The 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

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Content:

• International Water Law
• The 1992 Water Convention: History and evolution
• Recent development: the opening of the Convention
• Main objectives and provisions of the Water Convention
• Benefits
International water law:

• It protects the rights of all riparian countries and at the same time defines obligations to ensure sustainability and prevent harm.

• It provides a common language and a starting point for the discussion, adoption and further elaboration of normative and institutional frameworks for transboundary water resources management.

Why do we need global framework instruments?

→ Significant reliance upon transboundary waters

→ Fragmented system of legal arrangements
Recent development of International Water Law:

• The 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes which entered into force in 1996

  Also called: The Water Convention

• The 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses which entered into force in 2014

  Also called: UN Watercourses Convention
Status of ratification of the 2 global conventions (1992 & 1997)

- Party to the Water Convention (1992) Total: 40 + EU
- Party to UN Watercourses Convention (1997) Total: 36
- Party to both Conventions Total: 15
The Water Convention – History and Evolution

1992
UNECE Water Convention adopted and in force since 6 October 1996

Since 1996
Concerted and successful effort to implement and develop the Convention

2003 Amendment to allow States outside the UNECE region to join

2017
41 Parties and a Convention open for accession by all UN Member States
The global opening of the Water Convention

• 2016: Opening up the Water Convention to all UN Member States
  The Convention became = a **global instrument**

• More than 100 non-ECE countries already participated in Convention’s activities and many announced their interest to ratify (Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Chad..)

• **14 Dec 2017**: The Parliament of **Chad** has passed the law on the accession to the Water Convention (decisive step to soon become a Party)
Participation in events and activities under the Water Convention
The 1992 Water Convention: main objectives and obligations

**Objective** → Protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation

The Convention is based on **three main pillars:***

1) **Protection** of transboundary waters by *preventing, controlling and reducing* transboundary impacts
2) **Reasonable** and **equitable** use of transboundary waters
3) Obligation to **cooperate** through agreements and joint institutions

→ **Sustainability of resources is the overarching objective**

**Two categories of obligations:**

Part I. Obligations for all Parties (benefit for national legislation)

Part II. Obligations for riparian Parties (Convention does not replace basin agreements)
Provisions specific to Riparian Parties

- Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and creation of joint bodies
- Consultation between Riparian Parties
- Joint monitoring and assessment
- Common research and development
- Exchange of information between Riparian Parties
- Warning and alarm systems
- Mutual assistance
- Public information
Conclusion:
The Water Convention = Not only rights and obligations, also a lot of benefits

• Improving water governance at national and international levels
• Becoming a Party = joining an institutional regime and an intergovernmental framework where you can share experience and good practices
• Progressive development of the Convention (flexible tool)
• Forum for bilateral and multilateral cooperation
• Forum for dialogue and exchange with the international community and financial stakeholders.
• Support in achieving SDGs specially SDG #6 (targets 6.5.1 and 6.5.2)
• Projects on the ground (adaptation to climate change, nexus WFEE assessment)
• Capacity building: Address requests on clarifications and support implementation of the Convention’s obligations
• Framework for political advocacy on the importance of transboundary cooperation
Thank you for your attention!

More information:
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