



United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe



Ministry of Transport, Public Works
and Water Management



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE: HOW TO DEVELOP AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS

Workshop to be held in Geneva, 10-11 May 2010

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 10 May 2010

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

The workshop will bring together countries and main international actors engaged in activities on water and adaptation to climate change, in particular in transboundary basins, with the aim to:

- Exchange practical experience and share lessons-learned on the technical and strategic aspects of adapting to climate change;
- Analyse the specific challenges of adapting water management to climate change in the transboundary context;
- Show how transboundary cooperation can be established in the different steps of developing an adaptation strategy: from the assessment of impacts and vulnerability to the selection of measures;
- Support countries engaged in the process of preparing national or regional adaptation strategies;
- Promote the implementation of the UNECE Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change.

In particular, the workshop aims to assist governments implementing pilot projects on adaptation to climate change under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) in planning and implementing the objectives, steps and activities of the projects.

The workshop will also discuss how to ensure a continuous exchange of experience on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins through a pan-European platform under the Water Convention.



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

II. Background

Water resources are vulnerable and can be strongly affected by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems. Nevertheless, few countries have developed adaptation strategies so far. The fact that many water bodies cross boundaries, especially in the UNECE region, means that risks and challenges are shared and that solutions need to be coordinated. Adaptation measures, especially structural measures such as dams, reservoirs or dykes can have significant effects on other riparian countries. Cooperation on adaptation can help to find better and more cost-effective solutions, by enlarging the geographical area considered in planning measures, broadening the information base and combining efforts. Transboundary cooperation in developing adaptation strategies is currently, however, almost non-existent.

Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the Parties to the Water Convention developed the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change. When adopting the Guidance at its fifth session in November 2009, the Meeting of the Parties also decided to focus future work in two areas:

- Promoting adaptation on the ground through the establishment of a programme of pilot projects in transboundary basins, particularly in South-Eastern Europe, and in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia;
- Fostering exchange of experience on adapting water management to climate change in the pan-European region.

The workshop will launch the programme of pilot projects and will constitute the first step in establishing the platform for the exchange of experience.

III. Organization of work

The workshop will be organized on 10 and 11 May 2010, back-to-back with the third meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (12 May 2010), under the leadership of the Government of the Netherlands and Germany, with the support of the UNECE secretariat. Funding for pilot projects and the platform for exchanging experience is also provided by the governments of Finland and Switzerland.

The workshop is addressed to all those who are responsible for, or involved in the process of developing an adaptation strategy and addressing climate change impacts on water resources, at the national and transboundary level: first and foremost governmental representatives, but also water and health managers, local authorities, and representatives of academia, research institutes and non-governmental organizations.

The workshop will consist of the following sessions:

- Session 1: Introductory session
- Session 2: Legal, policy and institutional environments enabling cooperation on adaptation
- Session 3: Jointly assessing climate change impacts on water resources and determining vulnerability
- Session 4: Agreeing on a joint adaptation strategy

- Session 5: Launch of the pilot projects

Representatives of initiatives dealing with water and adaptation to climate change are invited to submit abstracts for presentations on topics relevant for the workshop to the Water Convention secretariat (sonja.koeppel@unece.org) by 6 April 2010.

A detailed programme will be issued in April 2010.

IV. Background documentation

The following documents will serve as background material for the workshop:

- (a) Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change (ECE/MP.WAT/30)¹
- (b) Overview of the pilot projects programme (TFWC/2010/3).

Participants are welcome to make available any other relevant material at the workshop.

V. Practical information

The workshop will start at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 10 May 2010 and end at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 11 May 2010. It will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The workshop will be organized back-to-back with the third meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (12 May 2010). The working languages will be English, French and Russian.

Focal points are requested to disseminate information on the workshop and to facilitate nomination of relevant experts from their respective countries.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (olga.carlos@unece.org) as soon as possible, but not later than **6 April 2010. No application will be accepted after this deadline.** Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to representatives of pilot projects countries and to experts providing inputs to the workshop.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. Due to the entry of Switzerland in the Schengen Zone, visa procedures have become more complicated. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is now 15 working days. **Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.**

In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the registration form available online at http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_adaptation_workshop.html

¹ Available at http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/documents/Guidance_water_climate.pdf.

and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat **by 1 May 2010** either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0621) or e-mail (olga.carlos@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the UNECE Water Convention website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1926.

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at:
<http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>.

Further information, the registration form and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course:
http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_adaptation_workshop.html
