



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

MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Seventh session

Budapest, 17-19 November 2015

Item 6 of the provisional agenda: Cooperation with partners

UNESCO and the Water Convention

Note prepared by UNESCO-IHP

Past cooperation

Background

In November 2012 the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention adopted Decision VI/5 calling for a close cooperation between UNECE Water Convention and the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP) with the objective of promoting the protection and the reasonable, equitable and sustainable use of transboundary groundwater, through the exchange of experience and the organization of joint activities. In view of the risk of unsustainable use of these precious resources, UNECE and UNESCO-IHP joined forces to address the challenge of the implementation of the UNECE Water Convention in this area.

The cooperation builds on earlier cooperation, started in the 1990s, in particular in pilot projects, preparation of the component on aquifers of the UNECE assessments on transboundary waters, and dissemination of monitoring guidelines.

The cooperation between UNECE and UNESCO-IHP in the last two years focused on the promotion of the principles of the UNECE Water Convention and its Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters, in particular in the framework of the area of work “Promoting the management of transboundary aquifers” of the Eighth Phase of the IHP (IHP-VIII, 2014-2021). The cooperation included exchange of experience, preparation of material, organization of regional consultations and joint activities as well as seminars for both parties and non-parties of the UNECE Water Convention. Examples of such activities are listed in the Annex to this document.

Such fruitful cooperation has been supported by the contribution of the UNESCO-IHP global network which includes Centres, Chairs, IHP National Committees, the “International Shared Aquifers Resources Management (ISARM)” Programme Focal Points, and in particular, the UNESCO International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC). UNESCO-IHP network offered scientific contribution and support in capacity-building activities aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the UNECE Water Convention as a global instrument and the implications of its implementation in the protection and the reasonable, equitable and sustainable use of transboundary groundwater resources.

The celebrations of the International Year of Water Cooperation (2013), on behalf of UN-Water, were organized by UNESCO-IHP in collaboration with UNECE. This included in particular a regional

consultation of the GEF-funded “Groundwater Governance” project, held in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 19 to 21 March 2013. The meeting, organized by UNESCO-IHP in cooperation with UNECE, counted with the participation of more than 100 participants. UNECE regional priorities and needs were presented and discussed, with broader aim of improving governance for groundwater resources and aquifers, raising awareness on a global groundwater agenda, and building partnerships across decision makers and stakeholders. UNESCO-IHP also counted with the support of UNECE to organize other milestone events of the Year, such as the High-Level International Conference on Water Cooperation (August 2013, Dushanbe, Tajikistan), the Strategic and High-Level Meeting on Water Security and Cooperation (September 2013, Nairobi, Kenya), the Budapest Water Summit (October 2013, Budapest, Hungary) and the Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Water Cooperation (December 2013, Mexico City, Mexico).

Additionally, different seminars and workshops were organized jointly, e.g. at the World Water Week, in 2013, 2014 and 2015. UNESCO-IHP contributed to UNECE’s outreach and awareness raising events such as national and regional workshops held in Amman, Jordan (March 2015) and in Beirut, Lebanon (February 2015).

Transboundary contexts

Trade-offs and uses of water, energy and food, as well as overlaps and unclear responsibilities related their management can cause friction between riparian states. Recognizing these challenges, the UNECE (Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus) and UNESCO (Food, Energy, Environment, and Water Network – FE2W) have started exchanging experience in the assessment and study of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins around the world. Cooperation has allowed seeking new opportunities for additional sharing of practical solutions for improving security and reconciling different needs in transboundary basins.

Moreover, other joint activities included the compilation of good practices in transboundary water cooperation and the creation of an online database enabling its constant enrichment. These activities were implemented under the umbrella of the UN-Water Transboundary Waters Thematic Priority Area (TPA), which UNESCO-IHP and UNECE co-coordinate jointly. A flyer summarizing the results of the good practice collection was presented at the 7th World Water Forum in the Republic of Korea in April 2015.

Communication and Outreach

UNESCO-IHP has also supported the preparation of the Arabic version of the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters of the UNECE Water Convention (translation and printing). This publication is being distributed and promoted widely, in particular in the seminars held in the Arab region.

