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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Sixth session

Rome, 28–30 November 2012

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its sixth session

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For practical reasons the following documents adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session are being issued in addenda to the present report:

- Programme of work for 2013–2015 (ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.1)
- Decisions and vision for the future of the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2)

I. Introduction

1. The sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held from 28 to 30 November 2012 in Rome, at the invitation of the Government of Italy. The meeting was held back to back with the International Round Table on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean (Rome, 26–27 November 2012).¹

A. Attendance

2. The sixth session was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Convention: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. A representative of the European Commission (EC) represented the European Union (EU), a Party to the Convention. The representative of Italy also made some statements on behalf of the EU and its member States. The European Environment Agency (EEA) and the office of the EU Special Representative for Central Asia were also represented.

3. Delegations from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States not Party to the Convention were also present: Armenia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United States of America.

4. Delegations from the following non-ECE member States took part in the session: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Honduras, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Thailand, Tunisia and Yemen. A representative of Palestine also attended the session.

5. Representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), UN-Water, the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication, the World Bank, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) attended the meeting.

6. Representatives of the African Ministers' Council on Water, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, Forest Europe (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe), the Global Water Partnership (GWP) Secretariat and GWP-Mediterranean, the International Development Law Organization, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Environmental Law Centre, the International Water Assessment Centre

¹ More information on the round table is available from http://www.unece.org/env/water/southmed_roundtable.html.

(IWAC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Scientific Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC-ICWC), the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Sahara and Sahel observatory, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, the International Sava River Basin Commission, the International Scheldt Commission, the Swiss-Italian Commission for Protection of Common Waters and the Lake Chad Basin Commission also attended the meeting. In addition, a delegation of the Mekong River Commission Climate Change Adaptation Initiative attended part of the meeting and a round table on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins held on 27 November, back to back with the meeting.

7. The following Regional Environmental Centres were represented: the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus.

8. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions were present: Black Sea Women's Club; Conservation International; International Environmental Association of River Keepers (ECO-TIRAS); Green Cross International; International Association for Water Law; International Council of Environmental Law; International Federation of Business and Professional Women; International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD); International Office for Water; International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO); MAMA-86; Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development; Azerbaijan National Committee for the International Hydrological Programme; New Vision International; RBM solutions; Rivers Without Boundaries Coalition; Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI); Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI); European ECO-Forum; Union for the Defence of the Aral Sea and Amudarya; Wetlands International; Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF); World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF); and Universities of Bern, Cairo, Dundee and Geneva.

B. Organizational matters

9. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/36.²

10. The session was chaired by Ms. Sibylle Vermont, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties. In accordance with the rules of procedure, parts of the session were chaired by Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Vice-Chair of the Bureau; Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany), Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management; and Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

11. Six lunchtime side events were organized during the session on the following themes:

(a) Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins: future work guided by lessons learned;

(b) The ECE Water Convention and the United Nations Watercourses Convention:³ value, future perspectives and potential synergies;

² Information on the session, including documents, a list of participants, presentations, programmes for side events, can be accessed on a dedicated web page for the meeting at <http://www.unece.org/env/water/mop6.html>.

- (c) EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues: Identifying good practices and lessons learned, shaping ideas for the future;
- (d) How the United Nations system supports transboundary water cooperation;
- (e) Managing transboundary waters together: river, lake and aquifer commissions worldwide;
- (f) Examining the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus: a thematic assessment in transboundary basins.

II. Status of ratification of the Convention and its protocols, and report on credentials

12. The Meeting took note of the report of the officers, which verified that the credentials submitted by the Parties to the Convention were in good order.

13. The secretariat reported on the status of ratification of the Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health and the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (Protocol on Civil Liability), as well as on the status of the amendments to articles 25 and 26 of the Convention. Thirty-eight ECE member States and the EU were Parties to the Convention at the time of the meeting. The Protocol on Water and Health, in force since 4 August 2005, had 25 Parties. The Protocol on Civil Liability had been signed by 24 countries and ratified only by 1. The amendments to articles 25 and 26 had been ratified by 27 Parties and would therefor enter into force on 6 February 2013.

14. Several Parties reported they were in the process of ratifying the amendments to the Convention, namely, Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the EU, Greece, Kazakhstan and Slovakia. The Russian Federation announced that it had recently completed the national process of ratification.

III. Opening ceremony and high-level segment

15. Mr. Rocco Buttiglione, Vice-President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, opened the meeting. Mr. Corrado Clini, Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy, addressed the Meeting of the Parties.

16. A statement by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was read out by ECE Deputy Executive Secretary, Andrey Vasilyev. Subsequently, Mr. Vasilyev addressed the meeting on behalf of ECE.

17. During the session, a special high-level segment was held on 28 and 29 November. On 28 November, it focused on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and its opening to all United Nations Member States. The high-level segment discussed the main achievements of and the remaining challenges for the Convention, as well as views on and expectations for a globalized Convention (see annex). On 29 November 2012, the Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Cooperation in the Field of Protection and Sustainable Development of the Dniester River Basin (Dniester Treaty) was signed by the Minister of Environment of the

³ 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International watercourses.

Republic of Moldova, Mr. Gheorge Salaru, and the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, Mr. Eduard Stavtyskyi.

18. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Welcomed the many statements by Parties, non-Parties and international and non-governmental organizations highlighting the achievements made in the framework of the Convention over past 20 years, as well as the remaining challenges, and agreed to take them into account in its deliberations, in particular in the discussions on the future programme of work;

(b) Emphasized the crucial importance of the opening of the Convention to all United Nations Member States, and welcomed the numerous expressions of interest by non-ECE countries in acceding to the Convention or participating in its activities.

