



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
6 April 2023

Original: English

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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

#### **Eighteenth meeting**

Geneva, 19–21 June 2023

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

## **Report on the implementation of activities under the Water Convention in 2022**

**Prepared by the secretariat**

### *Summary*

The present document reports on the implementation of the programme of work for 2022–2024 for the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (ECE/M.P.WAT/63/Add.1) for the period 2022, including activities undertaken by the subsidiary bodies of the Meeting of the Parties and by the secretariat. Information on financial contributions to the Convention's trust funds and the use of these and other extrabudgetary resources is included in a separate document (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2023/4).

The Working Group is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the present report;
- (b) Encourage donors, where appropriate and possible, to accept such reports in the future instead of asking for a separate report on their contribution.



## I. Highlights from 2022 of the work programme for 2022–2024: major outcomes

1. In 2022, the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2024 for the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) (ECE/M.P.WAT/63/Add.1) was initiated, with the overall aim of supporting implementation of the Water Convention and its principles and the overall objective of ensuring that transboundary waters worldwide are managed in cooperation between riparian countries to promote sustainable development, peace and security (see table below for key highlights by programme area). A detailed description of activities, including those listed in the table below, is presented in section III below.
2. The year 2022 marked the Water Convention's thirtieth anniversary, which was celebrated in Tallin (30 June 2022). That event also served to discuss the Convention's future in terms of themes and institutional development. The publication *The Water Convention: 30 Years of Impact and Achievements on the Ground*<sup>1</sup> was prepared illustrating the Convention's increasing relevance as a global instrument.
3. Significant progress was made in the Convention's global opening: Cameroon joined as a new Party and over 20 countries made progress towards accession. Additionally, interest in acceding to the Convention emerged for the first time in Latin America.
4. The Convention and partners significantly raised the profile of transboundary cooperation at global events such as the Ninth World Water Forum (Dakar, 21–26 March 2022), the Second Dushanbe Water Process Conference (6–9 June 2022) and, notably, in the run-up to the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (New York, 22–24 March 2023), where a specific interactive dialogue focusing on transboundary and intersectoral cooperation was included.
5. In 2022, work under the Convention started to address new topics, such as source-to-sea management, on which a dedicated global workshop was organized with many partners (Geneva (hybrid), 14–16 December 2022).
6. The role of partners has been crucial in activities supporting the Convention's globalization and increasing capacity for its implementation, in all programme of work areas. Furthermore, the lead Parties (Finland, France, Germany, Ghana and Hungary (programme area 1.1), Estonia (programme area 1.2), Germany and Hungary (programme area 1.3), Finland and Senegal (programme area 2), Estonia and Slovenia (programme area 3.1), Finland (programme area 3.2), Finland and Hungary (programme area 3.3), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the European Union member States and their entities (programme area 3.4), the Netherlands and Switzerland (programme areas 4–5)) played a crucial role in providing effective guidance on and mobilizing political and other support for implementation of activities.
7. In 2022, the Convention continued to serve as a tool for operationalizing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, specifically regarding transboundary water cooperation, and supporting implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. For example, water and transboundary cooperation were given significantly more attention at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 6–20 November 2022).

