



SUMMARY OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES (WATER CONVENTION): 28-30 NOVEMBER 2012

The sixth Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) met from Wednesday, 28 to Friday, 30 November 2012 at the Chambers of Deputies in Rome, Italy. The meeting was attended by more than 320 people, including parties, non-party states, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). MOP6 addressed many substantive issues related to the work of the Convention, such as: its opening to all members of the UN beyond the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region; support for implementation and compliance; transboundary groundwater; a thematic assessment on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus; water and adaptation to climate change; cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements and international partners; vision for the future of the Water Convention; and the programme of work for 2013–2015.

The MOP adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: support to implementation and compliance, establishing an Implementation Committee; model provisions on transboundary groundwaters; accession by non-ECE countries; cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); vision for the future of the Convention; and the programme of work for 2013-2015, including implementing bodies and the budget.

During the meeting, the signing ceremony of the new bilateral 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, with Gheorghe Salaru, Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova, and Eduard Stavvytskyi, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ukraine.

This report presents a summary of the presentations and discussions during the three days of the meeting, as well as the main decisions taken by MOP6, organized following the agenda items.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WATER CONVENTION

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was adopted in Helsinki, Finland, on 17 March 1992 and entered into force in 1996. There are currently 39 parties to the Convention. The Convention was amended in 2003 to allow accession by all UN Member States. On 8 November 2012 the necessary number of ratifications for the amendments on the opening of the Convention to all UN Member States to enter into force was reached, therefore, the amendments will enter into force on 6 February 2013.

The Water Convention has the objective to strengthen national measures for the protection and sound management of transboundary surface water and groundwater. Under the Convention, parties are required, *inter alia*, to: prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts; use transboundary waters reasonably and equitably; and manage them sustainably. The Convention includes provisions *inter alia*, on monitoring, research and development, consultations, warning systems, mutual assistance and access to information by the public.

There are two protocols to the Convention. The Protocol on Health and Water was adopted in London, the United Kingdom, in 1999 and entered into force in 2005. The Protocol on Health and Water is signed by 36 countries and has been ratified,



A view of the plenary

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acceded, accepted or approved by 25 parties. The Protocol aims to protect human health and wellbeing by better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases.

The Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to the Water Convention and to the 1992 Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accident Convention), was signed in Kiev, Ukraine in 2003, at the Fifth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference as a response to the Baia Mare cyanide spill accident in Romania. It has not yet entered into force. The Civil Liability Protocol provides for a comprehensive regime for civil liability and compensation for damage resulting from transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters.

MOP3: The third session of the MOP was held in Madrid, Spain, from 26 - 28 November 2003. At this meeting, parties decided, *inter alia*, to open up the possibility of acceding to the Convention to countries outside the UNECE region and to focus further work under the Convention on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), where many rivers and lakes that used to be a national concern within the Soviet Union are now shared between sovereign states.

MOP4: The fourth session of the MOP was held from 20 - 22 November 2006, in Bonn, Germany. At this meeting, parties, *inter alia*, adopted the: Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters; new Model provisions on transboundary flood management; Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines, jointly with the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention; and the Recommendations on the Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). MOP4 agreed to develop new pilot projects in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and in EECCA. Parties decided to develop a Strategy for the UNECE region on Water and Climate Adaptation, and the involvement of the Convention in the National Policy Dialogues (NPD) in EECCA countries within the framework of the EU Water Initiative.

MOP5: The fifth session of the MOP took place from 10 - 12 November 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. MOP5, *inter alia*: adopted the Guide to Implementing the Convention and the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change; mandated the Legal Board of the Convention to explore options for a mechanism to support implementation and compliance in view of considering proposals for such mechanism at MOP6; endorsed the Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities; decided on the continuation of the NPD under the EU Water Initiative; and agreed a roadmap to develop the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in UNECE region, to be issued by the Seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe.”

WATER CONVENTION MOP6 REPORT

OPENING SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

On Wednesday 28 November, Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland, Chair of MOP6, opened the meeting and high-level segment, highlighting the city of Rome and its renowned Fountain of Four Rivers as an appropriate venue to promote transboundary water cooperation. Rocco Buttiglione, Vice-President, Chamber of Deputies, on behalf of Gianfranco Fini, President, Chamber of Deputies, Italy, thanked participants for accepting



Rocco Buttiglione, Vice-President, Italian Chamber of Deputies

his government’s invitation to attend MOP6, and welcomed the opening of the Convention to non-Economic Commission for Europe countries. He said water resources are a common good for all people and that, therefore, an international governance system

is needed to manage them.

Corrado Clini, Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, stated his country’s commitment to support the Convention and recognized efficient integrated water resource management (IWRM) as a pillar of sustainable development. Delivering a message on behalf of Ban Ki-moon, UN



Corrado Clini, Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Secretary-General, Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), encouraged countries outside the UNECE region to join the Convention. He stressed that the Water Convention and the UN Convention on Watercourses are complementary to each other and called for coherent implementation. Vasilyev then highlighted key achievements

of the Convention, namely: strengthened implementation and compliance; the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters; adaptation to climate change; national policy dialogues; and projects on the ground. Delegates then adopted the agenda (ECE/MP.WAT/36).

STATUS OF RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS, AND REPORT ON CREDENTIALS

On Wednesday, Chair Vermont introduced the agenda item on status of ratification of the Convention and its protocols, and report on credentials (MOP-6/2012/INF.1/REV). Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to the Convention, UNECE, informed participants the Convention has 39 Parties and that 27 parties have ratified the amendments to Article 25 on ratification, acceptance, approval and accession and Article 26 on entry into force and the amendments will enter into force on 6 February 2013. She observed that this ratification represents a trend of acceleration towards ratification. She also said this meeting included a record participation from parties with only two Parties not represented. On Friday afternoon, the representative of the Credential Committee reported that all credentials were in order.

SPECIAL SESSION ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION AND ITS OPENING TO ALL UN MEMBER STATES: MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES FOR THE CONVENTION

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES FOR THE CONVENTION: On



Sibylle Vermont, Chair of MOP6, Switzerland

Wednesday morning, Chair Vermont introduced this item (MOP-6/2012/INF.2 and MOP-6/2012/INF.3) and the members of the panel for the special session. She highlighted three achievements of the Convention: the Convention as a model for bilateral and multilateral treaties on shared waters; the role of the Convention in driving national water legislation; and the globalization of the

Convention. She recognized that climate change is presenting new challenges for the Convention.

Johan Kuylenstierna, Executive Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), moderated the panel. He said he was inspired by the progress of the Convention.

Lea Kauppi, Director General, Finnish Environment Institute, Finland, said one success of the Convention is its ability to adapt to new conditions, new requirements and emerging challenges, such as climate change. She said the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus represents a global challenge and highlighted the findings of the Second Assessment, which found a lack of integration among these sectors.

Ahmet Muhammedov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Water Economy, Turkmenistan, recognized the Convention's role in improving water management in of Central Asia. He said Turkmenistan is committed to IWRM and looked forward to close cooperation with all parties.

Péter Kovács, State Secretary for Water, Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary, stressed active participation of parties in the Convention and called for a focus on implementation. He welcomed the globalization of the Convention as a milestone.

