

# **Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health and International River Basin Management**

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# Overview



## Water Convention

- Key obligations
- From regional to global
- How it works: institutions, programme of work
- Support to basin management
- Implementation Committee

## Protocol on Water and Health

- Core obligations
- Work programme and institutions
- Synergies with EU Directives
- Compliance Committee
- Interpretative function of the Compliance Committee

## The Water Convention history

- 1960s-1970s: over 30 decisions, guidelines, recommendations on water and environment by UNECE Committee on Water Problems
- Convention negotiated 1989-1992
- Signed 1992, in force 1996

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ECE GOVERNMENTS ON ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS FOR RATIONAL UTILIZATION OF WATER RESOURCES

*Prepared by the Seminar on Economic Instruments for Rational Utilization of Water Resources, held in Veldhoven (Netherlands) in 1980, and endorsed by the Committee on Water Problems at its twelfth session.*

As water is becoming a limited and valuable resource and its development requires increasing investments, it is now generally accepted that its use must be most efficient and must secure the highest possible level of national welfare. In water management,



# The Water Convention



## Water Convention Key Principles

Principle of prevention  
of transboundary  
impact

Principle of equitable  
and reasonable  
utilization

Principle of  
cooperation

Main objective



Foster  
cooperation over  
transboundary  
waters in order to  
**ensure** that they  
are **sustainably  
and equitably  
managed**



WATER  
CONVENTION

# The Water Convention obligations



## Obligations for all Parties (Part I)

Licensing of waste-water discharges and monitoring of authorized discharges

Setting emission limits based on BAT

Application of best environmental practices

Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution

Application of EIA and other assessments

Exchange of information



WATER  
CONVENTION

# The Water Convention obligations



## Obligations for Riparian Parties (Part II)

Catchment area (basin) approach

Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and creation of joint bodies

Joint monitoring and assessment

Common research and development

Exchange of information between Riparian Parties

Consultation

Warning and alarm systems

Mutual assistance

Public information

# The Water Convention – from regional to global



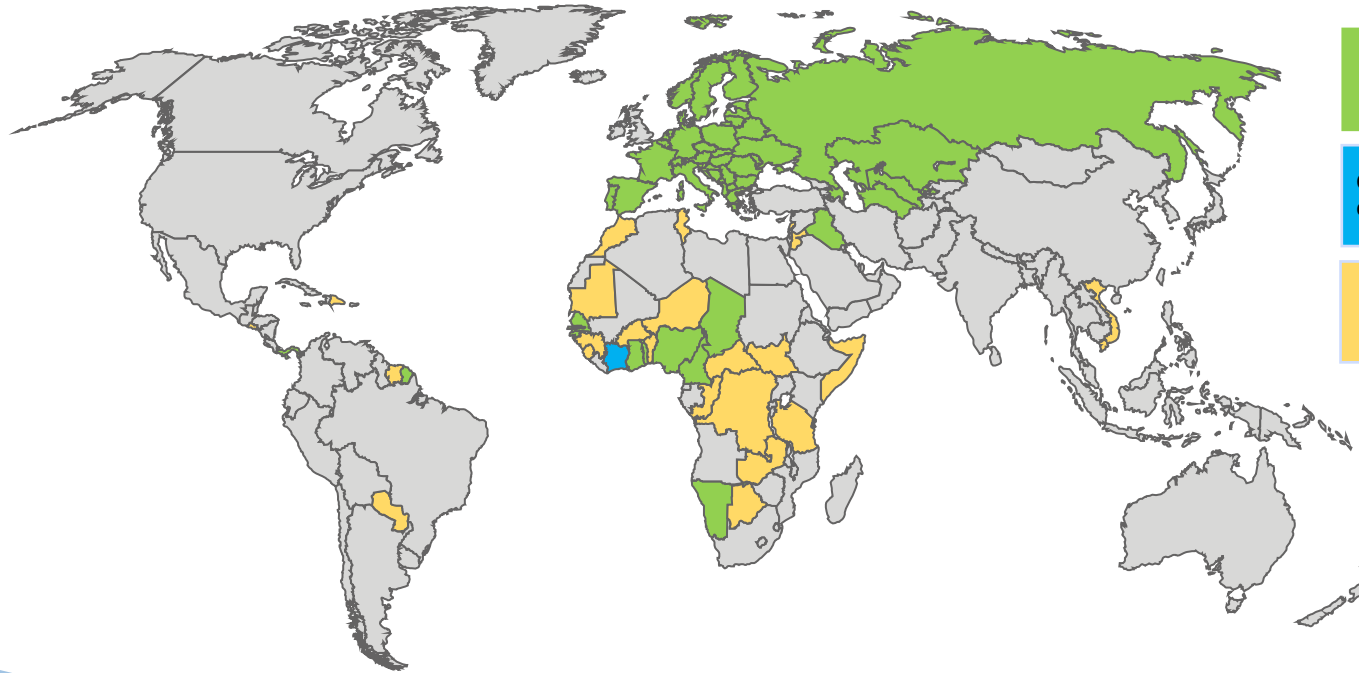
## Amendments

- Build on the success achieved
- Apply the principles worldwide => broaden political support for transboundary cooperation
- Interest from countries outside the region
- Willingness to learn from other regions