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/69/Corr.1

## Selected specific outcomes and outputs by programme area

<i>Outcome of programme of work for 2022–2024</i>	<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Key specific outcomes in 2022</i>	<i>Key specific outputs in 2022</i>
1: Countries understand Convention, accede thereto, develop agreements and establish joint bodies	1: Increasing awareness of and accession to Convention and application of its principles drawing on benefits of cooperation	<p>Accession by Cameroon</p> <p>Significant progress on accession in 6 countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Iraq, Namibia, Nigeria, Panama)</p> <p>Awareness of and political support for Convention and transboundary water cooperation increased</p> <p>Support provided to countries, through projects and development of tool, in developing and revising transboundary water cooperation agreements and arrangements</p>	<p>Legal/technical advice provided to more than 12 countries</p> <p>10 national and 3 regional workshops organized on Convention/transboundary cooperation</p> <p>Presentation of Convention at numerous regional/basin events; online courses organized by partners</p> <p>Support provided to developing new or supporting implementation of existing agreements in 4 basins/subbasins</p> <p>Support provided to 2 regional cooperation processes</p> <p>Publication <i>The Water Convention: 30 Years of Impact and Achievements on the Ground</i> launched and printed in English, French, Spanish</p> <p>Answers provided by Implementation Committee to Latin American countries' questions</p>
2: Water resources in transboundary basins monitored and assessed, and information shared among riparian countries	2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins	Support on monitoring and exchange of data and information across borders provided through development of guidance material	<p>Publication <i>Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters</i> finalized and printed in English</p> <p>45 case studies collected for new publication on good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data exchange</p>
3: IWRM implemented at all levels in changing climate	3: Promoting integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels	<p>Global workshop on source-to-sea management addressed new topic and initiated cooperation with new partners</p> <p>Value of intersectoral action bolstered in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and globally</p> <p>Nexus methodology and tools became increasingly useful to partners</p> <p>Awareness raised on global practices in allocation and complementary practices in transboundary basins</p> <p>NPDs served as platforms for intersectoral cooperation</p>	<p>Global workshop on source-to-sea management organized, gathering more than 300 experts and facilitating practical learning on new topic</p> <p>Nexus assessments, road maps, and project documents supported in Drin River and Drina River basins</p> <p>Publication <i>Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: A synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins</i> translated into French, Russian and Spanish and promoted</p> <p>Leaflet <i>Transboundary Nexus Assessment Methodology</i> developed in English, French, Russian and Spanish</p> <p>Seventh meeting of Task Force on Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus organized</p>

Outcome of programme of work for 2022–2024	Programme area	Key specific outcomes in 2022	Key specific outputs in 2022
		and water reform drivers in 9 countries	<p>Publication <i>Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context</i> translated into Russian; Publication promoted at different workshops and seminars</p> <p>Co-organized session on transboundary water allocation and complementary approaches at SIWI World Water Week 2022</p> <p>Transboundary water cooperation supported by NPDs in 3 basins</p> <p>New NPD process launched in Uzbekistan</p> <p>Study of pollution sources and identification of accident risks in Syr Darya River basin prepared</p>
	4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins	Countries and basins better equipped with knowledge and skills to mainstream water and benefits of transboundary cooperation into global and national climate- and disaster-related documents and projects	<p>Two global events organized, involving about 300 participants, linking transboundary water cooperation, disasters, climate and agriculture, including one global workshop and Task Force on Water and Climate meeting</p> <p>Importance of water and benefits of transboundary cooperation promoted at UNFCCC COP27</p> <p>Water and benefits of transboundary cooperation integrated into documents prepared under UNFCCC, e.g., Methodologies for assessing adaptation needs and their application</p>
4: Transboundary water cooperation and basin development are sustainably financed	5: Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development	<p>Strengthened partnership with key IFIs and organizations working on topic</p> <p>Comprehensive overview of possible sources of funding and financing to support transboundary water cooperation and activities related to transboundary basins management and development available</p>	<p>Publication <i>Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development</i> translated into French and Russian</p> <p>Preparation of brief <i>How to Accelerate the Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development?</i> initiated</p> <p>Thematic session on financing transboundary water cooperation piloted in national workshop on accession in Nigeria</p>
5: Transboundary water cooperation monitored and partners mobilized to support it	6: Reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under Convention	Awareness raised on progress and challenges in transboundary water cooperation, under Convention and at global level	<p>3 Regional progress reports on SDG indicator 6.5.2 prepared for Arab States, Ibero-America and Africa by, respectively, ESCWA, CODIA and ECA</p> <p>3 Acceleration snapshots prepared to illustrate progress on Prespa Lake,</p>

