



United Nations
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Ministry of Infrastructure and the
Environment



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
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MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



SECOND WORKSHOP ON WATER AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS: CHALLENGES, PROGRESS AND LESSONS LEARNT

To be held in Geneva, 12-13 April 2011

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 April 2011

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

The workshop will bring together countries and other stakeholders 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, identify best practices, success factors and lessons learnt; considering the different steps of developing an adaptation strategy: from the assessment of impacts and vulnerability to the selection of measures;
- Exchange experience between the pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) as well as other similar initiatives;
- Support governments, organizations and joint bodies engaged in the process of preparing national or regional adaptation strategies;
- Promote and discuss the implementation of the UNECE Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change.

The workshop is the second one organized on this theme in the framework of the UNECE Water Convention, within its platform for exchanging experience on adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context. It will build on the results of last year's workshop and illustrate recent developments in this area. Information on the first workshop "Water and climate change- how to develop an adaptation strategy in



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

transboundary basins” (Geneva, 10-11 May 2010) can be found at www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_adaptation_workshop.html.

II. Background

Water resources are vulnerable and can be strongly affected by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems. Despite growing efforts in this area, 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.

To promote cooperation in adapting to climate change in transboundary basins, a programme of pilot projects was launched at the first workshop. The programme is based on the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change, developed under the Water Convention, which explains step-by-step how to develop an adaptation strategy in transboundary basins. The programme is supported by a platform for exchanging experience between the pilot projects and other similar initiatives, through different means such as regular meetings, a web-based platform etc.

III. Organization of work and call for contributions

The workshop will be organized on 12 and 13 April 2011, back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (14 April 2011), 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.

Contributions are invited on the following topics:

- Jointly assessing climate change impacts on water resources and determining vulnerability
- Jointly planning water management under uncertainty, including mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into river basin management plans
- Jointly responding to climate change impacts on water uses such as hydropower, navigation, and irrigated agriculture
- Adaptation measures for floods and drought management
- Water and health: preparing water supply and sanitation to extreme weather events and the impact of climate change

- Financing of measures
- Options for capacity development.

Abstracts for presentations on the above topics should be sent to the Water Convention secretariat (sonja.koeppel@unece.org) by 1 March 2011. The abstracts should be structured as follows:

- Background of the project, situation, expected impacts, partners, level of advancement
- Achievements so far
- Difficulties encountered
- Lessons learnt that could be of use for the other projects

A detailed programme will be issued in March 2011.

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 progress (TFWC/2011/3)
- (c) Report of the first workshop held on 10-11 May 2010 in Geneva.

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

V. Practical information

The workshop will start at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 April 2011 and end at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 13 April 2011. It will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The fourth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate will be held on 14 April 2011. 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 **1 March 2011. No application will be accepted after this deadline.** Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to experts providing inputs to the workshop.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is 15 working days since Switzerland is part of the Schengen zone since 2009. **Participants needing a visa**

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

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_climate_adaptation_workshop.html and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat **by 1 April 2011** 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_climate_adaptation_workshop.html
