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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

Fourth meeting
Geneva, 8–9 July 2009

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH MEETING

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting on Wednesday, 8 July at 10 a.m.*

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Adoption of the report of the third meeting.
3. Progress in the ratification process.

* Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations are requested to complete the **registration form** available on the UNECE website (http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGIWRM.htm) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat **before 25 June 2009**, by e-mail (olga.carlos@unece.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's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the UNECE website: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1926. Experts from eligible countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting. Requests for **financial support** should be addressed to the UNECE secretariat together with the registration form as soon as possible, and in any case **by 27 May 2009**.

4. Support for ratification and implementation:
 - (a) Guide to implementing the Convention;
 - (b) Future activities of the Legal Board.
5. Water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management:
 - (a) Water and adaptation to climate change;
 - (b) Transboundary flood management.
6. Second assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region.
7. Ecosystem services and payments for such services in integrated water resources management.
8. Water and industrial accidents:
 - (a) Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents;
 - (b) Protocol on Civil Liability.
9. Activities supporting implementation of the Convention.
 - (a) European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues;
 - (b) Transboundary water cooperation and integrated water resources management in Central Asia;
 - (c) Environment and Security Initiative.
10. Promotion of the Convention.
11. Coordination and synergies with activities of United Nations agencies and other organizations.
12. Ongoing workplan for 2007–2009 for integrated water resources management.
13. Workplan for 2010–2012 and beyond:
 - (a) Structure and activities of the workplan for 2010–2012;
 - (b) Activities on the ground: new pilot projects.
14. Dates and venue of the fifth meeting of the Working Group.
15. Other business.
16. Closing of the meeting.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. The main objectives of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management are to review the implementation of the activities in the Convention's workplan for 2007–2009 and to agree on a draft workplan for 2010–2012. The latter workplan will be submitted for discussion and adoption at the fifth meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 10–12 November 2009).
2. The meeting will start on 8 July 2009 at 10 a.m. and will close on 9 July at 5.30 p.m.
3. The meeting will be chaired by Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland).
4. The working languages will be English, French and Russian.
5. All relevant documentation for the meeting of the Working Group will be made available in due course at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGIWRM.htm.

Item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

6. The Chairperson will open the meeting and invite the Working Group to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document.

Item 2: Adoption of the report of the third meeting

7. The Working Group will examine and adopt the report of its third meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/2).

Item 3. Progress in the ratification process

8. Since the Working Group's third meeting, there have been no new ratifications of the Convention, its Protocols or the amendments to the Convention's articles 25 and 26.
9. Representatives of countries that are in the process of ratifying the Convention will report on the progress achieved by their respective countries.
10. The Working Group will discuss how to foster ratification of the Convention as well as of the amendments to the Convention's articles 25 and 26.

Item 4. Support for ratification and implementation of the Convention

(a) Guide to implementing the Convention

11. The Chairperson of the Legal Board will recall the key outcomes of the Board's sixth meeting (Geneva, 29–30 April 2009) and will introduce the draft guide to implementing the Convention (informal document WG.1-Inf.1).

12. The Working Group is expected to comment on draft guide by offering: (a) general comments on the draft; and (b) comments on the specific chapters, including on the identified minimum requirements and examples. To effectively organize the discussion, delegations are requested to provide the secretariat with their written comments prior to the meeting.

13. The Working Group will also agree on ways and means to finalize the draft guide and to make arrangements for its submission to the Meeting of the Parties for possible adoption.

(b) Future activities of the Legal Board

14. At its third meeting, the Working Group reiterated the importance of ratification, effective implementation and compliance with the Convention, and suggested that the Convention's workplan for 2010–2012 contain an item related to support for ratification, implementation and compliance. On the basis of past activities, especially experience with the Guide's elaboration, the Chairperson of the Legal Board will present options to the Working Group for possible activities in this area and for the Legal Board's future involvement.

Item 5. Water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management

(a) Water and adaptation to climate change

15. The Co-Chairpersons of the Task Force on Water and Climate will recall the key outcomes of the second meeting of the Task Force (24 April 2009) and will brief participants on the progress made in developing the draft guidance on water and adaptation to climate change.