Capacity-building trainings

Both UNESCO-IHP and the UNESCO IGRAC Centre regularly participate in the UNECE Water Convention meetings in Geneva. In particular, and in the framework of the capacity building activities of the Governance of Groundwater Resources in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA) Project, funded by the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNESCO-IHP presented to recipient countries the UNECE Water Convention during International Water Law seminars of the project (Gaborone, Botswana; May 2015; Tashkent, July 2015) and facilitated the UNECE Water Convention’s secretariat participation in such events to share experience. Furthermore, UNESCO supported the participation of experts from the Ministry of Environment of Guatemala, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry of Namibia, the Ministry of Minerals, Energy, and Water

Resources of Botswana, the Committee of Geology and Use of Mineral Resources of Kazakhstan and the State Committee on Geology and Mineral Resources of Uzbekistan, among others, in different workshops organized under the UNECE Water Convention.

Future plans for cooperation

Promotion of International Water Law

Valuing the fruitful past and on-going activities conducted along with UNECE, UNESCO-IHP aims on consolidating efforts on future joint activities. UNESCO is determined on continuing to support and promote the principles of the UNECE Water Convention and the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwater, by providing its expertise and taking the lead in the implementation of further actions focused on groundwater, for instance by supporting the promotion and the application of the UNECE “Guidance Note on the Benefits of Cooperation”.

UNESCO-IHP is thus ready to collaborate further with UNECE Water Convention, as expressed in the Decision VI/5 “with the shared objective to promote the protection and the reasonable, equitable and sustainable use of transboundary groundwaters, through the exchange of experience and the organization of joint activities”, within the framework of the Internationally Shared Aquifers Resources Management (ISARM) Programme, and with close involvement of the UNESCO IGRAC Centre.

UNESCO-IHP, in collaboration with the UNESCO IGRAC Centre, is also ready to participate to the development of a concept for a third comprehensive assessment as planned in the UNECE Draft programme of work for 2016-2018. The main achievements of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP), for which UNESCO was in charge of the groundwater component, and the UNESCO Internationally Shared Aquifer Resources Management programme, are particularly relevant for this work. Related to TWAP, UNESCO and UNECE also cooperated, with UNECE Water Convention Secretariat providing input to the identification of case studies and refining the approach to the groundwater component, as well as facilitating country contacts.

Other common activities will be also developed under the UNECE Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins, particularly regarding groundwater assessment.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UNESCO-IHP and UNECE will collaborate in the monitoring of the SDG on Water which includes a target mentioning transboundary water cooperation (target 6.5) through potential two indicators: a broader one measuring Integrated Water Resources Management and a more specific one measuring transboundary water cooperation.

Selected list of events of collaboration between UNESCO and UNECE activities since the 6th Meeting of the Parties (November 2012)

19-21 March 2013

Fifth Regional Consultation “Groundwater Governance Project”, The Hague, Netherlands

Organized by UNESCO-IHP in cooperation with UNECE

22 March 2013

World Water Day, The Hague, Netherlands

Official celebrations organized in the framework of “2013, International Year of Water Cooperation”, led by UNESCO in cooperation with UNECE on behalf of UN Water

11-12 April 2013

Regional Meeting on the Pretashkent Aquifer Study, Paris, France

Organized by UNESCO with participation of UNECE

14-15 May 2013

Inception Meeting of the “Assessment of Transboundary Aquifers and SIDS Groundwater Systems” (TWAP Aquifers), Perugia, Italy

UNECE work on assessment of transboundary groundwaters presented

11 June 2013

“Workshop on Transboundary Water Cooperation” back to back with “Second UNESCO/GEF IW:LEARN Groundwater Integration Dialogue”, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Organized jointly by UNECE and UNESCO-IHP

1 September 2013

Seminar “Strengthening the Basis for Water Cooperation across Borders” - World Water Week, Stockholm, Sweden

UNESCO and UNECE co-convenors

11-13 September 2013

“Strategic and High-Level Meeting on Water Security and Cooperation” - held within the framework of the International Year of Water Cooperation 2013, Nairobi, Kenya

Organized by UNESCO-IHP, with support of the Government of Kenya and UNECE

5-6 December 2013

Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Water Cooperation, Mexico City, Mexico

Organized by UNESCO-IHP, with support of UNECE

23-26 September 2013

UNECE Workshops “River Basin Commissions and Other Joint Bodies for Transboundary Water Cooperation: Legal and Institutional Aspects” and “Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management”, Geneva, Switzerland

UNESCO participation and support of participation of UNESCO’s projects experts

15-16 October 2013

“International Water Cooperation and Transboundary Aquifers Conference”, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Organized by UNITAR and the Government of Scotland, with support of UNESCO. The Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters and other relevant UNECE activities on groundwater presented.

