

Workshop on the UNECE Water Convention

Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

Venue: ICIMOD Campus

Date: 26 July 2018

Targeted audience: government officials, civil society organizations, and participants from TROSA Annual Learning Forum.

Background: *about the Water Convention*

For more than 20 years, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (signed in 1992 in Helsinki, into force in 1996) has provided a unique legal and institutional framework for sustainable management of shared water resources, both surface and groundwater. The institutional structure, including a Meeting of the Parties and an adaptive set of subsidiary bodies, and a programme of work, adopted every three years, make this convention operational and responsive to the needs of countries. The work involves both political and technical support to transboundary cooperation, covering a broad range of topics. As a framework, the Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific rivers, lakes and groundwaters, but, instead, it fosters their establishment, implementation, and further development.

Some 100 countries have already participated in the Convention's meetings or activities. Initially negotiated for the pan-European region, the Convention was amended to become open to all UN Member States in 2016. Chad is the first Party from outside the pan-Europe and a number of countries in different regions of the world are actively evaluating or pursuing accession. Most countries in Central Asia are already Parties to the Convention and there is also interest in South Asia. The workshop will provide for a dialogue with and among South Asian countries about the implications and benefits of joining the community and regime of the Water Convention, and contributing to its future development.

AGENDA

26 July	UNECE Workshop			
	Session	Objective	Content/Key Questions	Resources/Responsible
08:00-09:00	Registration			
09:00-10:30	General introduction to the Water Convention: the scope, obligations, institutional framework, soft-law instruments developed	Familiarize the participants with the main features of the Water Convention	<p>Opening of the Workshop and setting the scene - Mr. Jukka Ilomäki, Finnish Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Introduction to international water law and how the Helsinki Convention's provisions reflect the key principles - Mr. Ram Babu Dhakal, Nepal</p> <p>General introduction to the Water Convention: the scope, obligations, institutional framework, soft-law instruments developed - Dr. Annukka Lipponen, Water Convention secretariat, UNECE</p> <p>Questions and answers</p>	Mr. Jukka Ilomäki Finnish Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs
fWWF10.30-11.00	Coffee/tea break			
11.00-11:45	Examples about the application of the Water Convention and cooperation developed on that basis	Share practical experience from cooperation between some Parties to the Water Convention	<p>1. Finland-Russia cooperation: Balancing hydropower, flood protection and environmental needs</p> <p>2. Working with different stakeholders in the Finnish-Swedish Transboundary River Commission</p> <p>Ms. Minna Hanski, Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland</p> <p>Questions and answers</p>	Dr. A. Lipponen Environmental Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

11:45-13:00	Group exercise on the Convention	Go through some common questions to raise awareness	<p>Frequently asked questions and answers</p> <p>The participants can send in advance questions to the secretariat. These and some FAQs will be clustered according topic and discussed in the groups. Afterwards, each group will present the results of their reflection, for complementing in plenary.</p>	
13:00-14:00	LUNCH			
14:00-17:00 (includes 30 minutes Tea/Coffee Break)	<p>- Programme of Work under the Convention and selected topics</p> <p>-</p>	Introduce in more detail the current (2016-2018) and planned (2019-2021) scope of work under the Water Convention. Illustrate interaction and complementarity with another Multilateral Environmental Agreement	<p>Information and examples about the tools and activities, e.g. monitoring and assessment, climate change, public participation, benefits of cooperation</p> <p>Programme of Work under the Convention - Dr. Annukka Lipponen, UNECE</p> <p>Support from the Aarhus Convention to effective public participation in transboundary water management in the context of the obligations of the Water Convention - Mr. Vadim Ni, Ecoforum of NGOs, Kazakhstan</p>	Dr. Annukka Lipponen, UNECE
15.15-15.45	Coffee/tea break			
15.45-16.30	Group exercise	Gather views and ideas from participants about possibilities to support to transboundary cooperation in the region	<p>How the Water Convention and its tools can be used in the South Asia and ICIMOD regions</p> <p>Discussion in groups (themes and facilitators):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreements on transboundary waters and the work of joint bodies (Minna Hanski) 2. Public participation (OXFAM and Vadim Ni - TBC) 3. Benefits of transboundary cooperation and intersectoral coordination (water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus issues) (Annukka Lipponen) 	

			<p>4. Monitoring and assessment of waters (ICIMOD - TBC)</p> <p>5. Climate change (Chudamani Joshi, Special Advisor - Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu)</p> <p>The presentations on the Water Convention in the previous sessions will provide the basis for this and the facilitators will give a brief introduction. Some key documents and publications of the Water Convention on each of the above topics will be provided.</p> <p>Tasks 1. Discuss the soft law/guidance etc. under the Water Convention in the specified thematic area and its potential value.</p> <p>Task 2. Discuss if and how these guidance and information resources could be used in the region or any of the countries. If yes, please describe also how.</p>	
16.30-17.00	Plenary discussion	Discuss the outlook for cooperation	<p>Discussion: Is there a role for ICIMOD and Oxfam/TROSA partners to promote accession to the Convention in the region?</p> <p>Conclusions</p>	