

**Opening by Mr. Peter Kovacs, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties**  
**at the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection**  
**and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**

**Astana, 10 October 2018**

Excellencies, ministers, delegations

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the government of Kazakhstan to host the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention here in Astana and take over the chairmanship for the next period.

In my opinion today's meeting is a historical one as the MoP organised the first time in Asia, and it is the first conference after the global opening of the Convention.

I was very proud and honoured 3 years ago when I was elected as a chair of the convention during the 7th meeting of the parties in Budapest. My chairmanship started with a real challenge related to the opening of the territorial scope of the Convention.

I am also very delighted that under my chairmanship we already could welcome new countries acceding to the Convention. We know that the accession is not an easy task, but despite of all difficulties it is already proven that it is not a kind of an “impossible mission”.

Hungary has recognised long ago that water is not only the most valuable but the most crucial and strategic natural resource of the 21st century. That is why we volunteered for the chairmanship of the Convention 3 years ago.

We also counting water management as a global issue. Our president Mr. János Áder has also actively participated in the work of the High Level Panel on Water. During the 8th World Water Forum in Brasília in March he delivered the findings of the HLPW, which also highlighted the importance of Transboundary cooperation.

In my opinion the Water Convention is an excellent tool to improve transboundary cooperation. The 20 year of existence already proved its usefulness. We all know that Transboundary Water Cooperation is a politically sensitive, complicated issue with many obstacles. Conflicts exist between up- and downstream countries related to water quality and quantity aspects. The Water Convention offers examples of solutions a long term perspective.

By opening the Water Convention we see a great opportunities for countries from Central and North-African, Arabic countries, Central-America and Asia to utilise these tools.

I hope you will get all benefits from the Convention and I ready to offer Hungary's experiences And my personal capacity in the future as well.

Thank you very much for you kind attention.

Now please welcome on the screen the video message of the President of Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev to the Meeting of the Parties.