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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on
the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

Fifteenth meeting

Geneva, 6 December 2019

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and the report of the previous meeting

Annotated provisional agenda

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting on Friday,
6 December 2019, at 9.30 a.m.***

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session and election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and the report of the previous meeting.
3. Introduction to past and present activities on monitoring and assessment under the Convention.
4. Information from the reporting under the Convention and reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2.
5. Gathering feedback on the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters developed under the Convention.
6. Projects on the ground and regional events:
 - (a) Monitoring cooperation and information regarding projects under the Convention;

* Delegates attending the meeting at the Palais des Nations are requested to register no later than two weeks before the meeting using the electronic registration procedure. Registration is available through the following link: <https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=oarkol>. For assistance with registration, please see the instructions on the web page for the meeting (www.unece.org/index.php?id=50219) or contact the secretariat by email (alexandra.boonekamp@un.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates 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 the map on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website: www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 7828.

- (b) Regional events on monitoring and assessment in 2019–2021.
- 7. Information and data needs for sustainable water allocation.
- 8. Cooperation with partners.
- 9. Strategic discussion about future work on monitoring and assessment.
- 10. Date and venue of the next meeting of the Working Group.
- 11. Other business.
- 12. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations

- 1. The fifteenth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) will be held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, starting at 9.30 a.m. and ending at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, 6 December 2019. It will be held back-to-back with the Global workshop on exchange of data and information in transboundary basins (Geneva, 4 and 5 December 2019). The fourteenth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment was held jointly with the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (Geneva, 28–30 May 2018).
- 2. The main objectives of the fifteenth meeting will be to discuss:
 - (a) The implementation of activities on monitoring and assessment under the Convention in 2019–2021, notably regional events; the gathering of feedback on the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters through reviews and experiences from projects, with a view to their updating; and activities on the ground;
 - (b) Strategic directions for future work on monitoring, assessment and data exchange under the Water Convention, building on the insights, first, from a background paper entitled “Outlook for developing monitoring cooperation and exchange of data and information across borders”, second, from the reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and, third, from the Global workshop on exchange of data and information in transboundary basins (Geneva, 4 and 5 December 2019).
- 3. In addition, the Working Group will discuss information and data needs for sustainable water allocation in transboundary river basins and aquifers to support developing these aspects of the handbook on water allocation in transboundary basins currently under development with guidance from the Expert Group on water allocation;
- 4. The working languages for the meeting will be English, French, Russian and Spanish. All relevant documentation will be available on a dedicated page of the ECE Water Convention website.¹

1. Opening of the session and election of officers

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 9.30–9.35 a.m.

- 5. The lead Parties will open the meeting. Subsequently, the Working Group will elect its Co-Chairs, taking into account the fact that the Meeting of the Parties entrusted Finland and Senegal as lead countries to prepare the meeting.

¹ See www.unece.org/index.php?id=50219. Please note that documents with symbols ending in “INF.” and a number are informal documents and are only available from the meeting web page (and not from the Official Documents System of the United Nations).

2. Adoption of the agenda and the report of the previous meeting

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 9.35–9.45 a.m.

6. The Working Group is expected to adopt the agenda for its fifteenth meeting as set out in the present document.

7. The Co-Chairs will present the main objectives of the meeting.

8. The Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment will be invited to adopt the report of its second joint meeting with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (Geneva, 28–30 May 2018), taking into account the fact that the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its fourteenth meeting already considered the report.

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2019/1)

Report of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment on their second joint meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2018/2–ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2018/2)

3. Introduction to past and present activities on monitoring and assessment under the Convention

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 9.45–10 a.m.

9. The Co-Chairs will provide an overview of the relevant obligations of the Convention with regard to monitoring and assessment, as well as of past work and activities on monitoring and data exchange in transboundary basins under the Convention. They will then present the programme of work for 2019–2021 under the Convention for programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins.

10. The activities include the organization of a global workshop on data and information exchange and two regional events on monitoring and assessment (activity 2.1). The possibility has also been foreseen of providing, upon request, tailored assistance, such as studies or expert support. Furthermore, the gathering of experience for updating guidance material under the Convention is to be undertaken (activity 2.2).