26-27 September 2013

Fourth World Congress on Agricultural and Rural Finance, Paris, France

organized by French banking Group “Crédit Agricole”; UNESCO presented the UNECE Water Convention under the theme “Water Cooperation: United Nations’ Initiatives”

3-4 February 2014

Inception meeting of the “Syr Darya Transboundary Basin” Project, Paris, France

Organized by UNESCO IHP, participation of UNECE

4-7 May 2014

2014 National Groundwater Association Groundwater Summit, Denver, USA

UNESCO presented "Research to Solutions: Contributions from UNESCO-IHP", including the activities jointly undertaken with UNECE

8 May 2014

Water Sustainable Program Distinguished Speaker Seminar, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona, USA

UNESCO presented “30 Years of Love for Groundwater: The role of UNESCO in striving for Water Security”, including the activities jointly undertaken with UNECE

22-23 May 2014

Workshop “Counting our gains: Sharing experiences on identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation”, Geneva, Switzerland

Workshop organized under the leadership of the Government of Estonia, with the support of the UNECE Secretariat in partnership with UNESCO. The final report includes a case study provided by UNESCO (DIKTAS case study) and sections relative to groundwater prepared with UNESCO-IGRAC.

27 May 2014

5th Africa Water Week, side event “Legal frameworks for transboundary water cooperation,” Dakar, Senegal

Organized by UNECE in cooperation with France, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Dundee Centre for Water Law, Policy & Science under the auspices of UNESCO, WWF, Green Cross International; participation of representative of UNESCO and presentation of cooperation with UNECE

11-12 June 2014

UNECE Workshop on “Legal frameworks for cooperation on transboundary waters – Key aspects and opportunities for the Arab countries”, Tunis, Tunisia

IHP chaired the session “Moving forward - Making cooperation happen in the Arab region”.

18-20 June 2014

Presentation of an overview of the accomplishments of the International Year of Water Cooperation (IYWC) to the IHP 21st Intergovernmental Council

Report on the celebrations of the Year, led by UNESCO in coordination with UNECE

31 August 2014

World Water Week , How the two global water conventions support transboundary water cooperation, –Stockholm, Sweden

Co-convenors: UNESCO, UNECE, Dundee Centre for Water Law, Policy & Science, Finnish Water Forum, Government of Hungary, Government of the Netherlands, Green Cross International, IUCN, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, Ministry of Water and Forestry of Cote d’Ivoire, SIWI, UNEP-DHI Centre for Water and Environment, UNESCO, WWF

20 September – 3 October 2014

Workshops and Training on Preventive Diplomacy and for Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia

Organized by UNESCO-IHE with participation of the experts from the UNESCO “Governance of Groundwater Resources of Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA)” project Presentation of the UNECE convention

17-21 November 2014

Water diplomacy UNESCO regional workshop for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Panama, San Jose, Costa Rica

Organized by UNESCO, Presentation of the UNECE convention

26 November 2014

Launch of the Water-Energy-Environment-Food Nexus Network, Paris

Participation of UNECE and presentation of the assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus under the Water Convention

4-5 February 2015

Workshop on the UNECE water convention, Beirut, Lebanon

Participation of UNESCO

10 March 2015

National workshop on frameworks for transboundary water cooperation: Focus on the UNECE Water Convention, Amman, Jordan

Organized by UNECE in cooperation with UNESCO, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation of Jordan and the Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med), with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

5-8 May 2015

Meeting of the Governance of Groundwater Resources of Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA) project, Gaborone, Botswana

Presentation of the UNECE Convention

6-9 July 2015

Workshop of the Governance of Groundwater Resources of Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA) Training on Legal and Institutional Aspects of Water Governance.

Presentation and analysis of the UNECE Convention and its implementation, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

24-August 2015

World Water Week, Implementing the SDGs in shared basins through international water law Stockholm, Sweden

Co-convenors UNECE, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit; Global Environment Facility; Government of the Netherlands; Green Cross International; Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance; Stockholm International Water Institute; UNESCO – Institute for Water Education; UNESCO-IHE – Institute for Water Education/UNESCO-PCCP (IHP/WWAP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Wide Fund for Nature.

22-25 September 2015

Workshop on Water Resource Management in the Context of Climate Change for Central Asia Almaty, Kazakhstan

Co-organised by UNESCO, WB, OSCE, UNRCCA and the Embassy of Germany in Kazakhstan UNESCO. Presentation of the UNECE convention.