19. Moreover, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Welcomed the signature of the Dniester Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which reaffirmed the importance and effectiveness of the Convention in promoting transboundary cooperation;

(b) Acknowledged that the process leading up to the Treaty had relied on the active involvement of a broad number of actors, including stakeholders from different sectors, civil society, international organizations — in particular ECE, OSCE and UNEP, in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative — and the financial support of Finland and Sweden;

(c) Encouraged Parties to the Convention and partner organizations to provide further support to the evolving Dniester cooperation, as needed;

(d) Also encouraged the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to share their experience in developing and implementing the Treaty with other countries in the ECE region and beyond.

IV. Review of past activities and discussion of future activities in the different areas of work

A. Mechanism to support implementation and compliance

20. The Chair of the Legal Board reported on the Legal Board negotiations in 2010–2012, which had resulted in the draft decision on support to implementation and compliance (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.4), and outlined the distinctive features of the proposed mechanism to support implementation and compliance.

21. The participants commended the Legal Board for the excellent work and welcomed the establishment of the mechanism.

22. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties invited Parties to elect the nine members of the Implementation Committee, and recalled that the Implementation Committee should benefit from a balance of technical, legal and managerial expertise, as well as a fair geographic distribution of its membership.

23. With regard to the possibility of introducing a reporting procedure under the Convention, it was underlined that, prior to taking any decision on that issue, it was important to explore the implications, advantages and possible drawbacks. Participants were in favour of discussing the possibility of introducing a reporting procedure under the Convention in the framework of the programme of work for 2013–2015. They emphasized

that such a procedure should not duplicate the existing reporting obligations, in particular under EU legislation, as well as the regular assessments under the Convention.

24. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted decision VI/1 on support to implementation and compliance (see ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2);

(b) Elected by consensus the following members of the Implementation Committee for a full term — Ms. Vanya Grigorova (Bulgaria), Mr. Kari Kinnunen (Finland), Mr. Stephen McCaffrey (United States of America), Mr. Aliaksandr Stankevich (Belarus), Mr. Ivan Zavadsky (Slovakia) — and the following members for half a term — Mr. Johan Gerrit Lammers (the Netherlands), Mr. Saghit Ibatullin (Kazakhstan), Ms. Anne Schulte-Wülwer-Leidig (Germany) and Mr. Attila Tanzi (Italy);

(c) Considered that the geographical distribution reflected in the first election should not set a precedent for future elections;

(d) Decided to include an activity on “Consideration of the need for reporting under the Convention” in the programme of work for 2013–2015.

B. Support to implementation through capacity-building and assistance on the ground

25. The ECE Regional Adviser on Environment presented the results under the different assistance activities implemented since 2010 to support implementation of the Convention in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Major achievements had included the finalization and signing of the Dniester Treaty and the Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin. Among challenges encountered, a lack of intersectoral cooperation was highlighted. Planned future directions for assistance activities in 2013–2015 were also presented.

26. Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of activities supporting implementation, and stressed the need for strengthening water flow monitoring capacities in the Central Asian countries. Kyrgyzstan expressed its high satisfaction for the work supported by the projects in Central Asia. Azerbaijan and Georgia emphasized their commitment to finalizing a bilateral agreement on the Kura River. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia expressed appreciation for ECE support in the Drin River Basin. GEF reported it was considering financing a project proposed by ECE and UNDP on enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the Chu Talas River Basin.

27. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the importance of capacity-building and assistance projects as crucial tools for supporting implementation of the Convention;

(b) Decided to include such projects in the programme of work for 2013–2015, as an integral part of programme area 1, “Support to implementation and accession”;

(c) Thanked the Regional Adviser for his support, as well as all the donors and partners that had made the implementation of the projects possible;

(d) Called upon Parties, non-Parties and other actors to provide financial and in-kind resources for the implementation of projects on the ground supporting accession to and implementation of the Convention.

C. Transboundary groundwater

28. The Chair of the Legal Board introduced the study on the application of the Convention to groundwater: explicatory recognition of the existing United Nations Economic Commission for Europe language (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2012/3–ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2012/3) and the draft model provisions on transboundary groundwaters (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.5). The study demonstrated the need and provided the basis for the development of the model provisions, which had been mandated by the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Bureau.

29. Many delegations intervened to praise the development of the model provisions on transboundary groundwater as a timely and appropriate step, since the Convention specifically addressed groundwater in its scope. They emphasized the increasing importance of groundwater, in particular in the context of climate change and increasing groundwater use. UNESCO commended the Convention for advancing international law in the area of groundwater and expressed interest in further cooperating with the Convention in that area.

30. In response to the questions concerning the status of the model provisions, the Chair of the Legal Board clarified that they provided exemplary guidance, but did not have a binding character. Their flexible nature provided a basis for more stringent standards, as decided by Parties.

31. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Took note of the study on the application of the Convention to groundwater;
- (b) Adopted decision VI/2 on Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters (see ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2, as well as the Model Provisions contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.5);
- (c) Agreed to include transboundary groundwater management in the programme of work for 2013–2015 as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated in all programme areas.

D. Assessment of the status of transboundary waters

32. The Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment reported on the main activities in the area of monitoring and assessment implemented since 2010, in particular the *Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*,⁴ which had been released at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, 21–23 September 2011).

33. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the Second Assessment and encouraged its use for national and transboundary water management policies and measures.

34. On the basis of a presentation by the secretariat (see ECE/MP.WAT/2012/2), the Meeting of the Parties discussed future action in the area, in particular the proposal to develop a thematically focused special edition of the assessment on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus by 2015.