Uladzimir Tsalka, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, recommended close collaboration with other international agreements, including the

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

Arben Demeti, Deputy Minister of Environment, Forests and Administration of Waters, Albania, said the Convention has inspired national efforts and transboundary cooperation on sustainable water management, in particular in the Drin basin in South-Eastern Europe, and supported immediately opening the Convention with unanimous consent of the MOP. Marina Seliverstova, the Russian Federation, highlighted the Convention as a basic tool for bilateral and multilateral cooperation and for national law and strategies. She welcomed the opening to non-ECE members, noting this will increase the international profile of the Convention, and supported the creation of the Implementation Committee.

Kuylenstierna opened the floor for interventions. Many countries shared their experiences on bilateral and multilateral cooperation and with the implementation of the Convention. France stressed that future work under the Convention should be on: opening the Convention to make it truly global; addressing current difficulties on cooperation on transboundary water issues; and developing an integrated framework for tackling the linkages of water with health, education and science issues. Underscoring the negative impacts of climate change on water resources, the Republic of Moldova called for the development of climate change adaptation policies.

Noting that it was the first country to accede to the Convention, Azerbaijan shared its experience with bilateral collaboration with Georgia on water resources. He said Azerbaijan will achieve all water-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before 2015. Kazakhstan shared its experiences in implementing the Convention and welcomed the Second Assessment. Uzbekistan recognized that the majority of Central Asian countries are parties to the Convention and encouraged all countries around the world to ratify the Convention.

Bulgaria supported opening the Convention to non-ECE countries to expand the application of the principles of IWRM. Serbia said opening the Convention to non-ECE countries represents an opportunity to exchange experiences and good practice on transboundary cooperation. Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed interest in participating in future programmes and activities of the Convention.

The Netherlands welcomed the evolution of the Convention to address emerging challenges, including climate change adaptation. Slovakia called for future work on climate change impacts, including on flood protection and drought strategies. The Czech Republic welcomed the establishment of the Implementation Committee. On addressing future challenges



From L-R: Lea Kauppi, Director General, Finnish Environment Institute (FEI), Finland; Ahmet Muhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy, Turkmenistan; Peter Kovacs, State Secretary for Water, Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary; Uladzimir Tsalka, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus; Arben Demeti, Deputy Minister of Environment, Forests and Administration of Waters, Albania; Marina Seliverstova, Head of the Federal Agency for Water Resources, the Russian Federation

for the Convention, Romania highlighted strengthening capacity building and cooperation, and creating a funding mechanism to support implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

Austria noted the broad support for UNECE activities and the work of the Secretariat, and stressed that future focus should be on making the Convention a platform for an exchange of innovative ideas, such as the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, adaptation to climate change, and tapping into new forms of funding.

Several other parties supported work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, including the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

Germany expressed support for the work of the Convention and its bodies and said opening the Water Convention to non-ECE countries is likely as it is useful worldwide. She highlighted the Implementation Committee as a new challenge.

The EU, on behalf of its Member States, welcomed the Convention's work and recognized the linkages among water and climate change, desertification, disaster management and food security. She said effective institutional settings and good water governance are key to achieving peace and political stability.

Recalling the impacts of floods and droughts in Asian countries, Thailand called for increased cooperation and a further exchange of good practices for water resources management to address people's basic needs for water.

The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea called for more capacity building and support by the Secretariat to explain the provisions of the Convention and promote its implementation. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) called for scaling up and accelerating action towards sustainable water management. Sahara and Sahel Observatory reported on cooperation experience on shared aquifers in northern Africa. He noted his expectation for the opening the Convention to non-ECE countries and for the Convention to mobilize more technical assistance for implementation. The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) shared experiences on water cooperation among the 15 SADC countries and stressed potential mutual learning between UNECE and SADC countries resulting from the opening of the Convention.

Africa Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) drew attention to the engagement of African heads of states and governments on transboundary water issues and supported expanding the scope of the Convention and increasing collaboration with the Secretariat.

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) stressed IWRM as a tool for sustainable water management and offered to collaborate with the Convention on knowledge products, implementation and expanding the Convention's scope. The European Environment Agency (EEA) noted that the Second Assessment filled an existing gap, but that the data and information are neither harmonized nor equally accessible across the region. He stressed that future assessments should be explicitly commissioned by, and produce relevant results for, policy makers. He recommended that the UNECE collaborate in the development of a shared environmental information system that could be used across the region and offered EEA's experience on evaluating the effectiveness of assessments.

The UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia highlighted the creation of the Implementation Committee as an important step towards improving compliance and called for smooth coordination with the UN Watercourses Convention. On future work of the Convention, the Ramsar Convention emphasized the need for recognizing wetlands and other ecosystem services and for integrating the economic accounting of such services.



Mohamad Al-Shaibani, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq

Conservation International supported the expansion of the Convention outside the UNECE region and highlighted the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation as a tool to help develop best practices, noting that the Water Convention is a core partner of the Alliance.

VIEWS ON AND EXPECTATIONS FOR A GLOBALIZED CONVENTION: On Wednesday afternoon, a second high-level panel debated views on and expectations for a globalized Convention. Mohamad Al-Shaibani, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq, said the Convention enhances norms and standards on joint cooperation on water and expressed its intention to accede to the Water Convention as soon as possible. Ramesh Chandra Sen, Minister of Water, Bangladesh, stressed equitable sharing of water from transboundary rivers.

Moncer Rekaya, Tunisia, described a collaborative water resources project with Tunisia and Algeria and also expressed Tunisia's interest in acceding to the Convention.. Seam Sujiro, France, looked forward to the entry into force of the amendments in 2013. He also recognized synergies between the Water Convention and the UN Watercourses Convention, which he said were based on similar principles.

Iraq and Tunisia expressed interest in becoming parties to the Water Convention.

Ivan Zavatsky, Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat, noted the complementarity between the GEF International Waters Focal Area objectives and those of the Convention. He stressed expedited ratification of the amendments on opening of the Convention and consideration of the global environment benefits within the "GEF 2020 Strategy" formulation and the GEF 6th replenishment process.

Alejandro Iza, International Union for the Conservation of Nature emphasized that the opening of the Convention could contribute to promoting legal security. He emphasized the role of water in adapting to climate change and establishing a platform on mobilizing support for action.



Alejandro Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, IUCN

The Ivory Coast supported the opening of the Convention to all countries since water resources are global common goods, and highlighted the need for assistance on water stock assessments and quality standards.

Namibia emphasized the benefit for non-ECE countries of accessing accumulated experience in the Convention on dealing with disputes but stressed the need for harmonization with the UN Watercourse Convention. Nicaragua stressed that water is an essential common good and highlighted the potential of using the Convention as a framework for transboundary water cooperation with neighboring Honduras.

Jordan shared lessons learned from its bilateral agreements with Syria and Israel. Afghanistan said climate change represents a current and future challenge for water resources management. Switzerland noted the synergies between the Water and Watercourses Conventions and called for synergies between the possible future institutional frameworks. He also recognized growing attention to the linkages between water and security.

The EU, on behalf of its Member States, welcomed the opening of the Convention to non-ECE countries. The European Commission reported it has begun work on a proposal for ratification of the amendment of the Convention. Iran stressed the importance of capacity development at the institutional level.

Uzbekistan said the Convention should focus its work on, *inter alia*, access to sustainable drinking water, addressing disaster impacts and hydrological monitoring. Palestine asked how it could benefit from the Convention in terms of capacity building and technical assistance.

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) said opening the Convention to non-ECE countries will facilitate synergies and lessons learned from other sectors and other conventions. The European EcoForum stressed implementation and synergies with other conventions.

The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe suggested further integrating water management with other sectors, such as navigation.

The Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus described its role in producing national and regional roadmaps on integrated management of transboundary river basins.

