

UNITED NATIONS

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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)  
CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF  
TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES  
Rome, 28-30 November 2012**

*Delivered by Mr. Andrey Vasilyev,  
Deputy Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*

I am pleased to send greetings to this important meeting.

The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has provided an important legal framework for cooperation ever since new borders emerged in Europe in the 1990s. Strengthened basin commissions, new agreements and bodies, and the promotion of integrated water resources management have laid a solid foundation for facing the many challenges ahead.

Population growth, urbanization, increasing demands for food and energy, degraded ecosystems and climate change are straining water resources worldwide. Cooperation on the management of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater is crucial for peace and security, reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, protecting ecosystems and promoting sustainable development.

Soon the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes will become open for accession to all Member States. Your experience and the lessons you have learned will be invaluable. I encourage countries outside the UNECE region to join the Convention and contribute to its further development.

The globalization of the Convention should also go hand-in-hand with the expected entry into force of the United Nations Watercourses Convention. These two instruments are based on the same principles. They complement each other and should be implemented in a coherent manner.

At Rio+20 we agreed to work towards establishing universal sustainable development goals as part of the post-2015 development agenda. Water is an indispensable element. As we approach the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation, I encourage both Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to work for water security for all.

I wish you a successful meeting.