Documentation

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its eighth session. Addendum: Programme of work for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.1)

4. Information from the reporting under the Convention and reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 10–11 a.m.

11. At its seventh session, the Meeting of the Parties adopted decision VII/2 (see ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2), introducing a reporting mechanism under the Convention. In accordance with decision VII/2, reporting started with a pilot exercise in 2017, which was coupled with reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2. In the first reporting cycle under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2, 38 out of 40 Parties reported under the Convention and 107 out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters reported on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2. The reports submitted provided information about the Convention's implementation and the advancement of transboundary water cooperation, including monitoring and information exchange. Among other topics, the reporting covered the inclusion of monitoring and information exchange as a part of cooperation in the context of arrangements or of tasks of joint bodies, as well as the exchange of data and information with riparian States.

12. On the basis of the information from the above-mentioned reporting exercises – including those synthesized in publications *Progress on transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention: Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*² and *Progress on transboundary water cooperation: Global baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.2*³ – the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat will inform the Working Group about the findings regarding monitoring cooperation and its coverage (for example, whether data collection and exchange or joint monitoring are a part of the scope of cooperation arrangements), types of information exchanged, as well as challenges in these areas. With this introduction, the Working Group will discuss needs and possible priorities for support to monitoring cooperation and data exchange, including promoting tools and implementation and exchange of experience.

13. The Working Group will also be informed about the second reporting exercise under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2, to be implemented in 2020, with a reporting deadline of 30 June 2019. Supporting material will be briefly presented.

Documentation

Decision VIII/I on reporting under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2)

Informal documents

Reporting template of the second cycle for reporting (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/INF.3)

Draft guide to reporting under the Water Convention and as a contribution to Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/INF.4)

Step-by-step monitoring methodology for indicator 6.5.2 (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/INF.5)

5. Gathering feedback on the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters developed under the Convention

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 11 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

14. The secretariat and experts will present the relevant policy and technical tools, including technical guidelines and strategic guidance developed under the Convention in the period 1996–2006, for example:

(a) *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*⁴;

(b) *Monitoring of International Lakes: Background Paper for the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes*⁵;

(c) *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes — Part A: Strategy Document*⁶;

(d) *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes — Part B: Technical Guidelines*⁷;

² United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/51.

³ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/57.

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.II.E.15.

⁵ Olli-Pekka Pietiläinen and Pertti Heinonen, eds. (Helsinki, Finnish Environment Institute, 2002), available at www.unece.org/index.php?id=20166.

⁶ ECE Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Helsinki, 2002), available at www.unece.org/index.php?id=20166.

⁷ ECE Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Helsinki, Finnish Environment Institute, 2003), available at www.unece.org/index.php?id=20166.

(e) *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers: First Review of the 1996 Guidelines on Water-quality Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Work Programme 1997–2000*;⁸

(f) *Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwaters: First Review of the 1996 Guidelines on Water-quality Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Work Programme 1997–2000*.⁹

15. A representative of the Netherlands will present the background paper “Outlook for developing monitoring cooperation and exchange of data and information across borders”. The Working Group will discuss the need to: update the above-mentioned strategic and technical guidelines in order to take into account technological advances since their development and the potential for their wider (global) application; and/or complement existing guidance, for example, related to exchange of data and information. This discussion will be informed by the outcome of the Global workshop (Geneva, 4 and 5 December 2019), the background paper, other guidance material developed by other actors and experiences from projects under the Water Convention and other partners. Review comments will also be invited from experts and different organizations working on monitoring and data exchange.

Documentation

Informal document

Outlook for developing monitoring cooperation and exchange of data and information across borders: Background paper to the Global workshop on exchange of data and information and to the fifteenth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the Water Convention (Geneva, 4–6 December 2019) (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2019/INF.1).

6. Projects on the ground and regional events

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 2.30–3.30 p.m.