Chair Vermont summarized the session, stressing, *inter alia*, that many felt the Convention is a model for transboundary water agreements and a catalyst for improved water legislation. She suggested that participants take the opportunity of this meeting to discuss what they would like to see included in a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on water.

This completed the high-level segment.



Riccardo Migliori, OSCE

SIGNING CEREMONY OF 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

On Thursday afternoon, Chair Vermont welcomed participants to the signing ceremony of the Dniester River Basin Treaty between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. She said the Treaty illustrates that the Convention serves as a framework for developing specific agreements and also helps interested countries to develop such agreements. Chair Vermont said she believes the Treaty will become a model for future basin agreements in EECCA.

Gheorghe Salaru, Minister of Environment, the Republic of Moldova, said the Dniester River is the ninth largest river in Europe and provides water for 10 million people in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. He hoped the Treaty would result in environmental improvement through sustainable use while also supporting present and future generations. He expressed his gratitude to the UNECE, OSCE and UNEP, as well as NGOs for their support.

Eduard Stavvtskiy, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ukraine, emphasized the importance of this bilateral agreement, the first river basin management in the post-Soviet area, for the populations and the hydrological resources, and urged other countries to follow the example of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. He wished the Republic of Moldova a successful implementation of the Treaty.

Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE, congratulated the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on what he described as a historic event. He recognized the role of NGOs in supporting the development of the Treaty, stressing the openness and transparency of the process. He also expressed gratitude to Finland and Sweden as the main donors.

Riccardo Migliori, President, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said the Treaty serves as an example of good practice on transboundary cooperation and sustainable management, including on awareness raising.

Sweden, Azerbaijan, Germany, Finland, Austria, Belarus, Romania, the Russian Federation, AMCOW, Afghanistan and the Ramsar Convention congratulated the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on the Treaty. Finland said the Treaty establishes many areas of cooperation, including on monitoring, reducing



Eduard Stavvtskiy, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ukraine and Gheorghe Salaru, Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova

climate change vulnerability and protecting aquatic ecosystems. The Ramsar Convention stressed the importance of stakeholder participation from the start of the process.

Azerbaijan expressed hope that Azerbaijan and Georgia would sign a similar agreement. Belarus hoped it would sign an agreement with Ukraine and the Russian Federation in the future. Romania expressed its interest in exchanging experiences with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine under its bilateral agreements.

Chair Vermont encouraged parties and non-parties to use the Treaty as an example of good cooperation and wished the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine success in implementing their obligations under the Treaty.

REVIEW OF PAST ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES IN THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF WORK

From Wednesday afternoon to Friday afternoon, in a general segment, delegates addressed the remaining agenda items and agreed on decisions, as orally presented by the MOP6 Chair, at the end of the discussion for each item. On Friday afternoon, delegates reviewed and adopted the decisions taken during the meeting.

MECHANISM TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE: This item was discussed on Thursday morning and Friday afternoon. Thursday morning, Attila Tanzi, Chair of the Convention's Legal Board, Italy, presented the mechanism to support implementation and compliance (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.4). He explained that MOP5 mandated the Legal Board to develop a proposal on facilitating implementation and compliance. He said the Legal Board produced a draft set of rules for the establishment and functioning of such a body, including core rules of procedure, so that the body could start work as soon as possible. He described the main features of the proposal as contained in Appendix 1 and 2 of the document, *inter alia*: nature and principles of the body; membership; and the Implementation Committee, power attributed to the Committee and its overarching facilitative role.

The Netherlands, the Russian Federation and Switzerland welcomed the development of the mechanism. The EU, on behalf of its Member States, welcomed the establishment of the Implementation Committee to support implementation and compliance with the Convention and said it should do so in a non-confrontational, transparent and cooperative manner. She said membership criteria should include personal skills and expertise, a balance between legal and technical experience, geographical distribution and gender balance. Switzerland said the committee should include legal and water managers and experts and individuals with monitoring experience.

Chair Vermont then introduced the discussion on the election of the members of the Implementation Committee (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/INF.4), reminding delegates that there were 15 candidates for 9 members and asked delegates to engage in bilateral discussions on membership. Azerbaijan withdrew its candidate, preferring that he continue his work as a member of the Bureau. Uzbekistan expressed preference for a Central Asian representative. Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Belarus each suggested a representative from their country.

Chair Vermont then introduced the discussion on a reporting mechanism under the Convention. Austria, supported by Germany and Luxembourg, backed reporting requirements in line with existing EU obligations. Switzerland supported a reporting mechanism as long as resources are available for

this activity. The Russian Federation said existing mechanisms and formats were sufficient and cautioned that the reporting proposal could result in duplication of work and unnecessary expenditure.

Francesca Bernardini, UNECE, clarified that the proposal for future work was to discuss and agree on what a reporting mechanism would look like, noting that it should help country implementation and not duplicate efforts. She said the assessment focuses on status not implementation.

On Friday afternoon, Chair Vermont opened the discussion on the election of the members of the Implementation Committee. She thanked delegates for their goodwill in the process.

Delegates elected the following members, by consensus: Vanya Grigorova, Bulgaria; Kari Kinnunen, Finland; Stephen McCaffrey, the US; Aliaksander Stankevich, Belarus; and Ivan Zavadsky, Slovakia for a full term and Johan Gerrit Lammers, the Netherlands; Anne Schulte-Wulwer Leidig, Germany;



Ivan Zavadsky, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist, GEF Secretariat

Attila Tanzi, Italy; and Saghit Ibatullin, Kazakstahn, for half a term. Delegates then adopted the decision on support to implementation and compliance.

Final Decision: In the decision, the MOP, *inter alia*: establishes the Implementation Committee with the aim to facilitate, promote and safeguard the implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention; and encourages

parties and non-parties to make use of the established mechanism which is to be simple, non-confrontational, non-adversarial, transparent, supportive and cooperative in nature, thereby facilitating the implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention. The MOP also decided to include an activity on "Consideration of the need for reporting under the Convention" in the programme of work for 2013-2015.

SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH CAPACITY-BUILDING AND ASSISTANCE ON THE GROUND: This item was discussed on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning and delegates adopted the final



Bo Libert, Regional Adviser, Environment Division, UNECE

decision on Friday afternoon. On Wednesday afternoon, Bo Libert, Regional Adviser, UNECE Secretariat, presented projects on the ground and activities on capacity-building implemented in the past three years to support implementation of the Convention in SEE and EECCA. He highlighted, *inter alia*, the development of agreements and cooperation frameworks, water quality and dam safety cooperation and international water law in Central Asia.

He mentioned achievements such as the finalization of the Dniester River Treaty, and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Drin River Basin, and challenges such as lack of intersectoral cooperation with regard to water

management. He called on all interested participants to contribute to future areas of work including continuation of the activities above and implementation of the new Dniester Treaty and the MoU for the Drin River Basin.

Uzbekistan emphasized the need for implementation of the proposed support activities, and Kyrgyzstan expressed satisfaction for the work of the UNECE in support of their activities.

On Thursday morning, the MOP resumed discussions on this agenda item. Azerbaijan and Georgia described a draft bilateral agreement on IWRM of the Kura River. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia highlighted UNECE assistance in developing a Memorandum of Understanding and action plan among the five countries sharing the Drin River basin.

The GEF reported that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have submitted letters of endorsement for a project, "Enabling transboundary cooperation and IWRM in the Chu Talas river basin" and said the GEF is in the process of moving forward on this project.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on this item.

