

10th MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON WATER AND CLIMATE

Welcome!

1 May 2019

Salle VII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

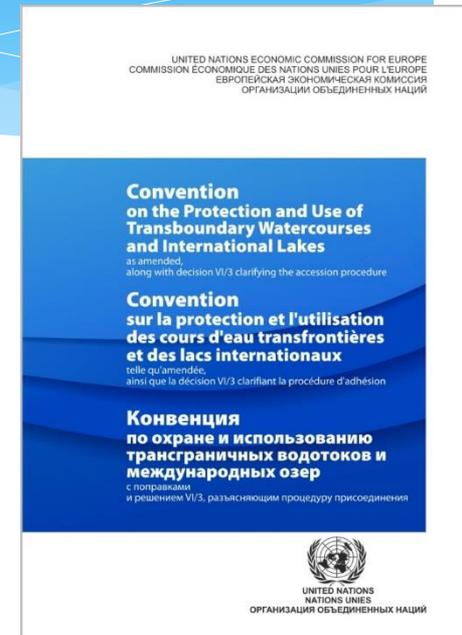


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Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

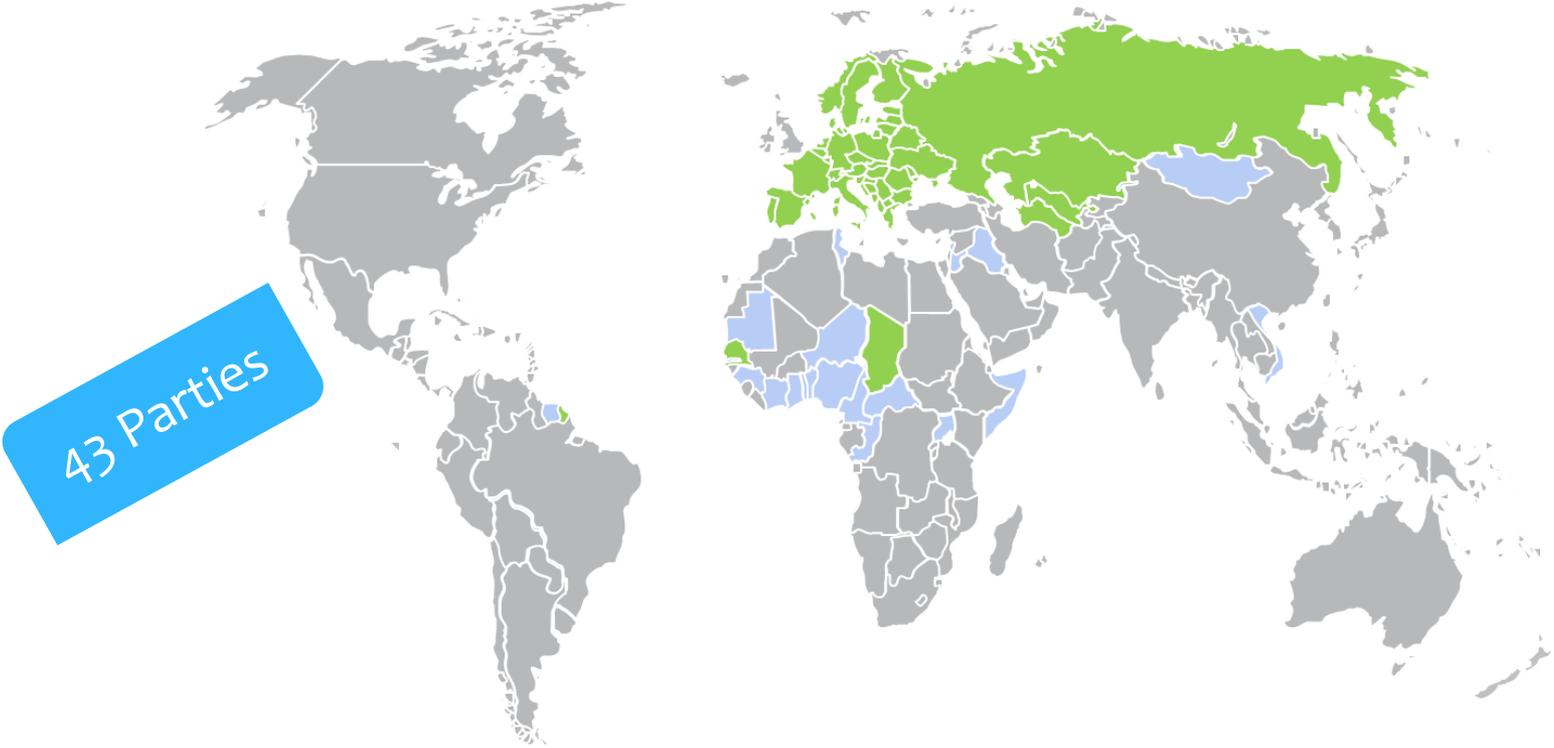
- * Negotiated in 1990-1992 through an intergovernmental process under the auspices of UNECE, largely relying on ILC Draft Articles process
- * Adopted in 1992 (in Helsinki), in force since 1996 -> 20+ years experience in its implementation
- * Amended in 2003 for global opening and since 2016 open for accession for all UN Member States.
- * 43 Parties <110 countries have participated in activities
- * Protocol on Water and Health (in force since 2005); Protocol on Civil Liability 2003 (not in force)



