MANAGING SHARED WATERS:
The Role and Status of the UNWC

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The Role of International Law
Status of the Legal Governance of Transboundary Basins

- 60% of transboundary basins without agreements
- 80% of existing agreements are bilateral
- Many agreements don’t
  - Provide for regular data-sharing
  - Establish water allocation criteria/process
  - Contain dispute prevention/settlement rules
  - Apply to entire river system, etc.
Transboundary Water Resources: A Case for Multi-level Legal Governance

UN Watercourses Convention; ILC Draft Articles on Transboundary Aquifers
Amazon Treaty
Agreements on the Mekong, Congo
National laws incorporating concerns with transboundary waters
Cooperation in border areas between local communities
The UN Watercourses Convention

- Background
- Importance
The UN Watercourses Convention: Goals, objectives and content

“Ensure the utilisation, development, conservation, management and protection of international watercourses and the promotion of the optimal and sustainable utilisation thereof for present and future generations;”

whilst “taking into account the special situation and needs of developing countries.” (Preamble)
The UN Watercourses Convention: Legal Objective

- Codification of customary law
- Clarification of customary law
- Framework for the development of customary law
Voting history and ratification status among Med countries

- **Sponsored/voted in favor of the UNWC’s adoption:** Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Libya, Morocco, Portugal, Syria, Tunisia;

- **Abstained:** Egypt, Israel; **Voted against:** Turkey;

- **Contracting states:** France, Greece, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Portugal, Syria, Tunisia;

- **Countries in the process:** Italy;

- **Other UfM Member States:** *Contracting states* (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Jordan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden); *in the process* (Ireland, UK)
The Global Initiative
Support Tools

- Online Interactive Module
- UNWC Q&A
- Technical UNWC Helpdesk
Fostering dialogue

- **Global meetings**: e.g., World Water Forum, Stockholm World Water Week
- **Regional / basin / national awareness raising workshops and in-depth trainings**
  - Central America, East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Greater Mekong Region
- **Focus of future events**: UNWC implementation = creation of institutional mechanisms + coordination with other key instruments/processes (e.g., UNECE Water Convention, ILC Draft Articles, other global environmental conventions)
Growing Support for the UNWC

Europe

- European Parliament Resolution, 15th March 2012
- France’s commitments at the 6th World Water Forum

Africa

- 6th World Water Forum – Africa Regional Process
- 2011 Bangkok Declaration of African Basin Organizations
- 2011 Bamako Declaration
- 2010 OSU Declaration, IGCC
- 2007 Call for Action on the Ratification of the UN Watercourses Convention by West African States
Thank you!

http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/how_we_work/policy/conventions/water_conventions/