Final Decision: In the decision, the MOP, *inter alia*: decides to include capacity-building and assistance projects in the programme of work for 2013-2015 as an integral part of programme area "Support to implementation and accession."

TRANSBOUNDARY GROUNDWATER: This item was discussed on Thursday morning and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday morning, Chair Vermont introduced the agenda item on transboundary groundwater (ECE/MP.WAT.WG.1/2012/3-ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2012/3 and ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.5), saying that MOP5 recognized a need to pay more attention to groundwater and mandated the Convention's Legal Board and Working Group on IWRM to prepare a preliminary study.

Attila Tanzi, Italy, presented the study, which he described as a joint venture between water experts and lawyers. He said the group examined the state cooperation on transboundary groundwater in the UNECE region. On the basis of the study's findings, which showed general gaps in cooperation on transboundary groundwaters, the two Convention's bodies had considered a range of options, from producing a draft model agreement, a draft protocol or draft rules. He said the group of water experts and lawyers considered a range of options, from producing an executive report, a draft model agreement, a draft protocol or draft rules. The group then decided to develop nine draft model provisions on transboundary waters, each of which is accompanied by an introduction and commentary.

Greece, Switzerland and Belarus supported the adoption of the model provisions. Germany recognized the Convention's coverage of both surface water and groundwater as a strength and said the model provisions are helpful as a basis for more specific bilateral or multilateral discussions. The UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

congratulated the UNECE for its efforts and particularly supported the integration of aquifers and groundwater in the Convention.

The Netherlands said it was not convinced of the necessity of rules. Attila Tanzi, Italy, responded that the study further elaborated guidance on groundwater for the implementation of the Convention. Chair Vermont reminded delegates that the group had undertaken its work following a request from the Bureau to the Legal Board and WG on IWRM, endorsed by both bodies. Noting that the Second Assessment had noted difficulties in assessing transboundary groundwater and locations where agreements were missing, she said the model provisions aimed to raise the profile of cooperation on groundwaters.

Bangladesh observed that quantifying the amount and extent of groundwater is complex and suggested a transboundary aquifer convention. Attila Tanzi, Italy, responded that the Convention covers groundwater and said the model provisions aim to provide exemplary guidance to countries interested in negotiating specific agreements.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on groundwater.

Final Decision: In the decision, the MOP, *inter alia*: adopts the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters and their commentary; invites Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to use these Model Provisions when entering into or reviewing bilateral or multilateral agreements or arrangements on transboundary groundwaters; requests the Secretariat to publish the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters and disseminate them as widely as possible; and agrees to include transboundary groundwater management in the programme of work for 2013-2015 as a cross-cutting issue in all areas.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF

TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS: This item was discussed on Thursday morning and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday morning, Lea Kauppi, Finland, Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, presented the main findings of and lessons learned from the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in UNECE region (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/2, ECE/MP.WAT/33 and 34), launched at the Seventh Environment for Europe ministerial conference held in Astana, Kazakhstan in September 2011. She noted that the Second Assessment's main achievements are that it provides a comprehensive, up to date overview of the status of transboundary resources in the region, with more than 150 transboundary rivers and 25 lakes and 200 transboundary groundwaters, and that it serves to inform and stimulate action by different actors. She emphasized the capacity building role of the Second Assessment's process, and the importance of strategic partnerships, intersectoral coordination and focused information collection. She urged participants to make use of the Assessment.

Francesca Bernardini, UNECE, thanked Finland and the other donors who provided support to the Second Assessment. Germany said the Second Assessment was an important multi-stakeholder process and stressed that the water- food-energy-ecosystem nexus was an ambitious but worthy programme. GWP considered the Second Assessment as a reference document and suggested broadening the scope of future assessments to look at other sectors affecting the water sector.

Annukka Lipponen, UNECE, noted that a third comprehensive assessment will only be conducted in eight to ten years, she said that a "special edition" assessment is



Attila Tanzi, University of Bologna, Italy and Chair of the Convention's Legal Board

proposed for 2015, which will focus on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. She outlined the next steps and timeline for the special assessment, noting: the establishment of a task force; a call for interested countries to suggest representative basins by end of January 2013; an expert workshop on 8-9 April 2013 to refine the methodology; the pilot basin testing of the methodology; the basin level assessment during 2013-2014; and synthesis and publication of the assessment in 2015.

Germany said it hoped to actively participate in the task force. Hungary expressed its willingness to participate in the process and, with Sweden and others, thanked Finland, for leading the activity. Sweden urged implementation of the recommendations in the Assessment.

Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the SEI supported the thematic focus on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. Switzerland and Sweden emphasized the need to include ecosystem services within the nexus.

Switzerland said it will continue providing financial assistance for the assessments. Finland said it was trying to negotiate funding possibilities for the assessment. The Russian Federation said experience gained in producing the Second Assessment should be used to organize the work of the next report. Azerbaijan called for building on existing work.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the GWP, UNESCO, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the EAA and Wetlands International offered to collaborate on future assessments. WMO suggested developing techniques to enable real time assessment of water availability in terms of climate variability and change and linking to the global framework for climate services. The UN Development Programme (UNDP), on behalf of the UNDP-GEF project on Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kurus Aras River Basin, encouraged collaboration with existing transboundary projects. The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) expressed interest in collaborating with the UNECE on the creation and strengthening of international commissions and transboundary water organization bodies.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on assessment of transboundary waters.

Final Decision: In the decision, the MOP noted the lessons learned from the preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters and the proposals concerning future assessments of transboundary waters under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/2). The MOP, *inter alia*: endorses the concept of the thematic assessment with a focus on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus; and decides to create a Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, entrusted to prepare, in cooperation with the Working Group on IWRM, the assessment to be submitted to MOP7, and an analysis for scoping the third comprehensive assessment.

JOINT MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS, INCLUDING DATA MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE:

This item was discussed on Thursday morning and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday morning, Paul Haener, International Office for Water (OIEAU), France, presented the project "Capacity building in data administration for assessing transboundary water resources in the EECCA countries," funded by the French GEF highlighting its diagnostic component and the pilot activities in two pilot basins, the Aral Sea and the Dniester River basins.



Joost Jacobus Buntsma, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate, the Netherlands

He recommended that future work under the project should include: incorporating a data component in all transboundary water management agreements and action plans; developing regional reference data sets; supporting countries to develop their own national water information systems; and developing training programmes on data management.

WMO suggested taking into account the advances being made by the Open Geospatial Consortium in data transfer formats and hydrological feature descriptions. Tajikistan expressed its willingness to share experiences acquired through the project.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on this issue.

Final Decision: The MOP: commended the OIEAU and the International Water Assessment Center (IWAC) for the progress achieved; encouraged the project leading organizations to share experiences and lessons learned in the framework of the project; and thanked the French GEF for the support provided.

WATER AND ECOSYSTEMS: This item was discussed on Friday morning and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Friday morning, Chair Vermont opened this item, inviting progress reports on the pilot projects on payments for ecosystem services (PES). Armenia reported on the process to develop fees and changes in legislation, both based on the polluter pays principle.

The Netherlands, also on behalf of Germany, said the Vechte River pilot project aims to develop a realistic system for PES. Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, highlighted awareness raising, capacity building and involvement of the business sector as key elements of the PES project in his region, the results of which focused on forest and pasture ecosystems.

