatibility of the two Conventions, as recognized in numerous studies, and stressing the importance of their joint implementation,

Recalling the adoption by the international community of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the establishment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 to "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", with target 6.5 calling for transboundary cooperation to implement integrated water resources management,

Emphasizing the important role that can be played by both Conventions to support countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris,

1. *Encourages* United Nations Member States to accede to both Conventions and to implement them jointly;
2. *Calls upon* Parties to assist other Member States from within and outside the ECE region, in their efforts to accede and implement the Water Convention and the

Watercourses Convention, including through advice, exchange of experience and development cooperation activities;

3. *Invites* interested countries from outside the ECE region to participate in and contribute to the activities in the Water Convention's programme of work, in particular by sharing their experience;

4. *Requests* the secretariat to facilitate the participation of interested non-ECE countries in the Water Convention's activities, including through communication and outreach, arranging for interpretation into Arabic and Spanish at its intergovernmental meetings, and translation of official documentation and publications into these languages, as needed and subject to the availability of resources;

5. *Also requests* the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to develop and implement activities of the Water Convention's programme of work in interested non-ECE countries upon their request, in order to build capacity and foster the Convention's implementation, in close cooperation with national, regional and global partners and subject to the availability of resources;

6. *Calls upon* bilateral and multilateral donors to provide resources to support participation of eligible countries as well as implementation of the Convention and its programme of work in interested countries worldwide;

7. *Invites* relevant international organizations, financing institutions, non-governmental organizations, academia and other stakeholders to use both Conventions, as well the Water Convention guidance documents and programme of work, as a basis for their activities on the ground;

8. *Entrusts* the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, in cooperation with non-Parties, key partners and the secretariat, to develop a strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level, including the relationship with the Watercourses Convention and the role of key partners, for adoption at its next session;

9. *Also entrusts* the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, in cooperation with non-Parties, key partners and the secretariat, to develop a strategy for the Convention's contribution to the achievement of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including their follow-up and review activities under the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

10. *Greatly welcomes* the fact that non-Parties and observer organizations present at the seventh session have associated themselves with this decision.