



Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment



The UN Watercourses Convention – Next steps

Side event at the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention

- Timing:** Wednesday, 18 November, 13:30 - 14:45
Location: Room of the MOP plenary session
Organizers: German Federal Environment Ministry, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Languages: English, French, Russian and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention - UNWC) was concluded in New York in 1997 and entered into force in August 2014, thus creating a global, legally binding framework for inter-state cooperation in water issues. There are also other treaties dealing with cooperation in international watercourses, e.g. the UNECE Water Convention, which has opened up for countries from outside the UNECE region. The UNWC does not have an institutional structure of its own to maintain active cooperation within the framework of the Convention, nor have any other arrangements concerning continuous and active cooperation been agreed upon yet.

Thus the question is what the next steps concerning the UN Watercourses Convention will be and how the preferred relationship between global, regional and bilateral agreements should be considered, e.g. the relationship between the UNWC and the UNECE Water Convention. There had been an informal gathering of the Parties to the UNWC on 15th and 16th September 2015 in Paris, which discussed the above mentioned questions.

The side event will inform about the UNWC gathering in Paris and the consistency and complementarity of both conventions. In a panel discussion Parties and Non-Parties to one or the other or both conventions will exchange their views on those and other instruments, the interest to accede to them and how to promote them.

Programme

Chair: *Carel de Villeneuve, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment*
Introduction and objectives of the side event

- Informal gathering of the Parties to the UN Watercourses Convention on 15th and 16th September 2015 in Paris – Outcome
Ms Heide Jekel, Head of Division, German Federal Environment Ministry
- The UN Watercourses Convention – History and Contents
Mr Fabien Dupuis, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Two global water conventions – compatible and complementary?
Mr Antti Belinskij, Counsellor of Legislative Affairs, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Panel discussion in the light of the informal gathering's outcomes

Exchange of views on the UN Watercourses Convention and its future, on tackling two global conventions, the interest in ratifying one of them or both as a package, and on the relationship of the UNWC with other existing instruments

Moderator: *Carel de Villeneuve, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment*

Panelists

Mr Fadi Comair, Director General of Hydraulic and Electric Resources, Ministry of Energy, Lebanon

Mr Peter Kovacs, Head of Department, Department of River Basin Management, Ministry of Interior, Hungary

Mr Samuel Ome, Director, Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Nigeria

Mr Alistair Rieu-Clarke, Reader in International Law, Centre for Water Law, Policy & Science, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK

Debate with the audience