35. In the ensuing discussions, the need to include ecosystem services in the nexus assessment and the importance of water for food production, in particular in view of

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No E.11.II.E.15. Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=26343&L=0>.

growing population and climate change impacts, were emphasized. It was also underlined that agriculture was a part of the solution to the nexus, as well as land management. Delegations wished for the nexus assessment to provide policy-relevant recommendations. The representative of the UNDP-GEF project on Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin encouraged collaboration with existing transboundary projects.

36. Finland and Switzerland expressed their intention to continue financing the work on assessing transboundary waters, with Finland maintaining a leading role. SEI and SIWI offered jointly to support the nexus assessment preparations. GWP Mediterranean (GWP Med), INBO and UNESCO expressed their willingness to cooperate in the undertaking. Some delegations indicated they were considering proposing a transboundary basin for the thematic assessment, including the Netherlands and SIC-ICWC. The representative of Thailand suggested the Mekong, and the delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo the Chad Basin, as potential candidates for the assessment.

37. The EEA representative, recalling the EEA 2011 Assessment of Assessments, underlined the importance of building the necessary information infrastructure and referred to the Shared Environmental Information System as a useful example. EEA reconfirmed its readiness to collaborate with the Convention in future assessments of transboundary waters.

38. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Expressed its high appreciation for the Second Assessment, and reiterated the importance of regular assessments so as to keep the state of the transboundary water resources in the ECE region — and beyond, as appropriate — under review and for benchmarking progress achieved in implementing the Convention;

(b) Thanked Finland for its leadership and for the substantive and financial support provided for the Second Assessment, and welcomed its future leadership of the area of work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the programme of work for 2013–2015;

(c) Thanked all other donors that had contributed to the Second Assessment — the Governments of Slovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands and Georgia — for the funding provided;

(d) Further thanked all partners, notably the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, the UNEP Global Resource Information Database (UNEP/GRID-Europe), IGRAC and GWP Med, as well as the river basin commissions of the Danube, Elbe, Meuse, Moselle-Saar, Oder, Rhine, Sava and Scheldt Rivers, for their substantive contributions;

(e) Thanked all Parties, non-Parties, including non-ECE countries, and the relevant experts that had contributed information and data;

(f) Took note of the lessons learned from the Second Assessment, and agreed that the third comprehensive assessment would be carried out in six to eight years' time from the Second Assessment;

(g) Endorsed the concept of the thematic assessment with a focus on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, recognizing at the same time the challenges that lay ahead and the need for the involvement of different sectors and diverse expertise;

(h) Invited countries and joint bodies sharing transboundary basins to indicate their interest in participating in the thematic assessment by 31 January 2013;

(i) Decided to create a Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, and entrusted it, in cooperation with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, to prepare the thematic assessment with a view to its publication

prior to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties, and to prepare an analysis for scoping of the third comprehensive assessment and, if applicable, a concept for it;

(j) Invited the active participation and contribution of partners in the Task Force and in the preparation of the nexus assessment, building on the positive lessons from the Second Assessment;

(k) Called upon donors to mobilize the funds needed to support that important area of work.

E. Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, including data management and information exchange

39. A representative of the International Office for Water informed participants about a project implemented in cooperation with IWAC, “Strengthening capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia”, including its results and the lessons learned, as well as progress on the two pilot transboundary basins, the Aral Sea Basin and the Dniester Basin. He underlined the need to reinforce data management capacities in the subregion. In that connection, he recommended the inclusion of a data component in all transboundary water agreements, and the development of regional reference datasets, among others. Several countries expressed their willingness to share experiences acquired through the project.

40. Regarding further work in the field of joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, WMO suggested taking into account the advances being made by the Open Geospatial Consortium in data transfer formats and hydrological feature descriptions.

41. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Commended the International Office for Water and IWAC for the progress achieved in the capacity-building project in the subregion;

(b) Encouraged the lead organizations to share their experiences and lessons learned in the framework of the project;

(c) Thanked the French Global Environment Facility for the support provided.

F. Water and ecosystems

42. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed the progress made by the pilot projects on payments for ecosystem services (PES). Armenia reported on the results of the pilot project on the introduction of PES schemes in the Upper Hrazdan River Basin. The Netherlands announced that the Dutch-German project in the transboundary Vechte River Basin was now entering into the phase of considering the relevance of PES in practice, after an initial phase in which relevant services had been identified. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia reported on the different initiatives to promote PES in Central Asia, especially through capacity-building and networking events in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

43. Switzerland informed participants about the main outcomes of the workshops, “Payments for ecosystem services: what role for a green economy?” (4–5 July 2011) and “Forest and Water in drylands: A Virtuous Cycle — Information exchange from the Mediterranean to Central Asia” (7–8 July 2011), held in Geneva in the framework of the ECE/FAO Forest and Water Week.

44. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reconfirmed the importance of ecosystems in the management of transboundary waters, and the innovative work carried out under the Convention in that area in relation to PES;

(b) Expressed gratitude to Switzerland for its leadership of that area of work;

(c) Agreed that work on water and ecosystems should be a cross-cutting issue to be mainstreamed in the programme of work for 2013–2015 in different programme areas, in particular as an important focus of the water-food-energy nexus assessment.

G. Water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins

45. The Dutch co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate reported on the work achieved in the area since 2010, as well as future planned activities regarding the programme of pilot projects and the platform for exchanging experience on adaptation in transboundary basins (see ECE/MP.WAT/2012/3).