<i>Outcome of programme of work for 2022–2024</i>	<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Key specific outcomes in 2022</i>	<i>Key specific outputs in 2022</i>
		Acceleration needs for progress on transboundary water cooperation to achieve SDG target 6.5 identified and promoted	Pungwe, Buzi and Save River basins, Stampriet Aquifer system Document prepared: <i>Opportunities to coordinate with neighbouring countries when completing the SDG indicator 6.5.2 national report</i>
	7: Partnerships, communication and knowledge management	Progress/achievements under Convention communicated via social media, press releases and newsletter Water Convention's 30th anniversary celebrated through special event (Tallinn) and dedicated anniversary publication Strengthened visibility on Water Convention's activities, including participation in major events (e.g., 9th World Water Forum and COP27) Political support to transboundary water cooperation catalysed ahead of United Nations 2023 Water Conference, including through Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition, Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting, and many other events	Three newsletters disseminated to 2,458 contacts (opened by more than 80% of recipients) Twitter audience: 7,433 followers (57% increase since 2021) LinkedIn account: 1,018 followers (55% increase since 2021) Facebook account: 1,200 followers (65% increase since 2021) 40-partner multi-stakeholder Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition launched Stronger cooperation with maritime partners initiated, through source-to-sea workshop Water Convention's 30 <sup>th</sup> anniversary event and Working Groups on Integrated Water Resources Management and Monitoring and Assessment organized with more than 200 participants

*Abbreviations:* CODIA, Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors; COP, Conference of the Parties; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; IFI, international financial institution; IWRM, integrated water resources management; NPD, National Policy Dialogue; SDG, Sustainable Development Goal; SIWI, Stockholm International Water Institute.

## II. Challenges, trends and lessons learned for future work specific to some programme areas

### A. Global opening of the Convention

8. In 2022, the Water Convention community of Parties grew, with Cameroon acceding to the Convention, and the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Iraq, Namibia, Nigeria and Panama approving accession thereto.

9. Progress in raising the Convention's profile and supporting accession processes continued, in close collaboration with Governments, through provision of legal advice and answering countries' specific questions, including the organization of 10 national workshops in Africa and Latin America, enabling progress towards accession and future implementation of the Convention in several countries and basins.

10. Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors, including through the strengthening of existing partnerships with regional and global financial institutions, the establishment of new partnerships with several regional organization and greater coordination and articulation with activities of partners, including with United Nations regional commissions and country offices, were essential for raising awareness on the Convention. The secretariat also supported accession to and implementation of the Convention, especially in regions where progress towards accession is slow.

11. Supporting implementation in new Parties began through developing implementation plans, but much greater efforts, mainly by partners and financial institutions, will be needed.

12. Decision IX/3 of the Meeting of the Parties on targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.2) has led to some progress towards a fairer sharing of the burden of financing the implementation of the programme of work, but much more effort is needed, since the current funding of the Convention is unsustainable, especially in view of the Convention globalization.

## **B. Implementation Committee**

13. An important lesson learned in 2022 was the need for close follow-up by the Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of its legal and technical advice provided to the countries concerned as part of the first advisory procedure. Also, in 2022, the Implementation Committee enhanced its role in supporting the Convention's globalization.

## **C. Monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins**

14. Regarding monitoring and data exchange, there is clearly a need for sharing good experiences and practices while paying adequate attention to transboundary cooperation aspects. The new publication *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*<sup>2</sup> should help countries to strategically develop their related cooperation. Experience of Convention projects on the ground shows the crucial importance of joint monitoring, assessment and data exchange for the implementation of other obligations under the Convention, as well as the need for partnership with other actors.

## **D. Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins**

15. The operationalization of nexus solutions depends on the effectiveness of transboundary cooperation, and river basin organizations have a key role to play here. However, there is still a need to clarify the benefits of nexus solutions and the business case for nexus investments vis-à-vis sectoral investments; this emerged from past and upcoming activities in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Countries in the process of acceding to the Convention showed an interest in exploring the potential benefits of accession for cross-sectoral cooperation. The methodology developed under the Convention is increasingly being used by partners from the cooperation and development sector and academia. While progress was made, partnering with actors outside the water sector (energy in particular) and valuing ecosystems remain key challenges that need be addressed in future work.

## **E. National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management under the European Union Water Initiative**

16. Challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the effects of the war in Ukraine have had a negative impact on work in countries and National Policy Dialogue (NPD) processes. Therefore, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.23.II.E.1.