16. The Co-Chairpersons of the Task Force will also inform the Working Group about other relevant activities in this area, including those taking place under the auspices of the Common Implementation Strategy of the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive.

17. The Co-Chairpersons of the Task Force will introduce the draft guidance (WG.1-Inf.2). The Working Group is expected to comment the draft guidance, agree on ways and means to finalize it, and to make arrangements for its submission to the Meeting of the Parties for possible adoption. To effectively organize the discussion, delegations are requested to provide the secretariat with their written comments prior to the meeting.

18. The Working Group will also be invited to discuss future activities in this area, including promotion of the guidance, possible pilot projects aimed to implement the guidance and initiatives to support sharing of experience and capacity-building (see agenda item 13). The Working Group will also discuss future cooperation on water and adaptation to climate change with the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events under the Protocol on Water and Health.

(b) Transboundary flood management

19. A representative of Germany, co-lead country for this activity, will report on the outcomes of the workshop on transboundary flood risk management (Geneva, 22–23 April 2009).

20. The Working Group will discuss and agree on future activities in this area on the basis of needs identified through the workshop and proposals put forward by the Task Force on Water and Climate.

Item 6. Second assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region

21. The secretariat will update the Working Group on developments related to the preparation of the second assessment taking place since the Group's third meeting, specifically focusing on the outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Bratislava, 10–11 June 2009) and the subregional meeting for South-Eastern Europe to be held from 18 to 20 May 2009 in Sarajevo.

22. The Working Group will be invited to discuss and agree on future steps to be taken in order to ensure the effective preparation of the second assessment. In particular, it will be invited to discuss cooperation with the UNECE¹ Committee on Environmental Policy, the body responsible for preparation of the next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference, scheduled to be held in Astana in 2011.

Item 7. Ecosystem services and payments for such services in integrated water resources management

23. The Chairperson and the secretariat will inform participants about the outcomes of relevant workshops organized on this topic, in particular a session organized at the World Water Forum held in March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey, and a workshop on forests and water scheduled to be held from 12 to 14 May 2009 in Antalya, Turkey.

24. A representative of the Central Asia Regional Environment Centre will inform the Working Group about progress achieved in implementing a project to establish payment for ecosystems services in the Lake Issyk Kul basin.

25. The Working Group will discuss future activities in this area, including possible pilot projects aimed to implement the *Recommendations on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management* as well as initiatives aimed at sharing experience and capacity-building (see agenda item 13).

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Item 8. Water and industrial accidents

(a) Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

26. At its third meeting, the Working Group was not in a position to endorse the progress report on the work of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group as no consensus was reached on that Group's future. The Working Group entrusted the Convention's Bureau and the Bureau of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents to consider this issue. Further to this, the two Bureaux held a teleconference on 4 November 2008. The teleconference concluded that the Bureaux would prepare a strategy on the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group that would address its future functioning (e.g. ensuring a demand-driven approach and a steering role for the Bureaux). This proposal was approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Geneva, 25–27 November 2008), and a small group composed of members of the two Bureaux was entrusted with further definition of the strategy.

27. The Chairperson of the Bureau of the Water Convention¹ will inform the Working Group about progress in this area. The Working Group will be invited to discuss and agree on: (a) needs for further work in the area of water and industrial accidents; (b) future activities to address these needs; and (c) specific working arrangements for the activities.

(b) Protocol on Civil Liability

28. The Working Group will discuss developments in transboundary environment/water pollution and relevant issues of liability, in particular the relationship with the EU *acquis communautaire*. The Working Group will be invited to identify needs for further work in this area and to discuss future activities to address these needs.

Item 9. Initiatives supporting implementation of the Convention

(a) European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

29. The Working Group will be informed about recent developments under the European Union Water Initiative and its National Policy Dialogues process regarding integrated water resources management activities conducted by UNECE and also water supply and sanitation activities conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, as key strategic partners of the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Particular attention will be given to the ongoing dialogue process, mainly financed by the European Commission, in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the activities envisaged in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

30. The Working Group will examine the lessons learned, the added value of the dialogue process for the Convention, and the further strengthening of the dialogues, in particular through

¹ Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

broader and direct support by EU countries. The Working Group will be invited to express its views on future work in this area.