46. The Executive Secretary of the International Sava River Basin Commission presented the progress achieved by the project in the Sava Basin. Lithuania and Belarus reported on the project on river basin management and climate change adaptation in the Neman Basin, stressing the pioneering nature of the project in terms of water quality assessment, cooperation between EU and non-EU countries and the results achieved. The Republic of Moldova informed the Meeting about progress in the Dniester project, and expressed the hope for its continuation. Luxemburg presented Rhine adaptation activities, and in particular the recent study on future scenarios for the Rhine.

47. INBO welcomed the planned creation in cooperation with the Convention of a global network of basins working on adaptation to climate change as an outcome of the Sixth World Water Forum. The results and lessons learned should be presented to the next World Water Forum in 2015. The representative of WMO also expressed appreciation for the positive cooperation with ECE and its willingness to continue it.

48. A representative of the Rivers without Boundaries Coalition presented progress and future plans for the “Dauria going dry” project. A representative of the Russian Federation stressed the importance of work in the Amur region, because of its high vulnerability and variability due to climate change and cyclicality. Moreover, since such a project would present an opportunity for Mongolia and China to be involved, it would contribute to the globalization of the Convention.

49. Azerbaijan expressed interest in a transboundary project on climate change adaptation in the Alazani River in cooperation with Georgia, to be linked to the new UNDP/GEF project on climate change adaptation and floods in Azerbaijan.

50. GWP Med informed participants about its activities in adaptation to climate change, and offered cooperation in the framework of the new GEF project on climate variability in the Mediterranean.

51. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reconfirmed the importance of the work on water and adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context, and expressed appreciation for the work achieved under the Task Force on Water and Climate in 2010–2012, as well as for the progress achieved in the pilot projects;

(b) Thanked the two co-Chairs of the Task Force, the Netherlands and Germany, for their wise leadership of that area of work in 2010–2012, and expressed its appreciation

to the Netherlands and Switzerland for their readiness to co-lead the Task Force during the period 2013–2015;

(c) Also thanked all donors, partners and organizations that had made the implementation of the climate change activities in 2010–2012 possible, in particular Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland;

(d) Decided to include “Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins” as one of the programme areas in the programme of work for 2013–2015, and entrusted the Task Force on Water and Climate, in cooperation with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, to prepare a collection of good practices and lessons learned on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins in time for its publication prior to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties;

(e) Welcomed those basins that had already indicated their interest in joining the programme of pilot projects and the global network of basins working on water and adaptation to climate change in a transboundary context, and invited other interested countries and joint bodies sharing transboundary basins worldwide to do so by 31 January 2013;

(f) Invited Parties and other partners to support the implementation of the activities on water and climate change by providing expertise and financial resources.

H. European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

52. Romania, as Chair of the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) Working Group for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, reported on the progress achieved and planned future activities for 2013–2015 under the EUWI and its National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on IWRM, facilitated by ECE, and on water supply and sanitation, facilitated by OECD. In particular, participants were briefed on the ongoing dialogue processes in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine (see ECE/MP.WAT/2012/4).

53. The EU expressed appreciation for the progress made in the reform of the water sector at national level and welcomed political commitments towards the EUWI NPDs in participating countries. It urged countries to continue their efforts in the NPDs and stressed its commitment to collaborate in the field of water management.

54. The Chair conveyed the message from OECD on its commitment to continued support for the NPDs on water supply and sanitation, as well as the financial and economic aspects of water resources management.

55. Azerbaijan welcomed the assistance the NPD had provided in the incorporation of IWRM principles in national water policies through the development of a national water strategy. Georgia said that, in its NPD, it was working to prepare new water legislation based on IWRM principles, set targets in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health and strengthen cooperation with Azerbaijan on water resources management. Tajikistan explained the role of its NPD in bringing together all the interested sectors in the development of future water policies. Turkmenistan highlighted its NPD focus on strengthening water legislation. The Republic of Moldova noted the contribution of its NPD process to its efforts to improve wastewater treatment, to develop a strategy on adaptation of water supply and wastewater treatment to climate change and to enhance access to water and sanitation and implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health. Kyrgyzstan emphasized the role of its NPD in providing a regular platform for discussing and addressing water issues. Armenia described the work done on economic instruments for water management in the framework of its NPD.

56. With regard to the international level, GWP Med emphasized the importance of exchanging experiences in conducting policy dialogues between the EUWI regions. Estonia expressed its readiness to share its experience on river basin management plans in the framework of the NPDs.

57. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reconfirmed the important role of NPDs in fostering the implementation and application of the Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health, progressive approximation to EU legislation and the enhancement of transboundary cooperation;

(b) Acknowledged the strong commitment to and ownership of the NPD process among countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

(c) Thanked Romania and the European Commission for their leadership and support for this area of work, as well as other partner countries and organizations for their support to the NPD process, and OECD for its strong partnership and effective cooperation;

(d) Agreed to continue with the policy dialogue process on IWRM, and to include relevant activities in the programme of work for 2013–2015;

(e) Welcomed the extrabudgetary contribution from the European Commission for 2012–2015 for the implementation of the NPDs programme;

(f) Invited Parties to the Convention to consider providing additional funding for the activities, including in-kind contributions by experts or other kinds of arrangements for assistance, stressing the high cost-efficiency of the NPDs.

I. Water and industrial accidents

1. Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

58. The Hungarian co-Chair of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents presented the Group's activities, highlighting the challenges it had faced due to the poor participation of experts and encouraging interested water and industrial accidents experts to contribute more actively to the Group's activities. The co-Chair also described the work carried out and the plans to finalize the draft guidelines for contingency planning in the transboundary context.