(ECE) and its partners have maintained close contact with beneficiary ministries and worked to maintain as many activities as possible, including working online. The essential role of access to clean water, adequate sanitation and hygiene and the importance of preserving ecosystems for human health were once again proved. NPDs have a vital role to play as intersectoral platforms for discussing key water-related challenges, policies and reforms.

17. The sustainability and stable institutional frameworks of the NPD processes and the strong partnerships with the European Union and OECD, as strategic partners for NPDs, enabled support to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the subregion.

## **F. Source-to-sea management**

18. The global workshop on source-to-sea management showed that work under the Convention can adapt and address new topics, but also that, for such endeavours, partnerships with other organizations (e.g., workshop partners) and strong leadership by lead Parties are crucial.

## **G. Adapting to climate change**

19. Activities on climate change in 2022 showcased the importance of strong linkages between transboundary water cooperation and climate change adaptation for addressing water scarcity and ensuring food security in transboundary basins. The twenty-seventh session of UNFCCC also illustrated that step-by-step efforts, such as communication with climate negotiators, capacity-building events and intersectoral coordination mechanisms bringing together water and climate stakeholders, as well as the water community's contribution to national, regional and global climate events and documents developed under UNFCCC, result in the promotion of water and transboundary cooperation in the climate change agenda. However, attention to water in global climate processes is still not sufficient, and the transboundary dimension of the climate issue is often not adequately addressed; thus, more efforts are required in this regard.

## **H. Financing transboundary water cooperation**

20. Financing transboundary water cooperation is an increasingly central topic on the global development agenda. Through its work on capacity-building and development of a dedicated brief, the Water Convention provides a key platform for member States and river basin organizations to learn about such financing and explore opportunities.

## **I. Contribution to global processes**

21. The Convention secretariat continued to advocate for transboundary water cooperation in global processes and played an important role in preparing “Interactive dialogue 4: Water for Cooperation” at the 2023 United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 (New York, 22 March–24 March 2023). Such global activities led to significant impact, including through the creation of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition.

22. The growing recognition of the importance of transboundary water cooperation, and of the Water Convention, for achieving Sustainable Development Goals was highlighted at the Ninth World Water Forum, the ECE Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (Geneva, 12–13 April 2022), the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater (Paris (hybrid), 7–8 December 2022) and many other events.

### **III. Areas of work and activities**

#### **A. Work of the Bureau**

23. The Bureau, led by its Chair, Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), held its thirty-third meeting (Geneva (hybrid), 20–21 October 2022) and several telephone conferences. The Bureau reviewed the programme of work's implementation, discussed the future of the Convention, and played a key role in the Convention's globalization.

24. Bureau members supported the Convention's promotion and the implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2), contributed to national, regional and global events to promote the Convention, including through twinning activities, took steps towards implementing specific Strategy actions, including establishing partnerships, and raised additional funds for Convention activities.

#### **B. Programme area 1: Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation**

##### **1.1 Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention and supporting national processes towards accession**

25. Upon request, the secretariat provided technical and legal advice and guidance to various national processes in close collaboration with regional and local partners, ensuring progress towards accession in various countries.

26. Cameroon acceded to the Water Convention on 1 November 2022. The Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia approved the laws of accession in January 2022. Understanding of, and capacity to accede to and implement the Convention was increased through a national workshop in Abuja, Nigeria (27–29 July 2022) to discuss the benefits of accession. Subsequently, the Cabinet approved the accession of Nigeria in September 2023. Several other countries made significant steps towards accession, such as Benin, Burkina Faso, the Congo and Sierra Leone, which progressed towards accession or launched national initiatives to discuss accession benefits. Additionally, a national workshop was organized in Lomé, (10–11 February 2022) to discuss the Convention's implementation and support the development of the national implementation plan.

27. In East and Southern Africa, national workshops were organized in Entebbe, Uganda (15–16 February 2022); Lusaka (26–27 May 2022), Windhoek (31 May–1 June 2022) and Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania (1–2 December 2022) to discuss accession benefits. Subsequently, road maps for accession were defined and interministerial working groups established to accompany implementation. Several other countries, such as Botswana, Somalia and South Sudan, also expressed interest in acceding to the Convention and launched national initiatives to discuss accession benefits.