Chair Vermont, reporting on a seminar on forests and water in drylands, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 2011, stressed that dryland forests support large human populations, forests and water must be integrated at the landscape level, and policies in these sectors should not be developed in isolation from other policies, such as climate change. UNCCD expressed interest in closer collaboration with the Convention on PES and referred to ongoing work on the economics of land degradation. FAO stressed the complexity of the relationships between forests and water and emphasized that policies and decisions in this area must be based on sound data and good water accounting procedures.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on this issue.



Sonja Koeppel, UNECE Secretariat

Final Decision: The MOP *inter alia*, agrees that work on water and ecosystems should be mainstreamed across different areas in the programme of work for 2012-2015 and be an important focus of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus.

WATER AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS: This item was discussed on Thursday afternoon and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday afternoon, Heide Jekel, Germany, Chair of the Working Group on IWRM, introduced the item on lessons learned and future work on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/3). Joost Jacobus Buntsma, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate, the Netherlands, presented the work done in this area since 2010, emphasizing the recognition of the need for transboundary cooperation and of the Convention's provisions as a sound framework for work in climate change adaptation. He highlighted the exchange platform, with the organization of three international workshops and the pilot project programme, which focuses on impact and vulnerability assessments and development of adaptation strategies in eight river basins, as key activities for the implementation of the "Guidance on water and adaptation to climate change," adopted by MOP 5 in 2009. He outlined future work for the Convention as, *inter alia*: scaling up the network of pilot basins to a global network of basins; continuation of the platform for exchanging experiences on water and climate change, with a workshop planned for June 2013; and continuation of the pilot projects.

International Sava Basin River Commission, Lithuania, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, Rivers Without Boundaries, Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation, and Luxembourg shared their experiences with the pilot projects in the Sava, Neman, Dniester, Dauria and Rhine River Basins. INBO supported the global platform for information sharing noting the positive

reaction on several non-ECE countries. The GWP-Mediterranean highlighted the Water, Climate and Development Programme in Africa and its cooperation with GEF on climate variability. WMO stated its interest in continued

collaboration with UNECE on this issue. Switzerland informed they will replace Germany as Co-Chair of the Task Force in the next triennium.

Sonja Koeppel, UNECE, reported on the expanded partnership of the Convention with the UNFCCC Secretariat, in particular in the framework of the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP), and urged countries to further build on synergies among the two conventions.

On Friday afternoon, delegates agreed on the proposals contained in document "Lessons learned and future work on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins" (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/3).

Final Decision: The MOP, *inter alia*: decides to include "Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins" as one of the areas in the programme of work for 2013-2015; and invite countries and joint bodies sharing basins worldwide to indicate their interest in joining the programme by 31 January 2013.

EUROPEAN UNION WATER INITIATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES: This item was discussed on Thursday afternoon and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday afternoon, IWRM Working Group Chair Jekel introduced the report on implementation of the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on IWRM and on Water Supply and Sanitation (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/4).

Ana Drapa, Romania, presented on the NPDs. She said NPDs have addressed, *inter alia*: strengthening water legislation; drinking water quality; transboundary water cooperation; adaptation to climate change; and the economic and financial dimension of IWRM. She said NPDs on water supply and sanitation aim to incorporate financial realism in water strategies and investment plans and to revise water policy prices. Laurence Argimon-Pistre, EU Ambassador to FAO, welcomed achievements and political commitments towards the NPDs. She urged countries to continue their efforts on the NPDs and stressed the EU's commitment to collaborate in the field of water management. Chair Jekel conveyed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s commitment to continued NPD support.

Azerbaijan said it is incorporating IWRM into its work, particularly in the social and industrial sectors, and plans to draft a plan for the long-term incorporation of IWRM. Georgia said its NPD includes components on, *inter alia*, preparing new water legislation based on IWRM principles, setting targets in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health, and strengthening cooperation with Azerbaijan on water resources management. He noted the NPDs create a platform for dialogue among government, NGOs and private companies. Tajikistan explained it invites participation from all interested sectors in its NPDs. He said future work in the NPDs will address legal and administrative frameworks and joint activities. Turkmenistan highlighted its NPD focus on improving water legislation and water resources management principles. The Republic of Moldova described its NPDs, noting its efforts on, *inter alia*: waste water treatment plants, strategies on adaptation of water supply and treatment and on climate change adaptation, policies on access to water and sanitation and implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health.



Heide Jekel, Germany



Peter Kovacs, Hungary

Estonia shared its experience on river basin management plans. Kyrgyzstan said the NPDs have become a traditional mechanism for discussing and addressing water issues. Armenia described its work on, *inter alia*, a rural water distribution strategy, IWRM and a model of water resources affected by climate change.

The GWP emphasized the importance of synergies and exchanging experiences. Switzerland thanked the organizations engaged in the NPDs and congratulated countries on their achievements. Finland prioritized the promotion of NPDs and expressed willingness to contribute to such work in the future. Bo Libert, UNECE Secretariat, stressed cooperation and sharing of information to strengthen work with relevant ongoing projects and sharing of information to strengthen future work.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted a decision on the issue.

Final Decision: The MOP, *inter alia*: reconfirms 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; and agrees to continue with the IWRM policy dialogue process, and to include relevant activities in the programme of work for 2013–2015.

WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS: This item was discussed on Friday morning and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Friday morning, Chair Vermont introduced the agenda item on water and industrial accidents (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/5 and ECE/CP.TEIA/2012/7).

Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group: Peter Kovacs presented the activities of the Joint Expert Group (JEG), *inter alia*: producing guiding documents on good practices and recommendations related to pipeline safety and tailing management. He said more active participation is needed in the JEG. He also described the ongoing work to develop guidelines/checklist on contingency plans and the seminar organized on the occasion of the 25th anniversary, in



Sergiusz Ludwiczak, UNECE

November 2011 of the Sandoz chemical spill accident. Germany appreciated the report and highlighted the Sandoz Seminar as a good platform to exchange views.

Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (Civil Liability Protocol): Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Deputy Director, Environment Division, UNECE, presented the Civil Liability Protocol and highlighted the three-step approach to assist countries, particularly economies in transition, to ratify the Protocol: improving understanding of the national legislation required to implement the Protocol and the differences between the Protocol and other civil liability instruments; carrying out case studies, based on realistic potential accidents, to understand the benefits of implementing the Protocol; identifying and recommending actions to enable the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to implement the Protocol.

Ludwiczak highlighted that the study carried out under the first step found, *inter alia*, that there is no substantive incompatibility between the liability rules laid down in the Environmental Liability Directive and those set out in the Protocol and that, although the EU is not intending to ratify the Protocol, there is nothing that would prevent individual EU member states from ratifying it. He finally noted that Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) at its last Conference of the Parties in November 2012, decided to take note of the study and to continue with the second step.

The EU stated it is not in a position to ratify the Protocol as some complex issues still need to be addressed, but that it will revisit the issue in the context of the upcoming review of the Environmental Liability Directive. She suggested that MOP6 decision language on the Water Convention Programme of Work be aligned to the decision on the Protocol taken by the Industrial Accidents Convention COP. Greece expressed appreciation for the conclusions of the study.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted decisions on water and industrial accidents.

Final Decision: On the JEG, the MOP, *inter alia*: agrees that the draft guidelines/checklist for contingency planning developed by the JEG should be presented to the IWRM Working Group at its next meeting in September 2013. On the Civil Liability Protocol, the MOP: agreed to continue with the second step, subject to availability of funds; and requests countries to express their interest in carrying out the second step, which involves case studies on potential accidents.

