



## **Information for non-Party States participating in the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention**

**10-12 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan**

This document aims to assist representatives of non-Parties to the Water Convention to prepare for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties and promote an active participation in the discussion at the session. It provides a background on the organization of work at the Meeting of the Parties and highlights agenda items which could be of particular interest for non-Parties.

### ***The Water Convention***

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. To date, the Convention counts 43 Parties, almost all countries sharing waters in the Pan-European region, joined by Chad and Senegal in 2018<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, an amendment to the Convention that entered into force on 6 February 2013, turned the Water Convention, initially a regional convention, into a universal convention on transboundary water cooperation. As of 1 March 2016, all United Nations Member States can accede to the Convention.

The Convention strengthens transboundary water cooperation and measures for the sustainable management of both transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. It requires Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts, to use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management. Parties bordering the same transboundary waters have to cooperate by entering into specific agreements and establishing joint bodies. As a framework agreement, the Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific basins or aquifers; instead, it fosters their adoption and implementation, as well as further development.

The Convention's implementation contributed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and supports the reaching of the Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information on the Water Convention, [a side event to the Meeting of the Parties is organized on 10 October from 1:30 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. in room 2 - Amu Darya](#). The objective is to offer delegates the opportunity to learn more about the Water Convention and its legal and institutional framework, to ask questions and raise potential concerns in order to facilitate their participation to the Meeting of the Parties and their contribution to it. Your participation is warmly welcome.

More information is also available from:

<https://www.unece.org/env/water/text/text.html>

<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44054&L=0>

<https://www.unece.org/env/water/MOP8>

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<sup>1</sup> Senegal presented its instruments of accession on 31 August 2018. Senegal's accession to the Water Convention will enter into force on 28 November 2018 in accordance with Article 26, paragraph 3, of the Water Convention, providing for a period of ninety (90) days between the presentation of the instrument of accession and the entry into force of the Convention.

## ***The Meeting of the Parties and the role of non-Parties***

The Meeting of the Parties is the Convention's highest decision-making body. It meets every three years to review progress in implementation of the Convention. It takes decisions on the development of the Convention such as the adoption of proposals for amendments to the Convention, soft law recommendations, other policy tools to promote transboundary cooperation and any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention. It sets strategic direction for future work under the Convention and agrees on the programme of work for the next three years. The Meeting of the Parties is therefore a unique intergovernmental platform for discussing progress and challenges in transboundary water cooperation and for sharing good practices, lessons and experiences.

Formally, representatives of non-Party States participate as observers in the meeting<sup>2</sup>. However, given the distinctive spirit of cooperation of the Convention, the established practice in the Meetings of the Parties and in other Convention's meetings is that no distinction is made between Parties and non-Parties, so that all participants have equal opportunities to express their views and opinions. Similarly, non-Parties are invited to participate in the different activities under the Convention, and to use and contribute to the development of the Convention's products. As potential future Parties, their views are sought after in all items under discussion.

With the participation of more than 80 countries and several new accessions, the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties will mark the Convention's transition into a global multilateral legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary water cooperation.

Non-Parties are therefore encouraged to intervene in the various agenda items, including in the discussion on the future programme of work. All speakers are expected to be as brief as possible (max. 2 minutes per intervention) in order to allow interventions by all interested representatives. Agenda items 5, 6 a, b, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15 are particularly relevant for non-Parties.

Item 6 is dedicated entirely to the Convention's opening. Your declarations of interest are especially significant here. Your interventions will demonstrate your commitment and interest, enable you to express your priorities for strategic directions of future work under the Convention, as well as your contribution to the implementation of the programme and to exchange your experience.



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<sup>2</sup> Non-Parties cannot propose candidates for the Implementation Committee and the Bureau and cannot vote in the unlikely case of a vote. The rules of procedure governing the discussions and decision-making at MOP 8 are available from the meeting page; a revised version will be adopted at the meeting: <https://www.unece.org/env/water/MOP8>

## ***Agenda of the eighth session***

### High-level segment

The session's high-level segment will take place on Wednesday, 10 October 2018 and will be opened by the President of Kazakhstan. The session will offer an opportunity to discuss the importance of transboundary water cooperation, in particular the role of the Water Convention, to make sure that the sharing of water resources and resulting benefits ensure the planet's and people's well-being and help enhancing prosperity and promoting peace, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. High-level representatives of non-Party States will be included in the panels. Moreover, non-Party high-level participants are also invited to make interventions to express their views on the above-mentioned topics and answer the questions for discussion at the segment (see the provisional agenda of the meeting and draft programme of the high-level segment).

To facilitate the conduct of the debate, delegations intending to make a statement should inform the Secretariat (water.convention@un.org) by 4 October 2018. All speakers are requested to bring a symbolic object connected to transboundary water cooperation in their country to illustrate their statement and main messages.

### General debate

#### *Decision under the eighth Meeting of the Parties*

The eighth Meeting of the Parties is expected to adopt three important decisions for non-Party States:

- a) *Draft strategy for the implementation of the Convention at global level (Item 6.b of the provisional agenda) (available here:***  
**[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct\\_10-12\\_8thMOP/Official\\_docs/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_2018\\_6\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct_10-12_8thMOP/Official_docs/ECE_MP.WAT_2018_6_ENG.pdf)**)

This strategy lays the basis for the future Convention's evolution to better leverage the benefits of its opening. Building on the success factors to date, the strategy defines objectives, means and approaches to ensure that the process of globalization of the Convention proceeds speedily and that the Convention's framework, modality of work and mechanisms are fit for promoting global implementation and are able to respond to the related challenges. The strategy also defines how the Convention will support the implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5 on transboundary water cooperation. Non-Parties are asked to read the Strategy and to associate themselves to the decision in their interventions by indicating how they intend to contribute to its implementation in their respective regions and basins.