28. In the Middle East and North Africa region, concrete actions were identified to support the finalization of the process of accession of Iraq and prepare for its future implementation. Capacity on the Convention and its new tools was raised through contributing to the training session "Capacity Development for Iraq's Water Diplomacy" (Erbil, Iraq (hybrid), 31 March–1 April 2022) organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq.

29. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, a new trend of interest in the Convention emerged, prompted by a combination of activities both at the regional and national levels. The secretariat co-organized or contributed to the following activities, which made it possible to facilitate discussion at the regional level on the benefits of acceding to and implementing the Convention, and raised awareness on its tools available to support transboundary water cooperation:



30. The fourth regional workshop on transboundary water resources management in Central America “Tools and processes to accelerate progress in cooperation for the management of transboundary waters” (Panama City, 31 May–1 June 2022), together with the Global Water Partnership–Central America (GWP-CAM) and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD). The workshop contributed to the establishment of a regional framework for transboundary water management in Central America, within the framework of the Regional Environmental Framework Strategy, based on the principles of international water law.

31. The Second International Symposium on Transboundary Waters in Latin America and the Caribbean (La Paz, Plurinational State of Bolivia, 1–3 December 2022), together with the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Organization of American States (OAS), preceded by a preparatory webinar “Dialogue space between Latin American and Caribbean countries on governance of shared waters” (online, 31 March 2022).

32. Meetings of CODIA: fifth Inter-CODIA meeting (Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 27–29 July 2022) and twenty-third CODIA meeting (Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 26–28 October 2022).

33. Consequently, several countries started national dialogues to discuss the benefits of joining and implementing the Convention. Understanding of the Convention and capacity to accede to and implement it was increased through national workshops organized in Santo Domingo (31 October 2022) and Panama City (6–7 December 2022). Following these workshops, significant progress was made by the Dominican Republic and Panama towards accession.

34. In Asia, progress towards accession is slow. However, the secretariat continued to provide technical support and liaise with countries in the region to build awareness and capacity on the Convention’s role and value added. For Viet Nam, the secretariat provided feedback to the National Water Law review process and gave a virtual presentation to officials in Hanoi (2 July 2022) on the Convention’s role and value added. Regionally, the secretariat hosted a half-day session (7 September 2022) for a study tour of senior water officials from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC), arranged by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. However, more efforts must be undertaken in the region next year, such as through the preparatory process for the Tenth World Water Forum (Bali, Indonesia, 18–24 May 2024).

35. The secretariat also co-organized the annual Pan-African Water Governance and International Water Law Training, in partnership with Global Water Partnership and several other partners (Entebbe, Uganda, 19–23 September 2022) to build the capacity of Africa experts on international water law and the water conventions.

36. In support of the national processes on accession and implementation, the publication *The Water Convention: 30 Years of Impact and Achievements on the Ground*<sup>3</sup> was prepared to showcase success stories of the Convention’s impact on the ground. It is based on success stories submitted by Governments and stakeholders in early 2022 in response to an open call issued by the secretariat. The publication, launched during the anniversary event in Tallinn (30 June 2022), illustrates how the Convention has supported economic development, promoted regional integration, improved water governance and helped countries adapt to climate change.

## 1.2 Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies

37. In Eastern Europe, the Water Convention secretariat and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) provided support to the Dniester Commission regarding continuation of the second phase of the Dniester Global Environment Facility project.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/69 and ECE/MP.WAT/69/Corr.1.

38. In Central Asia, in 2022, the secretariat supported the Chu-Talas Commission in preparing and endorsing a joint statement on the Chu-Talas Strategic Action Programme by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

39. In West Africa, the secretariat continued to provide support, in partnership with the Geneva Water Hub and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, to the regional dialogue on the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer basin shared by the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. In particular, they supported a regional working group in developing a road map for the negotiation of a legal and institutional framework for cooperation on the Aquifer basin. Additionally, the secretariat facilitated resource mobilization from other donors, such the World Bank, benefiting the riparian countries. The Aquifer basin initiative was selected among the three countries' Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global acceleration case studies by UN-Water<sup>4</sup> and showcased at the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Special Event during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 5–15 July 2022) and World Water Week 2022 (Stockholm, 23 August–1 September 2022).

