

**Opening Statement of the Swiss Delegation at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties
to the Water Convention.
Bonn, 20-22 November 2006**

Switzerland would like to thank Germany for hosting the 4th Meeting of the Parties to Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The Water Convention is 10 years old. Congratulations!

The quality of its work could not have been achieved only by Parties and non-Parties. First, I would like to thank Mr. Rainer Enderlein who was always ready to engage on new initiatives, on visionary ventures for the Convention, with a listening quality seldomly seen in other MEAs. I would also give my warm thanks to Ms. Francesca Bernardini for the work she has done all these years at the side of Mr Enderlein. We are mostly impressed by the engaged manner with which she has mastered the challenge of heading the Water Convention.

Switzerland has been promoting the Water Convention at the global level.

At global meetings now, people talk about the CBD, the UNECE Water Convention, the Climate change Convention.

The UNECE Water Convention is a model for other regions in the world. It has an active secretariat, active expert groups and guidelines, studies that provide useful guidance outside the region.

The work of the UNECE Water Convention in Europe has shown the synergies with the EU Water Framework Directive.

We also see the role of the Water Convention as complementary to the EU Water Framework Directive, helping non-EU countries to implement the WFD by giving further tools and providing harmonization across the UNECE region.

We believe that, given that half of the countries of the UNECE region are not Member States of the EU, the role of the Convention in the implementation of integrated water resources management, whether at national or transboundary levels, will be essential for decades to come.