More information available at:
<http://unece.org/env/water>



Evolution of membership of the Water Convention



International water law: collective solutions to shared problems

- * Multiple levels: different solutions for different contexts



Why are global framework Conventions needed?

- * For the continuity and sustainability of cross-border cooperation on the basis of a common language and mutual understanding
- * Support cooperation when it is not established:
 - * Where there is no specific legal and institutional arrangement at the basin level, ie for more than 60% of all basins
 - * Where legal and institutional arrangements at the basin level are weak, eg. Many agreements do not provide for data sharing, dispute resolution provision
 - * When all basin states are not party to the Basin Agreement, ie for more than 80% of basins
- * Promote gradual improvement of cooperation when it is established and strengthen implementation, for example, through a platform to share experiences and good practices
- * Support ≠ replace because basin agreements are to be created and Conventions facilitate negotiations and cooperation
- * Strengthen the profile of 'transboundary waters' at the national and international political level, and foster synergies with other global initiatives, for example for climate change

Purpose, scope and content of the Water Convention

- * Purpose
 - * Foster cooperation over transboundary waters in order to ensure that they are sustainably managed
- * Three key principles of the Convention
 - * Principle of prevention
 - * Principle of equitable and reasonable utilization
 - * Principle of cooperation



A sound legal framework

An active institutional framework

Activities and projects 'on the ground'

The Water Convention:

- * Supports **national water governance, the application of IWRM principles and intersectoral coordination**
- * Guiding principles:
 - * Precautionary principle
 - * Polluter pays principle
 - * Inter-generational equity and sustainability of resource management

Obligations for all Parties (Part 1)

Parties shall take all appropriate measures to **prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact**. This includes:

- * Waste water treatment, licensing of discharges and monitoring of authorized discharges
- * Best environmental practice for non-point pollution sources
- * Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution
- * Protection of groundwaters
- * Application of Environmental Impact Assessment
- * Monitoring and assessment of water resources

The Water Convention:

- * Sets obligations between Riparian Parties

They must establish:

- * Agreements or other arrangements for their transboundary waters
- * Joint bodies / river or lake basin organizations or aquifer organizations

Other provisions:

- * Consultations on planned measures
- * Joint monitoring and assessment
- * Common research and development
- * Exchange of information
- * Warning and alarm systems and mutual assistance
- * Public information
- * Dispute settlement mechanisms



