

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE WATER CONVENTION**  
**Astana, 10 October 2018**

It is a pleasure to greet this important meeting.

Transboundary waters not only unite populations across borders, they drive economic prosperity and sustain ecosystems. The benefits can be seen in the ways in which the Water Convention has brought countries together across the pan-European region since its adoption more than 20 years ago, contributing to regional integration and the prevention of conflicts.

At the same time, strains on water are rising. Climate change, pollution and growing demand for water are leading to scarcity and posing the risk of tensions between riparian countries. A recent report by UNECE and UNESCO shows that we are not on track in achieving cooperation on all transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers. This means that countries are less prepared to deal with the looming water crisis and lack the frameworks to prevent water conflicts.

The global opening of the Water Convention, the accession of the first countries from outside the UNECE region -- namely Chad and Senegal -- and the momentum in support of the Convention are promising developments. Along with the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, the world has the ability to strengthen the rule of law in transboundary cooperation worldwide. I call on Member States to join both Conventions and to strive for their full implementation.

Your efforts at this meeting to adopt a strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level, as well as an ambitious work programme until 2021, are laying the basis to realize the full potential of the Water Convention.

Let us work together to ensure that transboundary waters worldwide are managed equitably and sustainably, for the benefit of all. Please accept my best wishes for a successful meeting.