(a) Monitoring cooperation and information regarding projects under the Convention

16. The Working Groups will be informed about projects and other activities carried out by the secretariat, Parties and partners that involve monitoring, assessment or data exchange activities, including the following:

(a) The project “Enhancing transboundary cooperation and governance in the Drin River Basin”, funded by the United Nations Development Programme/Global Environment Facility and implemented by the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean in cooperation with ECE;

(b) The Drina River Basin Nexus follow-up project;

(c) Project “Strengthening cooperation on water quality management in Central Asia” implemented by ECE with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia;

(d) Monitoring and assessment activities implemented by the International Water Assessment Centre (the collaborative centre of the Water Convention in Kazakhstan);

(e) The Roundtable on transboundary collaboration on the Senegalese-Mauritanian Aquifer (Versoix, Switzerland, 6 and 7 February 2019), organized jointly by the Geneva Water Hub and ECE;

(f) Other relevant activities.

17. The Working Group will discuss activities on the ground, and how the experience under the Convention, the guidance (see para. 13 above) and its potential refinement and the platforms that the Convention provides can be helpful in implementing such activities, formulating follow-up initiatives and/or sustaining their results.

⁸ ECE Task Force on Monitoring and Assessment (March 2000).

⁹ ECE Task Force on Monitoring and Assessment (March 2000).

(b) Regional events on monitoring and assessment in 2019–2021

18. The programme of work for 2019–2021 foresees the organization of two regional capacity-building events on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters tailored to specific regional needs, possibly in the framework of regional events under programme area 1: Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation.

19. The Working Group will discuss priority topics and possible opportunities for organizing regional events on monitoring and assessment in the triennium 2019–2021. If appropriate, interest can be expressed in co-organizing or hosting such an event.

Documentation

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its eighth session. Addendum: Programme of work for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.1)

7. Information and data needs for sustainable water allocation

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 3.30–4.00 p.m.

20. The programme of work 2019–2021 includes the development of a handbook on water allocation in the transboundary context (activity 3.3.1), which is to be based on existing practices, covering the key aspects of equitable and sustainable allocation of water in the transboundary context, addressing both surface waters and groundwaters, and also environmental flows. Work will be started with a global review of water allocation arrangements in transboundary basins. The publication will include references to relevant tools and information resources and examples of: (a) the prerequisites (for example, institutional framework, data sharing) for agreeing on water allocations; (b) options and approaches that can be followed technically and legally; (c) relevant considerations in designing a process to agree on water allocation; and (d) the benefits that can be drawn from agreeing on water allocation. The concept and outline for the handbook on water allocation in the transboundary context (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/INF.6) identifies information requirements among the prerequisites for assessing the need for water allocations and, if appropriate, agreeing on them. In its first meeting (Geneva, 21 October 2019), the Expert Group will discuss the scope and outline of the handbook, possible case studies and the process, including planned regional workshops.

21. The Working Group will be informed about the status of work on preparation of the handbook. The Working Group will be invited to discuss the information and data requirements for sustainable water allocation, including available water resources and their status, as well as present and projected demands, and tools such as water balance calculation methods. The Working Group will also be invited to discuss good practices in joint assessment and data sharing, and their relevance for informed decisions about water allocation.

Documentation

Informal document

Concept and outline for the handbook on water allocation in the transboundary context (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2019/INF.6)

8. Cooperation with partners

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 4.00–4.30 p.m.

22. Organizations with relevant expertise and potential partners will be invited to make short interventions highlighting their relevant work, potential cooperation opportunities and synergies with work on monitoring, assessment and data exchange under the Water Convention, in relation to the programme of work 2019–2021 or beyond.

9. Strategic discussion about future work on monitoring and assessment

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 4.30–5.15 p.m.

23. The Working Group will be invited to discuss, in the light of the information provided under the preceding items, possible priorities and strategic directions for future work on monitoring, assessment and data exchange under the Water Convention.

10. Date and venue of the next meeting of the Working Group

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 5.15–5.20 p.m.

24. The Working Group will discuss the preliminary date and venue for its next meeting.

11. Other business

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 5.20–5.30 p.m.

25. Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

12. Closure of the meeting

Tentative timing: Friday, 6 December, 5.30 p.m.

26. The Co-Chairs will close the meeting at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, 6 December 2019.