59. The co-Chair also presented the outcome of the seminar on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sandoz accident (Bonn, Germany, 8–9 November 2011), stressing in particular the continuing risks of accidental pollution of transboundary waters.

60. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents for its work to date, and took note of the presentation by its co-Chair;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to Germany for having organized the seminar on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sandoz accident;

(c) Agreed that the draft guidelines for contingency planning developed by the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents should be presented to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its next meeting in September 2013.

2. Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters

61. The Chief of the Transboundary Cooperation Section of the ECE Environment Division reported on progress in implementing the three-step approach agreed by the Bureaux of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and of the Water Convention to jointly promote the entry into force of the Protocol on Civil Liability. The study commissioned by the secretariat to implement the first step had shown that there was no substantive incompatibility with Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage (Environmental Liability Directive), and that the respective liability regimes were complementary rather than contradictory. The study had also concluded that there was nothing in either EU law or international law that would prevent individual EU member States from ratifying the Protocol.

62. The presenter also noted that the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention, at its seventh meeting (Stockholm, 14–16 November 2012), had taken note of the study and had decided to continue with the implementation of the second step of the agreed approach.

63. The EU representative informed participants that the EU was presently not able to ratify the Protocol due to some complex open issues and the upcoming review of the Environmental Liability Directive. Greece expressed appreciation for the conclusions of the study, and strongly supported proceeding with the implementation of the three-step approach agreed by the two Bureaux.

64. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the consultant's study under step 1 in order to better understand what national legislation was required to implement the Protocol on Civil Liability in the light of the differences between the Protocol and other civil liability instruments;

(b) Agreed to continue with step 2, subject to the availability of funding;

(c) Requested countries to express their interest in being involved in step 2, i.e., case studies based on realistic potential accidents to understand the implications, including the benefits, of implementing the Protocol and/or other instruments.

V. Opening of the Convention

65. The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the International Conference on Europe-Asia Transboundary Water Cooperation (Geneva, 15–16 December 2011) and the International Round Table on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the South-Mediterranean, as well as other efforts to involve non-ECE countries in the Convention's activities and to promote the Convention beyond the region. The recent Round Table had resulted in increased understanding of the provisions and added value of the Water Convention and the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (United Nations Watercourses Convention) and in a request for additional capacity-building activities on transboundary water management by the participating Southern Mediterranean countries. The Chair also reported on the session on the Water Convention during the GEF International Waters Learning and Exchange Resource Network (IW:LEARN) regional workshop for International Waters Projects in Africa, held on 14 November 2012 in Addis Ababa.

66. In the light of the high interest by non-ECE countries in the Water Convention demonstrated at these events, the participants discussed the draft decision on a procedure for simplified accession by non-ECE countries (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.6). The secretariat

reported that, following a request by the Bureau, the United Nations Treaty Section had been asked for advice on the draft decision and had considered additional module A as not legally sound, since the Depositary could not accept the deposit of instruments before the requirements of the amendments were met. The secretariat was requested to distribute the non-paper with the advice from the United Nations Treaty Section.

67. Subsequently, Parties explained their positions with regard to the draft decision. To reconcile the different views, the Meeting of the Parties set up an ad hoc group to revise the draft decision. The ad hoc group successfully revised the decision so that it could be adopted by consensus.

68. Participants also discussed the Convention's relationship to the United Nations Watercourses Convention, which was expected to enter into force soon. In that regard, Finland reported on the side event held on 28 November on the two Conventions, which had concluded that they should be implemented jointly and that a coherent and logical institutional framework should be set up.

69. The secretariat informed participants that the Guide to Implementing the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.2), after its adoption at the last Meeting of the Parties, had been extensively used in capacity-building activities on the Convention within and beyond the ECE region. Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity, the Guide had not yet been printed. It was, however, noted that the Guide was outdated and in some respects misleading in view of the forthcoming global opening of the Convention and the accession by non-ECE countries.

70. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted decision VI/3 on accession by non-ECE countries, as revised during the session (see ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2);

(b) Prompted non-Parties that were in the process of ratifying, accepting or approving the Convention to simultaneously ratify, accept or approve the amendments to articles 25 and 26;

(c) Agreed to include an area of work on "Opening of the Convention outside the ECE region" in the programme of work for 2013–2015, including a sub-item on promoting synergies with the United Nations Watercourses Convention;

(d) Encouraged Parties, especially those that were also Party to the United Nations Watercourses Convention, to continue discussions on how to ensure synergies between the two Conventions, including with regard to the potential future institutional framework of the two Conventions;

(e) Encouraged interested non-ECE countries to participate in activities under the Convention even before its formal opening, and encouraged donors to make available funding for involving non-ECE countries in the Convention's activities;

(f) Requested the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau, to revise the Guide to Implementing the Convention to reflect the Convention's opening to accession by non-ECE Countries and to print the Guide in all United Nations languages, as needed.

VI. Cooperation with the Protocol on Water and Health

71. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health reported on progress achieved in implementing the Protocol's programme of work for 2011–2013 and plans for future activities, as well as on existing and possible future cooperation between the Convention and the Protocol.

72. MAMA-86 reported on the positive results of the project on raising awareness about the Convention and the Protocol and strengthening the role of the civil society in their promotion and implementation. She stressed the important role NGOs could play in supporting the implementation of both instruments.

73. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reiterated the importance of cooperation between the Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health, and expressed appreciation for the past cooperation in the fields of adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins and in the EUWI NPDs;

(b) Decided to further strengthen cooperation between the two instruments, in particular in the areas of climate change adaptation, the thematic assessment on the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus and the EUWI NPDs;

(c) Entrusted the Bureau and its Chair to discuss options for that cooperation in more detail, and invited the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to emphasize such cooperation in the future programme of work for 2014–2016 to be adopted at the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

VII. Cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements and international partners

74. Participants were informed about the process of cooperation and coordination between the chairs of the governing bodies of the ECE environmental conventions and the Committee on Environmental Policy which had resulted, among others, in a common position in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference).

75. GEF reported on its projects in the field of transboundary waters, and highlighted opportunities to strengthen collaboration with the Convention, in particular between the Convention and the GEF IW:LEARN. Italy, on behalf of the Bureau, presented the draft decision on cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.7). Many delegations intervened to strongly support the draft decision. The Meeting also noted the importance of support for the International Waters Focal Area in the negotiations for the next GEF replenishment.

76. UNESCO presented its activities in support of transboundary water cooperation, in particular on groundwater, recalled past cooperation with the Convention — especially in the preparation of the Second Assessment and through its promotion of the Convention's products in Latin America — and expressed the readiness of UNESCO to further cooperate to promote the Convention and its guidelines. The Meeting of the Parties emphasized the importance of the cooperation with UNESCO and its successful results, and supported the relevant draft decision prepared by the Bureau (see ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.8).

77. FAO, INBO and UNCCD also highlighted past joint work and expressed interest in further strengthening cooperation within the future programme of work. The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development conveyed its interest as well.

78. The Chief Technical Adviser for UN-Water presented recent UN-Water activities, in particular in relation to the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation and World Water Day. Together with the Convention secretary, he encouraged delegates to actively contribute to the thematic consultation on water in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda as a decisive means to ensure the needed recognition of the role of water in the post-2015 framework. Face-to-face consultations as part of that process would be held in early 2013 in Switzerland and the Netherlands.

79. The Meeting of the Parties took note of other events planned in 2013 that would play an important role in the debate on the role of water in the post-2015 development agenda and in the future Sustainable Development Goals, namely the High-level International Conference on Water Cooperation to be held in Dushanbe in August 2013 and the Budapest Water Summit to be held in October 2013.

80. The Netherlands shared details of the official World Water Day celebrations to be hosted in The Hague.

81. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Acknowledged that cooperation with partners was a great strength of the work under the Convention, enhancing the quality of products, the impact of actions at the local, national and international level and the effectiveness of activities. Cooperation with partners would become even more important with the future opening of the Convention. Therefore, it decided that such cooperation should continue and be further expanded;

(b) Thanked partners in cooperation for their support to date and invited them to continue cooperating actively in the work under the Convention;

(c) Decided to seek new partners relevant to the activities under the 2013–2015 programme of work, as well as new partners for the globalization of the Convention;

(d) Adopted decision VI/4 on cooperation with the Global Environment Facility, and thanked GEF, and in particular its IW:LEARN programme, for the positive cooperation that had already been established;

(e) Adopted decision VI/5 on cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and thanked UNESCO for the fruitful past cooperation;

(f) Expressed appreciation for the work of UN-Water in strengthening coordination and coherence among United Nations entities dealing with issues related to all aspects of freshwater;

(g) Stressed the importance of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, including the ongoing water consultation, and called upon Parties, non-Parties and partners organization to redouble their efforts to ensure that water would have a prominent, self-standing place in the future Sustainable Development Goals.

VIII. Vision for the future of the Water Convention

82. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the vision for the future of the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.2), presented by the Vice-Chair from Italy, underscoring that it should become one of the key instruments for awareness-raising on and promotion of the Convention worldwide.

83. The European Commission reported on the recently published Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources,⁵ which was very relevant to many activities under the Convention, and also on the adoption of the seventh EU Environmental Action Programme.

84. The Meeting of the Parties:

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources (COM/2012/0673 final).

- (a) Adopted the vision for the future of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;
- (b) Encouraged the bodies under the Convention, focal points and other actors to make use of the vision when discussing and agreeing on future activities to promote and implement the Convention;
- (c) Welcomed the Communication of the European Commission on the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources, and decided to take it into account in future activities under the Convention.

IX. Programme of work for 2013–2015, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation

85. On the basis of the discussions under the other items, the Meeting of the Parties discussed its programme of work for 2013–2015.

86. Several representatives of non-ECE countries confirmed their interest in the future activities. Bangladesh requested guidance and good practices on the creation and functioning of joint bodies. A representative of Colombia said that the country would assess the relevance of and its potential interest in acceding to the Convention, and requested specific capacity-building and information on the Convention for Latin American countries.

87. Morocco and Honduras also expressed interest in the Convention's activities, especially concerning exchange of experience, including sharing their own experience. The Islamic Republic of Iran announced plans for a workshop on transboundary cooperation in early 2013, and invited representatives of Parties and the secretariat to participate and present the Convention. The African Ministers' Council on Water and Palestine also requested capacity-building and technical assistance related to the Convention.

88. Afghanistan welcomed the recently started project on cooperation with Tajikistan, and stressed that its results should be shared with decision makers and that further support and capacity-building on the Convention was needed.

89. GWP Med and ESCWA confirmed their readiness to promote the Convention in the Southern Mediterranean region. Green Cross International also offered to continue its capacity-building on the Convention together with the United Nations Watercourses Convention.

90. The Meeting of the Parties emphasized the importance of ensuring clear links between the work under the NPDs and other programme areas, such as the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus.