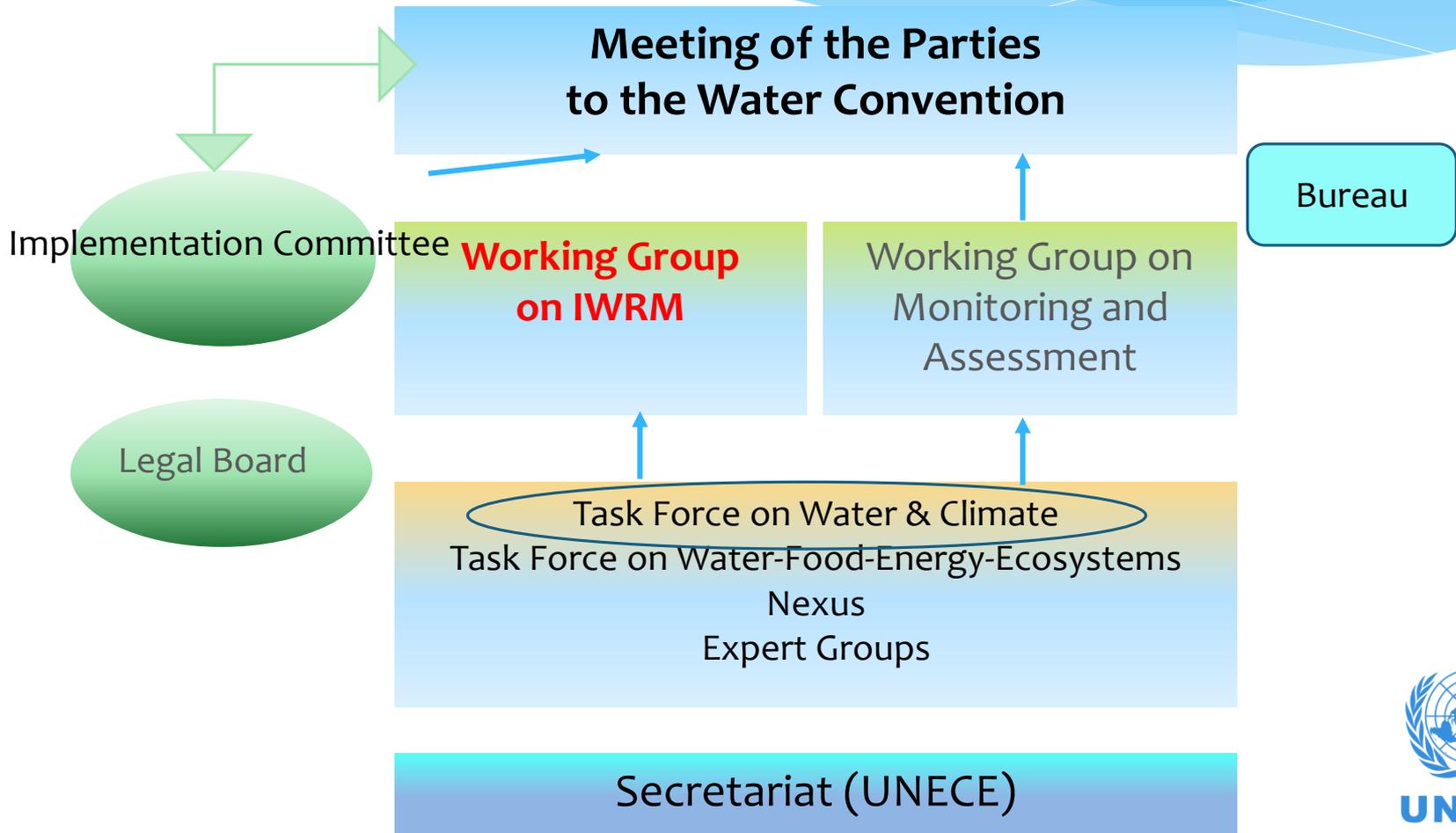
The two global freshwater conventions: similarities and main differences

The Watercourses Convention (1997) and Water Convention (1992) are fully consistent and complementary, based on the same principles of international water law

However, there are some differences:

- * Water Convention covers surface water and both confined and un-confined groundwater. The Watercourses Convention only surface water and connected groundwater
- * The Water Convention specifically obliges riparian parties to enter into joint agreements or other arrangements and joint bodies (institutions), whereas under the Watercourses Convention this is simply encouraged.
- * More detailed procedural requirements under the Water Convention. The Watercourses Convention more detailed on notification, and equitable and reasonable utilization factors
- * Water Convention includes institutional framework (MoP, secretariat, etc). No institutional framework under the Watercourses Convention
- * The difference are a strength, and both instruments can be seen as a fuller package of norms. More detailed provisions in one instrument can inform the other!