OPENING OF THE CONVENTION

This item was discussed on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Wednesday afternoon, in the general segment, Chair Vermont introduced this item (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.6; ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.1; MOP-6/2012/INF.7; ECE/MP.WAT/14; ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.2; ECE/MP.WAT/29; and Information document “Report on the International conference on Europe-Asia transboundary water cooperation”), saying that the discussion should be based on the UN Charter principle of sovereign equality of all UN members.

Sonja Koeppel, UNECE, presented the report on the international conference on transboundary water cooperation in Europe-Asia, highlighting the participation of high-level country representatives, and lessons learned, *inter alia*: sharing experience and capacity building outside the UNECE region; linkages with the UN Watercourses Convention; and establishing partnerships with other organizations and governments.

Chair Vermont informed the MOP about the second Africa-Targeted Workshop for GEF International Waters Projects, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2012, which focused on, *inter alia*, increasing awareness and understanding of the Water Convention and its work in Africa.

GWP-Mediterranean reported on the International Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean, held from 26-27 November 2012 in Rome, Italy, saying it successfully addressed the linkages of the Convention with the UN Watercourses Convention and other instruments such as the emerging convention for shared water resources in the Arab region and the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. He said participants emphasized the need to involve a wide range of stakeholders to support transboundary water cooperation, including parliamentarians, and had expressed general interest in the Convention and in being involved in its activities.

Chair Vermont asked parties which had not yet ratified the amendments to Articles 25 and 26 on the opening of the Convention to report on their progress towards ratification. Greece ensured that her country will ratify the amendment by the closure of 2013. Chair Vermont informed that Slovenia, not present at MOP6, had reported it will be able to ratify the amendment by end of 2013 and noted interest from countries beyond the ECE to accede to the Water Convention and participate in its activities, including Iraq, Iran, Tunisia, Namibia, Nicaragua and SADC.

Francesca Bernardini, UNECE, presented the draft decision on simplifying the procedure for accession of non-ECE countries (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.6), including the informal advice by the Treaty Section of the UN Office of Legal Affairs (UNLOA) (MOP-6/2012/INF.7). She noted the draft decision was prepared by the Convention Bureau, following a revision process involving the Convention Legal Board and parties. She stated that the draft decision addressed the need for simplification of the approval by the MOP and the timeline for the procedure for accession by non-ECE countries, and clarified that, with its adoption, any future requests for accession would be considered as approved. She highlighted the two modules regarding the timeline for accession, namely granting a provisional party status until the amendment enters into force for all Parties which adopted it in 2003 or immediate accession through unanimous consent by the MOP as of February 2013, and the Treaty Section's conclusion that both modules are not viable but similar objectives could be reached through other legal approaches.. She noted the Section Treaty had also prepared a non-paper with suggested language for the draft decision to achieve the objectives of the two modules.

The EU, on behalf of its Member States, encouraged all parties to ratify the amendments and supported the ex-ante approval to facilitate the opening of the Convention once the conditions for entry into force and applicability of the amendments are met. The Netherlands supported finding a legal solution for the opening at this MOP. Germany requested the Secretariat to distribute the UNLOA non-paper. An *ad hoc* working group was established with a view to finding a solution for the draft decision. The group met on Wednesday evening.

On Thursday afternoon, Attila Tanzi, Chair of the Convention Legal Board, reported that the *ad hoc* group had found agreement on the draft decision, and that a revised text would be circulated to all participants. On Friday afternoon, he presented the revised text, explaining that the two additional modules were not found to be politically relevant anymore given the high rate of ratification of the amendments and their expected entry into force for all Parties that adopted it by 2013 and that therefore the group had decided to leave them aside.. He stated that the agreement reached represented a victory of politics over law, but that the paragraph containing the decision to facilitate the accession conformed completely with legal advice.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision as amended during the meeting.

Final decision: The MOP, *inter alia*: reconfirms the conviction that the Convention is an effective instrument beyond the ECE; acknowledges the need for a procedure for accession by non-ECE countries not differing from the procedure for accession by ECE countries; and expresses the unanimous desire to enable the accession by non-ECE countries as soon as possible.

The MOP decides: that any further request for accession to the Convention by any member of the UN that is not member of the UNECE is welcome, and, therefore, shall be considered as approved by the MOP; that this approval is subject to the entry into force of an amendment to Articles 25 and 26 for all Parties which adopted them in 2003; and that a state or organization that becomes party to the Convention between the adoption of this decision and the entry into force of the amendments for all Parties which adopted them in 2003 shall be notified of this decision and is deemed to have accepted it.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

This item was discussed on Thursday afternoon and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday afternoon, Kjetil Tveitan, Norway, Chairperson



Francesca Bernardini, UNECE Secretariat



Kjetil Tveitan, Norway, Chairperson of the Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health



L-R: Moderator Jane Smart, IUCN; Bernard Giraud, President, Livelihood Venture; Julien Calas, FFEM; Olivier Hasinger, IUCN; Ramsar Convention Deputy Secretary General Nick Davidson; Biswajit Roy Chowdhury, Nature Environment and Wildlife Society; Manoj Kumar, Naandi Foundation; and Meine Van Noordwijk, ICRAF

of the Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health, reported that 25 countries have ratified the Protocol and that eight countries have set targets, with several others in the process of setting them. He highlighted ongoing cooperation with the Convention on, *inter alia*: target setting process; guidance on water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events; and a guide for the focal points on how to promote the Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health. He outlined future areas of cooperation on the EU Water Initiative and the NPD, quantifying the benefits of transboundary cooperation; climate change adaptation; and the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus.

MAMA-86 confirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and highlighted the Protocol as an instrument for the implementation of rights to water and sanitation. ECO-Tiras emphasized the importance of the Dniester River Treaty to support Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to comply with their obligations under the Protocol.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decision on the Protocol on Water and Health.

Final decision: The MOP decides to further strengthen cooperation between the two instruments, in particular in the areas of climate change adaptation, the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus and NPDs under the EU Water Initiative.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

This item was discussed on Thursday afternoon and delegates adopted the final decision on Friday afternoon. On Thursday afternoon, Chair Vermont introduced the agenda item on cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and international partners. Alice Aureli, UNESCO, presented UNESCO activities, noting that her organization contributed to the First and Second Assessments on Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters and used the guidelines of the Convention for monitoring and assessment of transboundary aquifers in Latin America. She said UNESCO is ready to place its network at the service of the Convention and to continue to work together.

On Friday morning, participants continued discussing cooperation. Christian Severin, the GEF, presented the GEF International Waters portfolio, which focuses on freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, foundational activities and areas beyond national jurisdiction. He looked forward to collaboration between UNECE and the GEF.

Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Kazakhstan and Hungary supported cooperation with the GEF. Switzerland and Kazakhstan said the GEF will play an important role in the globalization of the Convention. Azerbaijan described its cooperation with the GEF on climate change and floods and said further cooperation was needed.

Frederico Properzi, UN-Water, described ongoing global discussions on the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs, as they relate to water. Noting that the MDG sanitation target only focuses on water supply and basic sanitation, he stressed the need to incorporate a broader view of water management within the SDGs to address wastewater management, water security and water-related disaster risk management. He urged participants to contribute to the thematic discussion on water, which UN-Water is co-organizing. He highlighted the International Year of Water Cooperation in 2013. The GWP emphasized that this consultation process will be unique and participatory and highlighted events as part of the International Year of Water Cooperation.

Francesca Bernardini, UNECE, urged participants to contribute to the development of a SDG on water, noting that the MDG on access to water catalyzed support and action on the issue. She called for placing water resources management high on the UN agenda.

