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THIRD WORKSHOP ON WATER AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS: Making adaptation work

To be held in Geneva, 25-26 April 2012

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 25 April 2011

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

The workshop will bring together countries and other stakeholders from all over the world, engaged in activities on water and adaptation to climate variability and change, in particular in transboundary basins, with the aim to:

- Support governments, organizations, joint bodies and other actors involved in the process of preparing climate change adaptation strategies by offering them a platform to exchange experience on adapting to climate variability and change,
- Identify, collect and analyse best practices, success factors and lessons learned on adaptation to climate change, with a particular focus on transboundary basins,
- Share the practical experience developed by the pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) as well as other similar initiatives and resources by partner organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization, UN-Water and others.
- Provide input to debates on water and climate and the definition of future activities in this area.

II. Topics of the workshop

The workshop will consist of a mix of plenary sessions and panel discussions as well as more interactive discussion formats focusing on the following topics:



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

1. Economic aspects of adaptation to climate variability and change (calculation of damage costs, avoided costs by adapting, costs of adaptation measures)
2. How to select and implement adaptation measures? (prioritization of measures, identification of no regret and low regret measures, assessing the efficiency of adaptation measures, experiences and lessons learnt from their implementation)
3. Integrating the different spatial and governance levels (managing the involvement of policymakers, scientists and stakeholders from the (inter)national to the local level)
4. Vulnerability assessment in transboundary basins (methodologies, lessons learned, assessing impacts of climate change on water quality and health)
5. The ecosystem approach (increasing ecosystems resilience as a means to adapt to climate change)
6. Integrating sectoral interests into the adaptation strategy (e.g. the water-energy-food nexus, industry, navigation, water supply and sanitation)

The topics relate to both extremes of too much and too little water.
A detailed programme will be issued in March 2012.

III. Call for contributions

Contributions are invited on the above-mentioned topics.

Please note that all contributions should be focused, as much as possible, on transboundary issues.

Abstracts for presentations on the above topics (max. 500 words) should be sent to the Water Convention secretariat (els.otterman@unece.org and Sonja.koeppel@unece.org) by 1 March 2012. The abstracts should be structured as follows:

- Background of the project, situation, expected impacts, measures planned/implemented, partners, level of advancement
- Achievements so far
- Difficulties encountered
- Transboundary aspects
- Lessons learnt that could be of use for other projects

IV. Organization of work

The workshop will be organized on 25 and 26 April 2012, back-to-back with the fifth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (27 April 2012), under the leadership of the Government of the Netherlands and Germany, with the support of the UNECE secretariat. It is organized in partnership with the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), the Global Water Partnership Mediterranean (GWP-MED), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Meteorological Organization and the European Commission. Funding for pilot projects and the platform for exchanging experience is also provided by the governments of Finland and Switzerland.

The workshop is addressed to all those who are responsible for, or involved in the process of developing an adaptation strategy and addressing climate change impacts on water resources, at the national and transboundary level: first and foremost governmental representatives, but also water and health managers, local authorities, and representatives of academia, research institutes and non-governmental organizations.

The workshop is an important step in the process of opening the Water Convention and in particular its activities on water and climate change to non-UNECE countries, including in the Mediterranean, in accordance with the amendments adopted at the third Meeting of the Parties to allow accession to the Convention to all UN Member States to the Convention. Experts from all over the world are therefore invited to participate and share their knowledge and experience.

Future steps in this direction include a proposal, to be further discussed in the framework of the elaboration of the Convention's programme of work for 2013-2015, for setting up a global network on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, based on the already existing UNECE platform for climate change adaptation and transboundary waters.

V. Background

Approximately 40 per cent of the world's population lives in river and lake basins that cross the political boundaries of two or more countries and, perhaps even more significantly, over 90 percent of the world's population lives within the countries that share these basins. Many of these transboundary waters are particularly vulnerable and can be strongly affected by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems.

Many countries are currently developing national adaptation strategies, but very few of them take neighbouring countries into account in this process despite their important connection through transboundary waters. Adaptation measures, especially structural measures such as dams, reservoirs or dykes can have significant effects on other riparian countries. Cooperation on adaptation can help to find better and more cost-effective solutions, both structural and non-structural, by enlarging the geographical area considered in planning measures, broadening the information base and combining efforts.