Entered into force in 2013

Operational since 2016

# Globalization of the Water Convention



Parties to the Convention (52) –  
newest: The Gambia, Panama,  
Namibia, Nigeria and Iraq (2023)

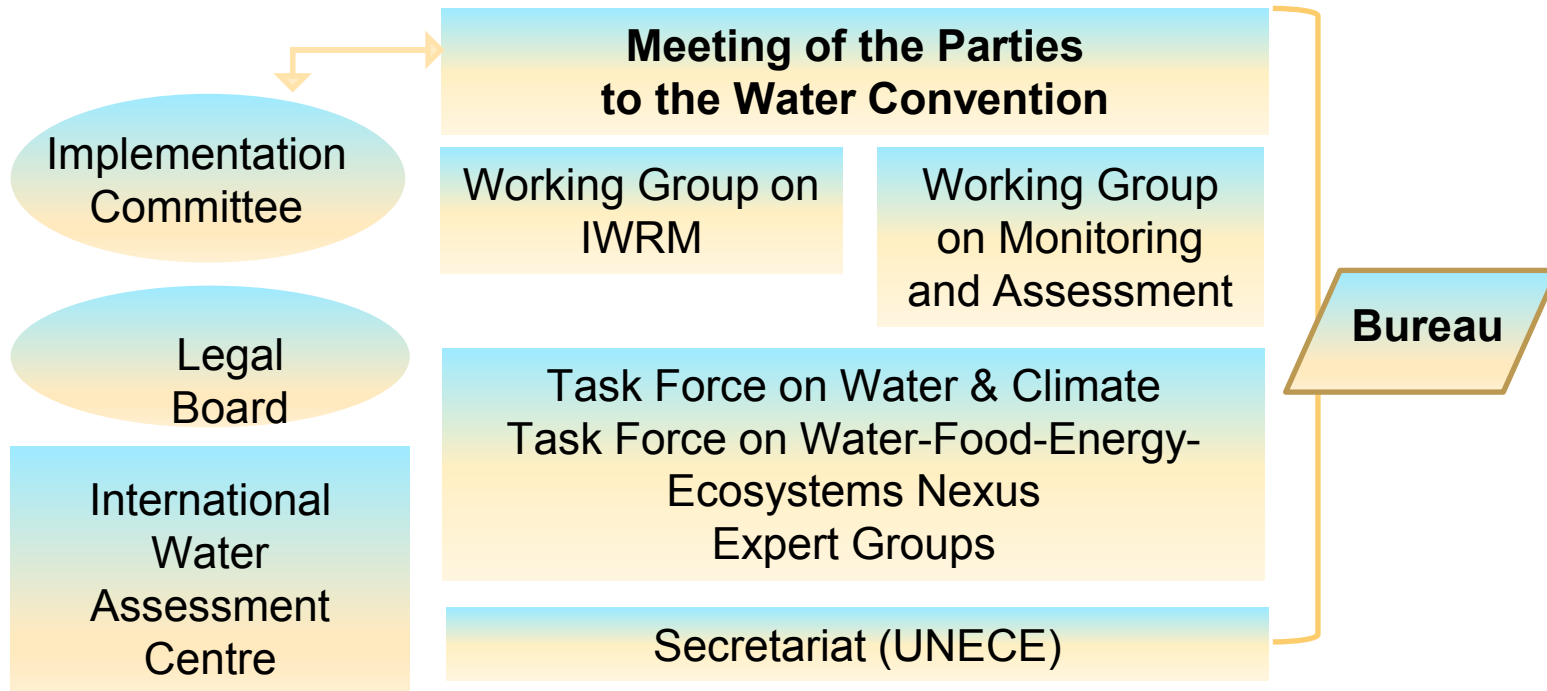
Countries very close to accession: Côte  
d'Ivoire

Countries in the process of accession  
to the Convention (>20)

Globalization guided by the **Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at global level**



# Water Convention: Institutional framework



# The Water Convention Programme of Work 2022-2024

## OUTCOME 1

Countries understand the Convention, accede to it, develop agreements and establish joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation



### *Awareness & accession*

#### Programme Area 1

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

## OUTCOME 2

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



### *Monitoring & assessment*

#### Programme Area 2

Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins

## OUTCOME 3

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



### *Integrated & intersectoral approach*

#### Programme Area 3

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



### *Climate change adaptation*

#### Programme Area 4

Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

## OUTCOME 4

Transboundary water cooperation and basin development are sustainably financed



### *Financing*

#### Programme Area 5

Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development

## OUTCOME 5

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



### *Reporting*

#### Programme Area 6

Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

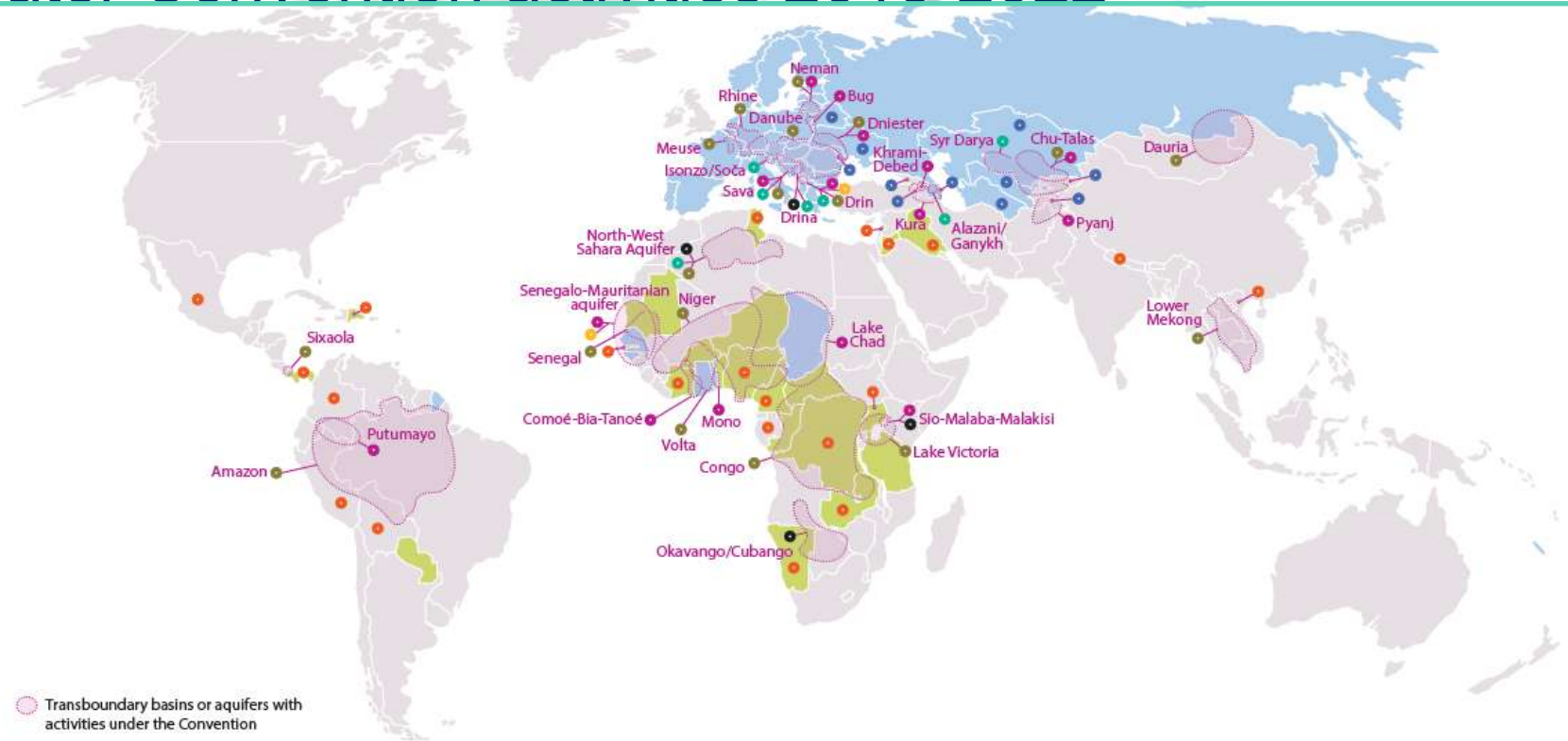


### *Partnership & knowledge*

#### Programme Area 7

Partnerships, communication and knowledge management

# Water Convention activities 2015-2022



## Areas of work

- Support the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies
- Identify, assess and communicate the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- Assess and promote the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins

- Adapt to climate change in transboundary basins
- Increase knowledge of and accession to the Water Convention
- Monitor, assess and share information in transboundary basins
- National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the European Union Water Initiative