The Netherlands said it will organize four technical workshops on World Water Day in 2013 on water cooperation as it: contributes to poverty reduction and quality; creates economic benefits; helps to preserve water resources and to protect the environment; and build peace.

On Friday afternoon, delegates adopted the decisions on cooperation with UNESCO (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.8), and the GEF (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.7).

Final decision: In the decision on the GEF, the MOP: decides to seek closer cooperation with the GEF and entrust the secretariat and the Bureau to discuss the opportunity and possible modalities to further strengthen and formalize the cooperation with GEF on different levels; agrees to exchange experiences with the GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network and the different bodies and activities under the Convention; and invites GEF to consider using the Convention, once it is open to accession by all UN Member States, as a basic legal framework for the work in the International Waters Programme.

In the decision on UNESCO, the MOP decides to: continue and further enhance cooperation with UNESCO; invite UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP), within the framework of the Internationally Shared

Aquifers Resources Management Programme, to consider the Convention, once it is open for accession by all UN Member States, for its work on transboundary groundwaters worldwide; and invite UNESCO IHP to promote the use and implementation of the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WATER CONVENTION

This Item was discussed on Friday. On Friday morning, Vice-Chair Massimo Cozzone, Italy, introduced the vision for the future of the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.2), noting that it aims to ensure that parties to the Convention move in the same direction.

Germany and Switzerland welcomed the vision. The EU, on behalf of its Member States, presented the “Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources.” He said the Blueprint recognizes a need for improved implementation and closer integration among disaster management, energy, transport and water sectors.

Bangladesh asked about the promotion of joint bodies. Germany responded that Germany and Finland plan to organize two workshops on work of the joint bodies.

Final decision: On Friday afternoon, the MOP adopted the vision. The MOP also welcomed the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources and decided to take it into account in future activities under the Convention.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2013–2015, TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BODIES ESTABLISHED TO IMPLEMENT IT AND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

On Friday morning, Francesca Bernardini, UNECE, presented the draft programme of work for 2013-2015 (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.1), explaining it is the result of a strategic process aimed at identifying the most important challenges and priorities for the Convention after 20 years of implementation. She noted the programme of work includes seven programme areas, ranked in order of priority: support to implementation and accession; European Union Water Initiative and NPDs; quantifying the benefits of transboundary cooperation; adapting to climate change in transboundary basins; water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus; opening of the Convention to countries outside the UNECE region; and promotion of the Convention and establishment of strategic partnerships. She further presented the key activities and estimated costs for each programme area. Several interventions were made by delegates on the proposed draft programme of work.

On support to implementation and accession, Germany said this area of work is the core of the Convention and confirmed its support. The EU, on behalf of its Member States, welcomed the proposed programme of work as balanced, forward looking and realistic, and suggested taking into account the EU Water Blueprint. She further suggested aligning the text on the ratification of the Civil Liability Protocol with the decision by the Industrial Accidents Convention. Switzerland confirmed its support to opening of the convention, quantifying benefits, climate change and water and the nexus assessment. Afghanistan and AMCOW supported the proposals and expressed interest in collaboration.

On the EU Water Initiatives and the NPD, Finland expressed interest in supporting activities and suggested greater synergies between programme areas, for example, the nexus and the NPD.

On quantifying the benefits of transboundary cooperation, Vice-chair Cozzone emphasized it is a new area of work and called for strong commitments from participants. Switzerland, Bulgaria and Estonia indicated their intention to support it. SIWI confirmed its leadership in the methodology, Bangladesh, UNDP/GEF, Azerbaijan and the Chair of the Legal Board expressed interest in participating.

On adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, the Netherlands looked forward to co-leading this area of work with Switzerland and to acceleration activities, including on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. Germany confirmed its support for activities. SEI confirmed its commitment to participating in programmatic activities and highlighted its research on adaptation. INBO confirmed its commitment to extend the network of pilot basins to other continents. Bernardini reminded participants they have the opportunity to join pilot projects through the end of January.

On the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, Germany confirmed its support for activities. Finland confirmed its willingness to play a leading role in this programme area. The FAO, SIWI and SEI reiterated their interest in participating in the program of work, with the FAO noting its existing work on the topic. Thailand supported this programmatic area.

On opening of the Convention outside the ECE-region, France confirmed its support and willingness to co-lead the programme area with Italy and Switzerland. Colombia highlighted interest in possible accession to the Convention in the future and proposed that UNECE raise awareness about the Convention among Latin American countries. Morocco expressed its interest in sharing experiences for parties and non-parties. Iran said it had invited UNECE to participate in a workshop in Iran on the Water Convention. Palestine reiterated its request for technical assistance, capacity building and other forms of support. She asked parties to consider approving Palestine’s interest in acceding to the Convention. GWP-Med repeated its commitment to promote the Convention and assist



countries to accede to the Convention. Green Cross welcomed the opening of the Convention and, with AMCOW, expressed its commitment to contribute to this area of work. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia expressed interest in collaborating with the UNECE Secretariat.

On promotion of the Convention and establishment of strategic partnerships, Bernardini highlighted: the European Riverprize, reminding participants that all countries in the pan-European region can propose candidates; cooperation with other MEAs and with UN-Water, and follow-up to the Astana Conference. OSCE and UNEP expressed interest in strengthening their partnerships with the Convention.

Stressing the need to avoid the proliferation of bodies, Bernardini presented those that will implement the programme of work: the Bureau of the MOP; two Working Groups: on IWRM and on Monitoring and Assessment, noting that the latter will be suspended in the next triennium; the Implementation Committee; the Legal Board and the Joint *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on water and industrial accidents, upon request, two Task Forces: on Water and Climate and on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus and the IWAC, pending its continuation.

Germany and Finland agreed to co-lead the IWRM WG and France indicated interest in participating in it.

Norway indicated it will continue to support the work on NPDs, the Implementation Committee and capacity building, with a contribution of US \$ 280,000 for 2013.

Final decision: On Friday afternoon, the MOP adopted: the programme of work 2013-2015; the bodies and the terms of reference of bodies established to implement it; and the relevant budget as amended at the meeting.

INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE

On Friday morning, Vice-Chair Cozzone introduced the progress report on the work of the IWAC and draft programme of work for 2013-2015 (ECE/MP.WAT/2012/L.3).

Boris Minarik, Director, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, described IWAC activities including, *inter alia*:



Boris Minarik, IWAC

supporting pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins; playing a role in the preparation of the Second Assessment; and capacity building and exchange of experiences. Germany, Switzerland and Finland appreciated IWAC's work and thanked the Slovak government for hosting IWAC. Switzerland congratulated Minarik for his role as a "true

ambassador" to the Convention.

Slovakia regretted that it had to terminate its funding to IWAC due to the financial crisis. France hoped to develop a solution soon to the lack of funding. Vice-Chair Cozzone noted that the future programme of work and vision would be updated to take into account the lack of funding for IWAC.

Final decision: On Friday afternoon, the MOP adopted the decision. The MOP, *inter alia*, restated the important play played by IWAC in the implementation of the Convention; thanked the Government of Slovakia for having hosted and supported IWAC; and encouraged other parties to explore the possibility of supporting IWAC from 2013.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

On Friday afternoon, delegates elected Massimo Cozzone, Italy, as Chair of the MOP, and as members of the future Bureau until MOP7, they elected by consensus: Serik

Akhmetov, Kazakhstan, as Vice-Chair; Maria Galambos, Hungary, as Vice-Chair; Heide Jekel, Germany, as Co-Chair of the Working Group on IWRM; Lea Kauppi, Finland, as Co-Chair of the Working Group on IWRM; Vladimir Ivlev, the Russian Federation, member; Harry Liiv, Estonia, member; Philippe Meunier, France, member; Dragana Milovanovic, Serbia, member; Rafiq Verdiyev, Azerbaijan, member; and Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland, member.