For this reason a programme of activities on climate change in transboundary basins was developed under the Water Convention which started with the publication of the 'Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change'. Current activities include a programme of pilot projects and a platform for exchanging experience, through regular meetings, a web-based platform etc.

This workshop is the third workshop on Water and Climate Change in Transboundary Basins under the framework of the platform for exchanging experience. It will build on the discussions and results of the first two such workshops organized in 2011 and 2010 and present progress in this area. Information on the previous workshops can be found at:

http://www.unece.org/env/water/transboundary_adaptation_workshop_2012

VI. Partner organizations

The Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA) is a network of development banks, governments, civil society organizations, and for-profit institutions that are focused on developing the best practices for implementing and operationalizing climate adaptation through the lens of water. In terms of transboundary activities, AGWA is working on two levels:

1. A decision support tool that integrates the best practices for integrating climate-relevant information from hydrology, finance and economics, engineering, ecology, and governance. The tool focuses on basin-level decision processes and institutional processes across political boundaries.
2. Developing a place-based workstream around transboundary issues that will begin coordinating AGWA network members in at least three basins by the end of 2012.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is currently developing the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). This global initiative will bring together climate information providers and climate service users. The water community was identified as one of the four priority areas to be addressed in the short term, alongside agricultural and food security, health and disaster risk reduction. More information on GFCS can be found under <http://www.wmo.int/gfcs>.

Other WMO Programmes related to adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins include the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS), proven as a successful tool to encourage data and information sharing in transboundary basins, or the Associated Programme on Flood Management, a hub for capacity building on the theme of flood management, presenting a series of no-regret solutions for adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), established in 2002, is a regional partnership of the Global Water Partnership. GWP-Med (www.gwpmed.org) is a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together a range of organizations, institutions and companies working on water issues in the Mediterranean Region, including Southeastern Europe. Its goal is to promote action and exchange knowledge on Integrated Water Resources Management and the sustainable use of water resources at regional, national and local level. Transboundary water resources management and adaptation to climate variability and change are part of GWP-Med's focus areas. Its related activities are implemented through and in the framework of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative, the GEF Climate Variability and Change Programme in the Mediterranean, the GEF IW:LEARN III, the EC-supported Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) Programme, the AMCOW/GWP Water, Climate & Development Programme in Africa, Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, etc.

The EUROCLIMA programme, funded by the European Union DG Development and Cooperation collaborates with Latin America to address the challenges of climate change, thereby contributing to reduce its vulnerability and improving the living conditions of its population. EUROCLIMA aims to improve the knowledge of Latin American decision-makers and the scientific community regarding problems and consequences of climate change, particularly in view of integrating these issues into sustainable development strategies. Through its actions, the programme intends to reduce vulnerability to climate change, reduce social inequalities caused by global warming, reduce the socio-economic impacts of climate change and reinforce regional integration dialogue. The RALCEA project, funded by the European Commission aims at fostering information based policy and promoting south-south cooperation in

capacity development in the water sector by supporting the development of a network of knowledge centres in Latin America.

VII. Practical information

The workshop will start at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 25 April 2011 and end at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday, 26 April 2011. It will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The fourth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate will be held on Friday 27 April 2012. The working languages will be English, French and Russian.

Focal points are requested to disseminate information on the workshop and to facilitate nomination of relevant experts from their respective countries.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (Cammile.Marcelo@unece.org) as soon as possible, but not later than **15 March 2011**. **No application will be accepted after this deadline.** Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to experts providing inputs to the workshop.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is 15 working days since Switzerland is part of the Schengen zone since 2009. **Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.**

In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the registration form available online at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2012/wat/workshops/Transboundary_adaptation_april/Registration_form.doc and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat **by 11 April 2012** either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0621) or e-mail (Cammile.Marcelo@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the UNECE Water Convention website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1606

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>

Further information, the registration form and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course: http://www.unece.org/env/water/transboundary_adaptation_workshop_2012