- b) *Draft decision on reporting and revised template for reporting under the Convention (Item 5 of the provisional agenda) (available from:***  
**[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct\\_10-12\\_8thMOP/Official\\_docs/ECE\\_MP\\_WAT\\_2018\\_5\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct_10-12_8thMOP/Official_docs/ECE_MP_WAT_2018_5_ENG.pdf)**)

The decision on reporting will establish a mechanism that will facilitate monitoring of implementation of the Convention as well as monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation. The decision will also help identify specific needs and support capacity-building and technical assistance activities. This decision will be of interest to countries that share basins with existing Parties or are considering accession to the Convention. The Draft decision on reporting and revised template for reporting under the Convention was developed on the basis of the results of the technical analysis meetings that followed the pilot reporting exercise under the Convention and on SDG indicator 6.5.2 in 2016-2017. Non-Parties are invited to share their experience of

reporting on indicator 6.5.2, comment on the draft decision and associate themselves to its adoption and implementation.

**c) Draft decision on the designation and responsibilities of focal points:**  
[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct\\_10-12\\_8thMOP/Official\\_docs/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_2018\\_7\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct_10-12_8thMOP/Official_docs/ECE_MP.WAT_2018_7_ENG.pdf) )

Focal points represent the main channel of communication between the secretariat, the country involved and other countries on Convention-related matters. This decision aims to formalize this channel of communication and define clear responsibilities at the national level to support implementation of the Convention. Delegates are invited to discuss the draft decision for adoption and to identify and designate their focal points by 31 January 2019.

**Discussion on past and future activities under the Convention (Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 of the provisional agenda)**

The meeting will review the activities carried out under the Convention's current programme of work (2016-2018) and discuss future activities for 2019-2021. The report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2016-2018 is available from: [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct\\_10-12\\_8thMOP/Official\\_docs/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_2018\\_2\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct_10-12_8thMOP/Official_docs/ECE_MP.WAT_2018_2_ENG.pdf)

The programme of work for 2019-2021 aims to assist countries, both Parties and non-Parties, in implementing the Convention and improving their transboundary water cooperation. It will include the continuation of current activities as well as new programme areas, such as providing support for the monitoring, assessment and exchange of information in transboundary basins. The provisional agenda is available from: [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct\\_10-12\\_8thMOP/Official\\_docs/ECE\\_MP.WAT\\_2018\\_4\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/WAT/10Oct_10-12_8thMOP/Official_docs/ECE_MP.WAT_2018_4_ENG.pdf)

You are invited to comment on and express interest in the different areas of the programme of work, by indicating how you could contribute to the implementation of the programme, in particular on:

**a) Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention, and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation (programme area 1, agenda item 6)**

This programme area aims to support the understanding of and accession to the Convention as well as its application by non-Parties. Discussions on this programme area will also offer the opportunity to express your interest to accede to the Convention in front of the Meeting of the Parties. *All non-Parties that have submitted letters of interest for the Water Convention to the secretariat are invited to reaffirm their intention during their interventions under this topic.* Requests for assistance, for example for national or regional workshops on the Convention, should also be expressed at the Meeting of the Parties in order to be integrated into the programme of work.

In preparation of possible interventions, non-Parties are encouraged to consult with the relevant national authorities so that a consolidated input to the discussion can be brought forward at the Meeting of the Parties.



**b) Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins (programme area 4)**

The Convention has been supporting countries and basins in cooperating on climate change adaptation across borders through guidance documents, projects on the ground and exchange of experience. A global network of basins has been created and a collection of experience was published in 2015. In pilot projects, transboundary vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies are developed and their implementation supported. For more information, see: [http://www.unece.org/env/water/water\\_climate\\_activ.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/water_climate_activ.html) and <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=39417&L=0>.

**c) Facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation (programme area 5)**

This new programme area hopes to meet challenges related to financing transboundary cooperation. Among other things, it aims to promote knowledge sharing and peer learning on funding options likely to allow a more sustainable management of transboundary waters and support national authorities and joint bodies in securing financing of transboundary water cooperation from different sources, including national budgets.

**d) Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels (programme area 3)**

This programme area includes the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus issue. In an effort to break the silos between these sectors, the Convention is carrying out nexus assessments in transboundary basins to identify opportunities for additional and equitable sharing of benefits from stronger integration across sectors as well as practical solutions for reconciling the different sectors' needs. Further information is available from: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/nexus.html> and: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41427&L=0>.

**e) Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins (programme area 2)**

This programme area aims to support countries in establishing or developing joint or coordinated monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, covering both quantitative and qualitative aspects of water, and ensure information exchange between riparian countries. Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and information exchange are among the main obligations under the Convention. This programme area was highly important in the first years that followed the Convention's entry into force and will be prioritized again in the future programme of work.

***Side events***

A number of side events are scheduled to take place during the Meeting of the Parties in order to discuss in more detail certain challenges or tools for transboundary cooperation. The list of side events is available on the meeting website: <https://www.unece.org/env/water/MOP8>

***Further information***

The provisional agenda for the session and additional practical information are available on the meeting website: <https://www.unece.org/env/water/MOP8>; for any questions, please address : [water.convention@un.org](mailto:water.convention@un.org)