## Country Status

- Parties to the Water Convention
- Countries in the process of accession

# The Water Convention: a source of global experiences, tools and guidance to support cooperation in basins

Establishing principles and inspiring cooperation



Supporting the development of agreements, creation of basin org-s and financing



Helping basins adapt to climate change



Supporting cross-sectoral cooperation in basins



# River basin management: Examples of activities and support provided under the Water Convention



→ Provide **technical and political support** to riparian countries to **develop cooperative arrangements** (e.g. in the *Dniester River*, in the *Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin* )



→ Support **climate change adaptation** in **transboundary basins** (e.g. in *Chu Talas*, *Dniester*, *Sava*)



→ Support the **identification and assessment of the benefits of cooperation** in **shared basins** (e.g. in the *Drina river basin*; *Cubango Okavango River basin*; *Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin*; *North Western Sahara Aquifer System*)

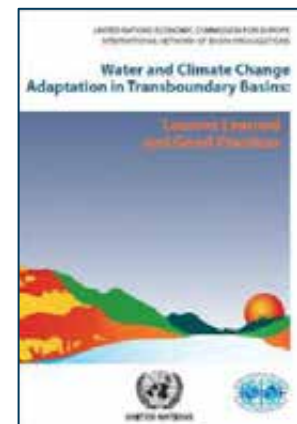


→ Support **intersectoral dialogues and assessments** through the application of the **water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus** approach (e.g. in the *Syr Daria basin*, *Sava basin*)



# Programme area: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

- Task Force on Water and Climate since 2006
- Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation (in cooperation with INBO): *Amazon, Chu Talas, Congo, Danube, Dauria, Dniester, Drin, Lower Mekong, Meuse, Neman, Niger, North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS), Okavango, Rhine, Sava, Senegal, Sixaola, Lake Victoria, Volta*
- Guidance documents
- Regular global workshops
- Projects on the ground
- Input to global processes on CC and DRR
- Preparation of bankable projects





## Possible steps in transboundary climate change adaptation

- Basin-wide analysis of climate change impacts
- Transboundary vulnerability assessment
- Basin-wide adaptation strategy and plan
- Joint resource mobilization plan
- Implementation of priority adaptation measures
- Integration of transboundary adaptation into the basin and flood risk management plans as well as national climate and sectoral policies

Good examples worldwide:

- Chu-Talas, Danube, Dniester, Neman, Rhine, Volta, Lake Chad, Lake Victoria, Mekong and Niger

## Mechanism to support implementation and compliance

- Legal basis: Decision VI/1 adopted by the Meeting of the Parties (Rome, 28-30 November 2012)
- The objective of the mechanism is to facilitate, promote and safeguard the implementation and application and compliance with the Convention
- The mechanism is to be simple, non-confrontational, non-adversarial, transparent, supportive and cooperative in nature







# Implementation Committee: Composition

- 9 members, who serve in their personal capacity and objectively, in the best interest of the Convention
- Persons with experience and recognized expertise in the fields related to the Convention, including legal and/or scientific and technical expertise
- Geographical distribution of membership and diversity of experience and expertise
- Elected by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention among candidates nominated by the Parties (Signatories and NGOs may propose candidates to Parties)
- Members of the Implementation Committee normally serve for a full term of office (6 years), with half of the members being replaced at each session of the Meeting of the Parties (every 3 years)

# Implementation Committee: Methods of work

- Committee normally meets twice a year for a period of one or two days
- No information held by the Committee is to be kept confidential, unless it was provided to it in confidence
- The Committee meetings are held in public, unless the Committee decides otherwise. Observers should register no later than 2 weeks before the meeting.
- Committee reports to the Meeting of the Parties at each ordinary session
- Decision-making:
  - Consensus
  - If no consensus,  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of members present and voting, or
  - by a majority of 5 members, whichever is the greater number

# Functions of the Implementation Committee

- **Consider requests for advice (advisory procedure)**
- **Consider self-submission or Party-to-Party submission**
- **Consider undertaking a Committee initiative** (the public can submit information to the Committee)

Committee may also:

- Examine specific issues of implementation of and compliance with the Convention at the request of the Meeting of the Parties
- Take measures, including recommendations, as appropriate
- Carry out any other functions that may be assigned to it by the Meeting of the Parties, including examination of general issues of implementation and compliance that may be of interest to all Parties.

# Measures by the Committee to facilitate and support implementation and compliance

The Committee may decide to:

(A) Provide advice and facilitate assistance, including:

- Suggesting or recommending that domestic regulatory regimes be set up or strengthened
- Assistance in establishing transboundary water cooperation agreements and arrangements for strengthening cooperation
- Facilitating technical and financial assistance, including information and technology transfer, and capacity-building
- Assistance in seeking support from specialized agencies and other competent bodies.

(B) Request and assist the Party(ties) concerned to develop an action plan to facilitate implementation and compliance

(C) Invite the Party concerned to submit progress reports to the Committee on its efforts to comply with its obligations

(D) Recommend to the Meeting of the Parties that it takes measures.