DATE AND VENUE OF SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Hungary expressed interest in hosting the MOP7 in 2015.

CLOSING SESSION

In her concluding remarks, Chair Vermont highlighted



Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE

the future generations of the Convention through a compilation of photos of all the meeting participants' children. She thanked the government of Italy and the Chamber of Deputies for their hospitality and the UNECE Secretariat for their hard work and support. Vice-Chair Cozzone recognized the participation of 18 countries from outside the UNECE region, noting that

expanded participation represents the future of the Convention. He looked forward to future progress on the Convention. Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE, congratulated participants on a successful meeting and wished parties success in their work.

Chair Vermont closed the meeting at 4:07 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Regional Consultation Workshop for Asia on Groundwater Governance Project: The Asian Regional Consultation is the fourth in a series. The others have included consultations in: Uruguay, for Latin America and the Caribbean, in April 2012; Kenya, for the Africa region, in May 2012; and Jordan, in October 2012, for the Arab countries. The fifth Regional Consultation, dedicated to the European region as well as institutions from the private sector, will be hosted by the Netherlands in the first quarter March 2013. The results of the regional consultations will contribute to the preparation of a Global Groundwater Governance Diagnostic and Framework for Action. **Dates** :3-5 December 2012 **location**: Shijiazhuang, China **contact**: UNESCO IHP **phone**:+33 (0)1 45 68 40 99 **e-mail**: m.rubio@unesco.org **www**: <http://www.unescobej.org/natural-sciences/resources/news-and-upcoming-events/2012/groundwater-governance>

International Year of Water Cooperation: The UN International Year of Water Cooperation will be observed in 2013. The campaign will work to advance comprehension of the challenges and benefits of water cooperation, and promote it worldwide. UN-Water has called upon the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to lead the International Year. The 2013 World Water Day, marked on 22 March, also will be dedicated to water cooperation. **date**: 1 January 2013 **location**: worldwide **contact**: Lucilla Minelli **e-mail**: l.minelli@unesco.org **www**: <http://www.unwater.org/watercooperation2013.html>

International Water Summit 2013: The inaugural International Water Summit will be hosted by Masdar and held alongside the 2013 World Future Energy Summit (WFES) and the Abu Dhabi International Renewable Energy Conference (ADIREC). The aim of the International Water Summit is to

provide an opportunity for participants to network with global politicians, experts from the international water community and leaders from the public and private sectors, and collaborate in the development of solutions for some of the world's most water-scarce regions. The Summit is part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week. **dates:** 15-17 January 2013 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **www:** <http://www.abudhabisustainabilityweek.com>

Workshop on Target Setting and Reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health to the UNECE

Watercourses Convention: This workshop will convene ahead of the 6th meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health to the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), to assist Protocol's Parties in preparing for the second reporting cycle in accordance with the Protocol. **dates:** 12-13 February 2013 **venue:** Palais des Nations **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Alisher Mamadzhanov **phone:** +41 22 917 2442 **fax:** +41 22 917 0107 **e-mail:** alisher.mamadzhanov@unece.org **www:** http://www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_target-setting_reporting_2013.html

31st Session of the International Sava River Basin

Commission (ISRBC): This meeting will report on activities related to decisions and conclusions taken at previous sessions, discuss activities related to the realization of the Work Plan of the ISRBC on water management issues, including river basin management (RBM) and flood prevention, navigation and cross-cutting issues. The session is expected to adopt the work plan of the ISRBC for 2013. **dates:** 19-20 February 2013 **location:** Zagreb, Croatia [tentative] **contact:** ISRBC Secretariat **phone:** +385 1 4886960 **fax:** +385 1 4886986 **e-mail:** isrbcsavacommission.org **www:** <http://www.savacommission.org>

UNECE Meeting of the Core Group of Pilot Projects on Climate Change:

This meeting will review progress and exchange experience between the pilot projects on water adaptation in transboundary basins carried out under the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) Task Force on Water and Climate. **dates:** 20-21 February 2013 **venue:** Palais des Nations **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Sonja Koepfel **phone:** +41 22 917 1218 **fax:** +41 22 917 0107 **e-mail:** csonja.koepfel@unece.org **www:** http://www.unece.org/env/water/core_group_pilot_projects_cli

Asia Water Week 2013: Organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Water Week 2013 will address ongoing efforts to reform water management policies and strengthen priority programmes. Focusing on the theme "Water Security for All" the meeting will cover issues including climate change, the water-food-energy nexus, disaster management, civil society, financing, private sector involvement and governance. **dates:** 13-15 March 2013 **location:** Manila, Philippines **contact:** Ian Makin **phone:** +632 632 5803 **www:** <http://www.adb.org/news/events/asia-water-week-2013>

Transboundary Water Management Across Borders and Interfaces (TWAM) 2013: TWAM 2013 aims to discuss means of addressing transboundary water management challenges, such as globalization pressures, climate change and variability, population growth, resource depletion, and pollution. The conference will address these challenges through a number of conference topics, including: water resources modeling; technological and natural solutions; environmental impacts, ecosystem services and values; economic incentives and instruments; water governance, institutions and regulations; stakeholder engagement; and planning water resources

and land use. **dates:** 16-20 March 2013 **location:** Aveiro, Portugal **contact:** TWAM2013 Secretariat **phone:** +351 234 370 387 **fax:** +351 234 370 387 **e-mail:** twam2013@ua.pt **www:** <http://www.ibtwm.web.ua.pt/congress>

World Water Day 2013: Reflecting the decision to designate 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation, World Water Day 2013 will be dedicated to the theme of water cooperation. **date:** 22 March 2013 **location:** worldwide **contact:** Lena Salame **e-mail:** l.salame@unesco.org **www:** www.unwater.org/watercooperation2013.html

World Association of Soil and Water Conservation Conference: This conference, titled "The Threats to Land and Water Resources in the 21st Century," will address the themes: situations and evolution of land degradation; control measures to prevent land degradation and to restore degraded land; evaluation of the impact of land degradation on food production and the environment; effects of global climate change on land degradation and food security; law and policy to prevent and mitigate land degradation; and water resources management. The Second Council meeting of the World Association of Soil and Water Conservation (WASWAC) also will take place. **dates:** 13-18 May 2013 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **e-mail:** waswac2@ltd.mail.go.th **www:** http://www.ltd.go.th/web_waswac2/index.html

Ramsar COP 12: The 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP 12) will take place in the first half of 2015, in Punta del Este, Uruguay. **date:** 1 January 2015 [tentative] **location:** Uruguay **contact:** Ramsar Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-0170 **fax:** +41-22-999-0169 **e-mail:** ramsar@ramsar.org **www:** http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops/main/ramsar/1-31-58_4000_0__

GLOSSARY

AMCOW	Africa Ministers' Council on Water
COP	Conference of the Parties
EEA	European Environment Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GWP	Global Water Partnership
INBO	International Network of Basin Organizations in Rome
IWAC	International Water Assessment Center
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
NPDs	National Policy Dialogues
OIEAU	International Office for Water
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PES	Payments for ecosystem services
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SEE	South-Eastern Europe
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization