

## **Progress of Uganda towards Accession to the Water Convention**

The Republic of Uganda has been participating in transboundary water cooperation for over 50 years, including hosting the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat in Entebbe since 2002. It has also been hosting an annual training on international water law and governance since 2015 with the most recent having taken place from 11 to 14 November 2019 where also the Water Convention Secretariat participated.

Having recently ratified the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement and with 98% of the countries water resources located within the Nile Basin, for Uganda, "Water cooperation is not a choice, but a must".

In view of the above Uganda is considering accession to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

As a first step, a national meeting was organized on 15 November 2019 to increase awareness and understanding of the Convention, its provisions and obligations, as well as the benefits and possible challenges for Uganda to accede to the Convention. The meeting was attended by officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Energy and Mineral Development, Water and Environment, and Makerere University.

The staff of the Water Convention Secretariat attended the meeting at the invitation of the Ministry of Water and Environment and facilitated some of the sessions. The meeting was also attended by a representative of Ghana who gave an overview of accession processes and status of accession to both conventions by Ghana.

Since the national meeting was held some progress towards accession has been made as follows: (i) confirmation of the Ministry of Water and Environment as the focal point for this task, (ii) Sharing information on the convention and holding discussions with relevant government ministries and agencies, civil society, academia etc.

It had been planned to: (i) hold meetings with key ministries and agencies in the country to discuss the Convention's provisions; (ii) hold stakeholder consultative workshops on the provisions of the Convention, and (iii) submit a paper to the Cabinet on the need for accession to the Convention. The planned activities were however affected by the lockdown due to COVID-19 but will resume soon since lockdown is being lifted.