40. In Southern Africa, the *Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Cooperation*<sup>5</sup> (Practical Guide) provided the template and guidance for developing an agreement and institution on the Luapula River, shared by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. The secretariat provided online capacity-building to Zambian officials on use of the Practical Guide and subsequent feedback on drafts.

41. In Central America, the Practical Guide provided inputs to the process of developing regional guidelines for transboundary water management led by CCAD. It was also promoted to contribute to the possible elaboration of an agreement for management of the Ocotepeque-Citalá Aquifer shared by El Salvador and Honduras.

42. Partners for this programme area included the African Development Bank (AfDB), the French Development Agency (AFD), the African Ministers' Council on Water, CCAD/the Central American Integration System (SICA), CODIA, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Geneva Water Hub, Global Environment Facility (GEF), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), GWP, GWP-CAM, IDB, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), OAS, the Senegal River Development Organization (OMVS), the Gambia River Basin Development Organization (OMVG), OSCE, ECA, UNDP and the World Bank. The work on the Water Convention global opening was largely supported by the project "Promoting accession to the Water Convention", funded by the European Union. Other donors, including Switzerland, contributed to opening activities.

### 1.3 Implementation Committee

43. In 2022, the Implementation Committee assisted Montenegro and Albania in implementing its legal and technical advice<sup>6</sup> provided in the framework of advisory procedure WAT/IC/AP/1 related to the possible transboundary impact of the planned construction of additional small hydropower plants on the Cijevna/Cem River in Albania. The Committee held consultations and a joint session with the two countries as part of its fourteenth meeting (Geneva, 24–25 February 2022), at which progress was discussed and next steps in implementation were agreed.<sup>7</sup>

44. In February 2022, the secretariat referred to the Committee questions received from several Latin American countries concerning the relationship between adjudication in the International Court of Justice and the possible implications of being a Party to the Convention. The Committee provided replies,<sup>8</sup> which were translated into Spanish and communicated by the secretariat to the relevant countries.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.unwater.org/publications/country-acceleration-case-study-senegal](http://www.unwater.org/publications/country-acceleration-case-study-senegal).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.21.II.E.8.

<sup>6</sup> See ECE/MP.WAT/IC/2021/1, annex.

<sup>7</sup> ECE/MP.WAT/IC/2022/2, paras. 6–9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., annex.

## C. Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins

45. The work focused on two key activities envisaged in the programme of work for 2022–2024: (a) updating the publication *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* (2006) as a global edition; and, (b) preparing a new publication on good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data exchange. The Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Data Exchange (Geneva (hybrid), 13–14 April 2022) provided comments on the first draft of the *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* and the outline of the new publication on good practices and lessons learned. Subsequently, the fourth joint meeting of the Working Groups on Integrated Water Resources Management and on Monitoring and Assessment (Tallinn, 28–30 June 2022) commented on the revised draft of the *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment* and invited countries and organizations to submit case studies for the new publication on good practices and lessons learned.

46. Following the incorporation of comments received, the publication *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment* was finalized by the secretariat in cooperation with the lead Parties and published in January 2023. The process of developing a new publication on good practices and lessons learned was initiated by collecting case studies, with over 45 case studies received by the secretariat by the end of 2022.

47. The regional workshop on monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins in Central Asia (Astana, 1–2 February 2023) was organized by the secretariat, the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) and the Green Central Asia Initiative implemented by GIZ. The workshop strengthened the capacity of government agencies and hydrometeorological services in five countries of Central Asia to develop cooperation in the fields of information exchange and monitoring and assessment of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The publication of *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment* informed the discussions. The workshop also enabled the collection of good practices for the new publication on good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data exchange.