91. Regarding the proposed new programme area 3, "Quantifying the benefits of transboundary cooperation", the Meeting of the Parties decided as a first step to develop an approach for identifying, quantifying and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation and subsequently to produce, publish and print a guidance note on that topic. The secretariat was requested to print that guidance note in time for the next session of the Meeting of the Parties. The proposed programme area was considered innovative in many ways, and several countries expressed their interest and willingness to contribute financially.

92. Finally, the Meeting discussed financing of the programme of work. Norway announced it would further support the NPDs, the Implementation Committee and capacity-building activities. Switzerland announced it would financially support work on the

opening of the Convention, quantifying benefits, the nexus assessment and climate change adaptation.

93. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked the Parties and organizations that had provided leadership and support to the activities at the basis for the programme of work for 2013–2015;

(b) Decided not to continue the Capacity for Water Cooperation project, but, instead, to build capacity through thematic workshops within the programme of work;

(c) Adopted the programme of work, the bodies established to implement it and the relevant budget as amended during the session (ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.1);

(d) Conveyed its appreciation to the Parties and organizations that had already expressed their readiness to take a lead role in the implementation of the programme work 2013–2015;

(e) Called on Parties, non-Parties and relevant organizations to actively contribute to the activities in the programme of work, including through financial and in-kind contributions.

X. International Water Assessment Centre

94. The director of IWAC reported on progress made by IWAC since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties. Subsequently, Slovakia announced its decision to terminate its hosting of IWAC by the end of 2012 for financial reasons, while indicating its readiness to facilitate the transition period.

95. Many delegations expressed their appreciation for IWAC work. It was recognized that Slovakia's termination of the hosting of IWAC would affect the programme of work, as it had been foreseen that IWAC would be involved in several programme areas.

96. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reiterated the important role played by IWAC in the implementation of the Convention and its programme of work;

(b) Thanked the Government of Slovakia for having hosted and supported IWAC in 2009–2012, expressed its particular thanks to the director of IWAC and his staff for their dedication, and took note of the decision of the Slovak Government to terminate the hosting of IWAC;

(c) Encouraged other Parties to explore the possibility of supporting IWAC from 2013 and to inform the secretariat;

(d) Entrusted the Bureau with discussing possible future arrangements concerning IWAC.

XI. Election of officers

97. The Meeting of the Parties

(a) Elected its Bureau as follows: Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Chair; Mr. Serik Akhmetov (Kazakhstan), Vice-Chair; Ms. Maria Galambos (Hungary), Vice-Chair; Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany), co-Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management; Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), co-Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management; Mr. Vladimir Ivlev (Russian Federation), member of the Bureau; Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), member of the Bureau; Mr. Philippe

Meunier (France), member of the Bureau; Ms. Dragana Milovanovic (Serbia), member of Bureau; Mr. Rafiq Verdiyev (Azerbaijan), member of the Bureau; Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland), member of the Bureau.

(b) Expressed its great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Ms. Sibylle Vermont, for her wise leadership of the Meeting of the Parties, her tremendous support to the Convention and her personal dedication over the past three years;

(c) Also expressed its appreciation and thanks to the chairs of the bodies under the Convention for their excellent work.

XII. Date and venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

98. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked Italy, in particular the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, for the organization of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties and for the warm hospitality extended to all delegates;

(b) Also thanked the Italian Chamber of Deputies and its staff for hosting the session and for the outstanding support provided in its organization and running;

(c) Welcomed the offer by Hungary to host the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2015.

XIII. Presentation of the main decisions

99. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reviewed and adopted the decisions taken during the session;

(b) Entrusted the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with finalizing the report of its sixth session.

XIV. Closing of the session

100. The outgoing Chair, Ms. Vermont, the newly elected Chair, Mr. Cozzone, and the ECE Deputy Executive Secretary made closing remarks, thanking the host country, the participants, the interpreters and the secretariat for the extremely successful meeting.

Annex

Chair's summary of the high-level segment on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and its opening to all United Nations Member States

A. Introduction

1. The high-level segment discussions were organized in two parts. The first focused on the specific achievements under the Water Convention since its adoption in 1992, the remaining challenges and the prospects for the future, in particular in view of the global opening of the Convention. The second debated views and expectations for the Water Convention in view of its forthcoming globalization. Each part started with a panel discussion, followed by interventions from the floor. The high-level segment was moderated by Mr. Johan Kuylenstierna, Executive Director of SEI, and chaired by Ms. Vermont, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties.

2. The first panel was composed of the following speakers: Mr. Arben Demeti (Albania), Deputy Minister of Environment, Forests and Administration of Waters; Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), Director General of the Finnish Environment Institute; Mr. Peter Kovacs (Hungary), State Secretary for Water, Ministry of Rural Development; Mr. Ahmet Muhammedov (Turkmenistan), Deputy Minister of Water Economy; Ms. Marina Seliverstova (Russian Federation), Head of the Federal Agency for Water Resources; and Mr. Uladzimir Tsalka (Belarus), Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. The second panel was composed of the following speakers: Mr. Mohanad Al-Shaibani (Iraq), Minister of Water Resources; Mr. Alejandro Iza (IUCN), Head of the Environmental Law Programme; Mr. Moncef Rekaya (Tunisia), Director, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Agriculture; Mr. Sujiro Seam (France), Deputy Director of Global Public Goods, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Ramesh Chandra Sen (Bangladesh), Minister of Water; and Mr. Ivan Zavadsky (GEF secretariat), Senior Water Resources Management Specialist.

B. Main messages

3. Water is a common good; we all have responsibility for it. In many of the interventions, the Water Convention was associated with terms such as trust, openness and flexibility, but — most importantly — with stability and peace. The high number of participants in the meeting and the number of interventions in the high-level segment by nearly all Parties, many non-Parties as well as numerous partners was a clear evidence of the important role of the Convention and of the platform for cooperation and exchange that it offers.

4. Participants stressed that in the past 20 years the Water Convention had served as a model for transboundary water cooperation in the pan-European region and also beyond it. It acted as a catalyser for negotiating new and strengthening existing transboundary agreements and institutions, as well as for improving national water management and governance, in line with principles of IWRM. Participants referred to the many transboundary agreements the Convention had fostered, for example, on the Danube, Drin, Chu and Talas Rivers, the bilateral agreements between Kazakhstan and China, Romania and the Republic of Moldova, and many others. Besides countries, also many partner

organizations stated that the legal framework of the Water Convention had supported their work.

5. It was also underlined that the Convention had made a difference even in difficult and conflict-prone subregions. In such situations, capacity-building on the Convention and, in general, on international water law is particularly needed to overcome misperceptions and misinterpretations.

6. Participants highly valued the holistic nature of the Convention, its economic, social and environmental dimensions and its aim to promote IWRM. Different activities under the Convention supported implementing this approach, such as the activities on PES, on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, on water and health and, in the future, the activities on the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus.

7. The institutional framework supporting implementation of the Convention was considered very important. Speakers highly esteemed the platform that the Convention provides for exchanging experiences and knowledge between Parties, non-Parties and other actors and encouraged a continuation of this important role and its expansion at the global level. There was a widespread and avid eagerness from all participants — Parties, non-Parties from within and outside the ECE region and partners — to contribute and exchange their experience in the Convention's framework.

8. Participants emphasized the importance of implementation and that it should continue to be a focus of the work under the Convention. In this respect, they highlighted the value of the different guidance material and field projects under the Convention which helped Parties and non-Parties to implement it and to improve their national water management. For countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the NPDs under the EUWI were considered as especially useful.

9. Moreover, the activities on monitoring and assessment and the regular assessment process had made it possible to keep track of progress in implementing the Convention and to guide its work to ensure that implementation challenges were addressed.

10. Participants also underlined that activities under the Convention had evolved with time to address new challenges, as requested by Parties. For example, the establishment of the Implementation Committee represents a major innovative step forward in international water relations and will help Parties and non-Parties to prevent and address water-related disputes.

11. Participants expressed concern that the growing global population, with increasing wealth and consumption levels, the projected rise of agricultural production and the demands for more primary energy would have far-reaching implications on water resources. Therefore a key challenge for the future was to strengthen intersectoral cooperation and the recognition that equitable and sustainable water management is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The ongoing discussion on the post-2015 development agenda offered a key opportunity to mobilize the needed political attention and international action in this respect. A Sustainable Development Goal on water, with a transboundary component, was called for by some participants.

12. Many speakers also mentioned the growing challenge posed by climate change impacts to transboundary water resources management and to water-related sectors, which made the activities of the Convention to support joint adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins of high and growing relevance. It was also noted that such activities not only increased countries' resilience and capacity to adapt, but also nurtured transboundary cooperation in general and, in some cases like in the Neman Basin, had made it possible to overcome cooperation challenges and bottlenecks. It was also highlighted that the Convention should play a leading role in mobilizing global responses to climate change.

13. Participants from ECE- and non-ECE countries welcomed the entry into force of the amendment opening the Convention to non-ECE countries on 6 February 2013, but urged all those Parties that had not yet done so to ratify the amendments as soon as possible so as to enable non-ECE countries to accede to the Convention rapidly.

14. The globalization of the Convention was considered an important opportunity and a strategic priority for the Convention's future. The many interventions by non-ECE countries in the high-level segment reconfirmed their very high interest in the Convention, its legal and institutional framework and its activities. In this regard, the announcements by Iraq and Tunisia to accede to the Convention when possible were welcome, strong political messages.

15. It was clear that such globalization required stepping up capacity-building activities, and non-ECE countries called for the mobilization of the Convention's Parties and partners to that end.

16. ECE and non-ECE countries clearly wanted to learn from each other's experience and management practices. The opportunities offered by the Convention's globalization in terms of exchange of experience at the global level, learning from each other, matching needs and strengthening political support to transboundary water cooperation were strongly emphasized.

17. Some participants stressed that raising funds for transboundary cooperation in general, and for the Convention in particular, was crucial with the globalization of the Convention, but challenging in times of financial crisis. The Convention thus needed to work with new partners, including development agencies, GEF, international financial institutions, etc. Parties were encouraged to use their political leverage to increase finances for transboundary water cooperation, including on the occasion of the next replenishment at the GEF in 2013.

18. Many speakers also recognized that the Convention's globalization would necessitate even stronger cooperation with many partners such as the EU, relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, the United Nations regional commissions and other multilateral environmental agreements, including those serviced by ECE and river basin commissions. Many organizations — such as the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, the African Ministerial Council on Water and the Southern African Development Community — expressed interest in stronger cooperation with the Convention.

19. Participants stressed the important products and activities of partners which the Convention could and should build upon, such as the newly developed EU Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources.

20. Many participants considered that it was key for the future to clarify the relationship between the Water Convention and the United Nations Watercourses Convention in order to build a coherent and supportive international legal framework. The two Conventions were considered fully compatible, complementary and mutually supportive. They should therefore be seen and implemented together. Their synergies in terms of activities and potential institutional framework should be strengthened. For this, further discussions among Parties were needed.

21. Finally, some speakers highlighted the opportunity provided by the International Year of Water Cooperation in 2013 and called upon the Convention, its Parties, partners and secretariat to play an active role during the year so to strengthen political support to transboundary water cooperation.
