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From the perspective of one of the founding Parties, how has the Convention been useful for Finland in the past 20 years?

- For the last 50 years, Finland has actively advanced transboundary water cooperation. In 1966, the International Law Association adopted the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers. We are very happy that two global water conventions are now in force providing a framework for work at the river basin level.
- Finland share transboundary watercourses with three neighbours. Even if our bilateral agreements on transboundary water cooperation with our neighbours are older than the UNECE or UN Conventions, for example, the Convention with Russia (then the Soviet Union) was signed already in 1964, these bilateral agreements are well in line with the requirements of the more recent international conventions. As a part of the transboundary cooperation very concrete measures such as regulating water flows, taking measures to reduce pollution and monitoring water quality have been agreed upon.
- In general, the UNECE Water Convention has provided Finland with a forum for sharing experiences and good practices on water cooperation. With the help of the Convention regime, Finland has been able to further develop water cooperation with our neighbouring states.

What are the main opportunities and challenges related to the global opening of the Convention?

- Only one third of transboundary river basins are covered by proper water cooperation mechanisms between riparian countries. One challenge is to make the Convention attractive so that many new countries are willing to join it.
- The Water Convention has strengthened capacities among parties, improved monitoring and provided good examples. The future should definitely be built on the many successes of it. Providing information on the benefits of the Convention is important for clarifying any possible misunderstandings related to its content and obligations.
- The Water Convention also helps in establishing river basin commissions (as it has done in Dniester, Chu Talas) and it supports the work of these commissions. It is important to provide assistance for new agreements.

What partnerships are needed and how should the Convention's institutional framework develop, including in relation to the Watercourses Convention?

- The globalisation of the Water Convention should go hand in hand with the United Nations Watercourses Convention. They complement each other and should be implemented coherently. The Water Convention provides an institutional framework, such as the Meeting of the Parties, a Secretariat and the Implementation Committee, that enhances the implementation of international water law.
- All countries sharing watercourses with their neighbours should be encouraged to sign and ratify both of these conventions. These two conventions provide countries with

possibilities for choosing the best ways to enhance cooperation depending on their circumstances. Naturally, we also need to ensure that these two conventions are implemented in a mutually reinforcing and coordinated way, which also strengthens international water law in general. Any overlapping work between the implementation of the UN and UNECE conventions should be avoided.

- Further, a sufficient level of funding, from multiple sources and by making use of existing funding mechanisms, is needed for enhancing the application of the Convention. More collaboration between international organisations, such as we have now between UNECE and UNESCO, is also necessary.
- The value of transboundary cooperation is recognised globally. This is reflected in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where transboundary cooperation is included in Sustainable Development Goal 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs to be given high priority. For successful implementation of the agenda, we need the effective participation and engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia. Different models exist for developing the Convention's institutional framework in relation to the Watercourses Convention. Finland strongly supports cooperation in international water law. However, we should try to avoid duplication between these two conventions.
- Climate change is expected to cause significant adverse impacts on water resources, including transboundary watercourses. It is, therefore, important that countries and international organizations have begun to integrate water-related considerations into their adaptation strategies. In this regard, Finland recognizes the important work on water and adaptation to climate change which has already taken place under the auspices of the UNECE Water Convention. We think that in future there is a need for further transboundary cooperation in adaptation to prevent maladaptation and increase the overall effectiveness of adaptation. Moreover, we believe that the forthcoming Paris Agreement on climate change will also contribute to reduction of water vulnerability through effective adaptation.