48. Partners for this programme area included the Geneva Water Hub, GIZ, GWP, Environment Agency Austria, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), IWAC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

## D. Programme area 3: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels

### 3.1 Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins

49. In 2022, the first Global workshop on source-to-sea management under the Water Convention was organized (Geneva, 14–16 December 2022), aimed at bridging existing gaps by connecting ecosystems' management and tackling maritime pollution at the source, upstream. Managing land, freshwater, coastal and marine resources holistically – from source to sea – is critical to protect the oceans and manage freshwater and land resources sustainably.

50. The workshop gathered more than 300 experts and policymakers from the freshwater and ocean communities, as well as from transboundary basin organizations and marine organizations, with the aim of strengthening cooperation and sharing good practices in policymaking and implementation of effective source-to-sea management. As highlighted at the workshop, the Convention can serve as a platform for building capacity, exchanging experience and providing guidance on source-to-sea management.

51. The workshop generated key recommendations, including a call to strengthen transboundary and intersectoral cooperation, raise awareness and build capacity in source-to-sea management, incentivize financing, and use the current political momentum to

accelerate source-to-sea action. A possible follow-up action to the workshop could include the preparation of a guidance note on the implementation of the source-to-sea approach for professionals working in the respective areas.

52. The Global workshop was organized in cooperation with UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC/UNESCO), SIWI, Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management (S2S Platform), GWP, GEF and its International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (GEF IW:Learn).

### 3.2 Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach

53. The project “Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in South-Eastern Europe, through the use of the nexus approach”, led by GWP-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), supported activities in the Drin River and Drina River basins. The project resulted in the publication of two assessment reports, two nexus road maps to guide future basin-level cross-sectoral cooperation efforts, and four proposals for priority nexus investments (on climate adaptation, sediment management, nature-based solutions for wastewater treatment, and sustainable biomass). The Drina steering committee (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) and the Drin Core Group (Albania, Kosovo,<sup>9</sup> Montenegro, North Macedonia) met online to validate the project’s results and discuss their relevance for future basin-level cooperation.

54. The secretariat concluded the preparation phase of a five-year nexus project in Central Asia, to be financed by the International Climate Initiative of Germany and implemented by OECD, ECE, the Scientific-Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC-ICWC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The project’s preparations included one high-level event (Astana, 16 June 2022), and discussion with stakeholders and partners at various events, notably the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment, organized at the Second Almaty Energy Forum (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 14–16 November 2022).

55. The Secretariat further promoted nexus publications and tools. The publication *Solutions and Investments in the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus: A Synthesis of Experiences in Transboundary Basins*<sup>10</sup> was translated into French, Russian and Spanish. A leaflet entitled *Transboundary Nexus Assessment Methodology (TBNA)*<sup>11</sup> was also produced in English, French, Russian and Spanish to promote the broader application of the methodology presented in the publication *Methodology for Assessing the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus in Transboundary Basins and Experiences from its Application: Synthesis*.<sup>12</sup>

56. The seventh meeting of the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus (Geneva, 12–13 December 2022) chaired by Finland provided a space for discussing: challenges and opportunities in the operationalization of nexus solutions from the perspective of river basin organizations; the key role of ecosystems in the nexus; and, opportunities for integrated water-energy solutions. Several partners illustrated how they used the methodology developed under the Water Convention to carry out nexus activities in transboundary contexts, adapting it to their needs.

57. Thematic contributions were made to, among other events: the national consultations for the development of guidelines for nexus investments in the Niger River basin, organized by GIZ (online, May to September 2022); and, the Global Symposium on Sustainable Water

<sup>9</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/66.

<sup>11</sup> ECE/MP.WAT/NONE/18.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/55.

and Energy Solutions, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations and Itaipu Binacional (Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, 13–15 June 2022).

58. Partners included: GIZ, GWP-Med, the Sustainable Energy Division of ECE, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), OECD, FAO, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations and the Middle East Desalination Research Centre.

### 3.3 Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context

59. In 2022, the *Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context*<sup>13</sup> was promoted in three national workshops (Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia), two subnational workshops (Zambia) and various online seminars.