The Water Convention: how does it work?



The Task Force on Water and Climate: role and responsibilities

- * A subsidiary body established by the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention in 2006
- * Open for participation to Parties, non-Parties, Non-Governmental Organizations, International Institutions and other stakeholders
- * Led by the Netherlands and Switzerland
- * Task Force is responsible for activities related to adaptation to climate change under the Convention, including flood and drought management.
- * Meets almost yearly to review progress in implementing the activities on water and climate under the Convention and represents a unique global intergovernmental platform on the topic.

Overview Programme of work for 2019-2021

Overall objective: Transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries in accordance with the Water Convention, promoting sustainable development, peace and security

Outcome 1

Countries understand the Convention, accede to it, develop agreements and establish joint bodies

Programme Area 1

Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation

Outcome 2

Transboundary water resources in transboundary basins are monitored and assessed, and information is shared among riparian countries

Programme Area 2

Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins

Outcome 3

Integrated water resources management is implemented at all levels in a changing climate

Programme Area 3

Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels

Programme Area 4

Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

Outcome 4

Transboundary water cooperation is sustainably financed

Programme Area 5

Facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation

Outcome 5

Transboundary water cooperation is monitored and partners are mobilized to support it

Programme Area 6

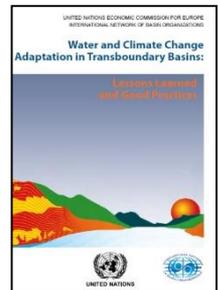
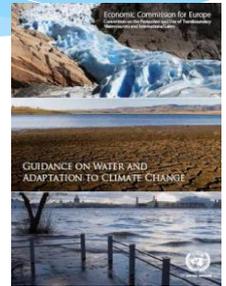
Reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

Programme Area 7

Partnerships, communication and knowledge management

Climate change activities under the Convention: programme area 4

- * Global platform for exchanging experience: annual workshops since 2010, last focused on financing of adaptation, on water scarcity, now on EbA
- * Knowledge hub: Guidance & collection of good practices and lessons learned, Model provisions on transboundary flood management
- * Programme of pilot projects: Dniester, Neman, Chu Talas, Sava
- * Global network of transboundary basins working on climate change with INBO
- * Contribution to global processes: UNFCCC and UNISDR
- * Supporting basins in preparing bankable projects for climate change adaptation



Thank you

- * All presentations will be available at:
- * <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50197>
- * Photographs available at:
- * <https://www.flickr.com/photos/waterconvention/>



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The Water Convention: what is it for?

Objective: Protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation

→ Support to transboundary water cooperation (initially in the pan-European region, now globally) for the sustainability of water resources

1992: Signature

1996: Entry into force

2016: Effectively open for
accession to all UN
Member States

2017: 41 Parties



The Water Convention: what does it require?

3 main pillars

Parties have the obligation to:



Prevent, control
and reduce
transboundary
impacts

Ensure reasonable
and equitable
utilization of
transboundary
waters

Cooperate
through
establishment of
agreements and
joint bodies
responsible for
joint management

Item 7: Future work on climate change in transboundary basins under the Water

Proposed decision: The Task Force

- a) Encouraged countries and organizations to contribute to the ongoing consultation process on the future programme of work, including the ideas raised on water and climate;
- b) Entrusted the chairs to develop a proposal for future work on water and climate under the Convention for consideration by the Bureau.

Questions for discussion in groups

- * Does your country/ basin include water in climate change adaptation activities, such as the climate change communications to UNFCCC, Nationally Determined Contributions, Adaptation Plans, intersectoral groups working on climate change etc.? If yes how? If not , why not? What are the challenges?
- * How to increase importance of water when updating the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2020 and when preparing the adaptation communications?
- * Are you engaged in any regional or basin-wide adaptation activities? Are transboundary climate risks and cooperation opportunities included into your national strategies and plans? If not, what could be done to improve that?
- * At the institutional level, do you cooperate with your climate colleagues? Is there any interministerial working group on climate change in your country?
- * Do you have any other suggestions for mainstreaming water and transboundary climate risks/ cooperation in climate change agenda on the global level?