(b) Transboundary water cooperation and integrated water resources management in Central Asia

31. Water management and cooperation in Central Asia are crucial for economic and social development as well as security in the subregion. In response, in recent years the Convention has increased its action in this area. Similarly, a number of initiatives have been recently launched to support progress. One main development has been the preparation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, which includes a pillar, coordinated by Italy, on environmental sustainability and water. Another important initiative is the programme, “Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia”, launched in 2008 by the Government of Germany during the “Water Unites” Conference in Berlin as part of the Berlin Water Process. A programme component on “Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management” will be implemented by UNECE.

32. The Working Group will be informed about the activities carried out by UNECE in Central Asia, as well as future plans and synergies with other initiatives.

33. The Working Group will be invited to discuss the future role of the Convention in the subregion and the related possible activities to be included in the 2010–2012 workplan.

(c) Environment and Security Initiative

34. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the contributions of UNECE to the Environment and Security Initiative, jointly carried out by UNECE, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization for Security and Co-operation and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as an associate member. The Working Group will provide its comments and offer guidance on future cooperation under the Initiative.

Item 10: Promotion of the Convention

35. The Working Group will be invited to discuss ways and means to effectively promote the Convention and the Convention’s achievements, based on a proposal prepared by the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention in cooperation with the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health.

Item 11: Coordination and synergies with activities of United Nations agencies and other organizations

36. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the contributions of UNECE to the activities of UN-Water, and in particular to the UN-Water Task Force on Transboundary Waters and the organization of World Water Day 2009, which was devoted to transboundary water cooperation.

Item 12. Ongoing workplan for 2007–2009 for integrated water resources management

37. The Working Group will review progress made vis-à-vis implementation of the Convention's ongoing programme of work under programme area II (ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2). It will do this taking into account: (a) discussions under the previous agenda items; (b) that the strategic guidance on integrated management of transboundary water resources (activity 2.1.1) has been revised in light of countries' requests; and (c) that synergies between the Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive (activity 2.2.2) have mostly occurred through the development of the guide to implementing the Convention and through the National Policy Dialogues

38. The Working Group will entrust its Chairperson (with the assistance of the secretariat) with the task of reporting on progress achieved to the Parties at their fifth meeting.

Item 13. Workplan for 2010–2012 and beyond

(a) Structure and activities of the workplan for 2010–2012

39. Discussions at the Working Group's previous meetings and in other activities under the Convention have suggested the need to restructure the workplan in a different way, namely to organize it by the type of action and the overall objectives of activities rather than by themes. Moreover, the need to consider monitoring and assessment in the broader context of integrated water resources management calls for close cooperation between the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment through cooperation on a number of joint activities.

40. On the basis of a document (see ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2009/3 - ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2009/4) prepared by the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups as well as the discussions under previous agenda items, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management will agree on possible future activities, including lead countries, and will consider possibilities for extending its mandate to guide the implementation of the 2010–2012 workplan. It will make work-sharing arrangements with a view to finalizing a draft workplan to be submitted to the Parties for adoption at their fifth meeting.

(b) Activities on the ground: new pilot projects

41. In the discussions of the workplan for 2010–2012, a prominent topic is expected to be projects on the ground, a projected main area of future work under the Convention. Pilot projects will build on the different activities under the Convention and support implementation of the Convention and of the guidelines and other soft-law tools developed under its auspices, e.g. the forthcoming guidance on water and adaptation to climate change and the *Recommendations on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management*.

42. On the basis of an informal document, the Working Group will discuss and agree on the objectives, geographic and thematic focuses, coordination structure and funding of the pilot projects programme. Countries and organizations will be invited to express their interest in participating in the projects.

Item 14. Dates and venue of the fifth meeting of the Working Group.

43. The Working Group will determine a preliminary venue and dates for its fifth meeting.

Item 15. Other business

44. At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.

Item 16. Closing of the meeting

45. The Chairperson will close the meeting on 9 July 2009 at 5.30 p.m.