60. The *Handbook* was translated into Russian, in support of a regional workshop on transboundary water allocation in Central Asia (Astana, 2–3 November 2022) co-organized by IWAC under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, ECE and the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) with funding support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland. This workshop built upon a previous regional processes and served to build capacity and strengthen the basis for decisions on the joint use of water resources of transboundary watercourses in Central Asia.

61. To promote the *Handbook* and related publications on the nexus, the secretariat co-organized a hybrid session on transboundary water allocation and complementary approaches at World Water Week (Stockholm, 30 August 2022), with partners including Finland, Slovenia and the International Joint Commission.

62. Partners included: the University of Eastern Finland, Oregon State University (United States of America), IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (Netherlands), IWAC and OECD.

### 3.4 Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management under the European Union Water Initiative

63. In 2022, ECE continued implementing NPDs with support from the European Union, with the aim of strengthening water governance and the application of integrated water resources management, particularly through intersectoral cooperation in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, in line with the Convention, its Protocol on Water and Health, the European Union Water Framework Directive<sup>14</sup> and other instruments. Activities were carried out in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

64. European Union funding through the new EU4Environment in Eastern Partner Countries: Water Resources and Environmental Data programme, launched in January 2022, made it possible to continue work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, working closely with the other implementing partners (OECD, Environment Agency Austria, the Austrian Development Agency and the International Office for Water of France).

65. The twentieth meeting of the Interministerial Steering Committee of the NPD on Water Issues in Yerevan (3–4 October 2022) and the ninth meeting of the Steering Committee of the NPD on Integrated Water Resources Management in Tbilisi (6–7 December 2022) were both followed by thematic workshops on nature-based solutions.

66. Continued efforts by ECE to support development of new laws and regulation resulted in the adoption of the amended Water Code in Armenia, on 7 July 2022, and a new Water Strategy and its associated operational plan for implementation in Ukraine, on 9 December 2022.

67. ECE continued to work with Armenia and Georgia on joint monitoring activities in the transboundary Khrami-Debed River basin, and with Azerbaijan and Georgia on the

<sup>13</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/64.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32000L0060>.

continuation of negotiations on cooperation in the Kura River basin. With ECE support, a working group meeting of the Dniester Commission was held in December 2022.

68. The NPD process continued to promote accession to and implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health. Targets related to the Protocol and facilitated by ECE are annexed to the new Water Strategy in Ukraine.

69. Activities in Central Asia were carried out under the regional project within the European Union–Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation project,<sup>15</sup> in cooperation with OECD. A new NPD process was launched in Uzbekistan, with the first Steering Committee meeting being held in Tashkent on 27 September 2022. The seventh meeting of the Interdepartmental Coordinating Council for the NPD on Water Policy was organized in Astana on 14 December 2022. A new study of pollution sources and identification of accident risks in the Syr Darya River basin was prepared with the involvement of all riparian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).

## **E. Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins**

### **4.1 Supporting development of transboundary adaptation strategies and implementation of priority measures**

70. In 2022, work under the Convention enabled increased capacity through the exchange of experience and knowledge-sharing, contributing to global policy processes on climate and disasters and projects on the ground.

71. The sixth meeting of the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation (Geneva (hybrid), 25 April 2022) and the thirteenth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (Geneva (hybrid), 19 October 2022) reviewed best practices in ecosystem-based adaptation in transboundary basins to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6, as well as opportunities and examples in mainstreaming water and transboundary cooperation into national climate documents, for example, Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans, the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture and nexus initiatives under UNFCCC.

72. The Global workshop on water, agriculture and climate change (Geneva (hybrid), 17–18 October 2022), organized under the leadership of the Netherlands and Switzerland and in cooperation with partners, concluded that intersectoral cooperation is crucial for addressing water scarcity and water quality, as well as ensuring equitable and sustainable water allocation at the national and transboundary levels. Additionally, it was highlighted by specific agriculture-focused examples from transboundary basins that understanding intersectoral impacts opens crucial opportunities for more efficient cooperation and funding for climate change adaptation.

73. Work in this area contributed to raising awareness of the role of water and transboundary cooperation in global processes, for example, to the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 6–20 November 2022), namely to the round table on “Water Security” (8 November), the Water Pavilion and several side events, including by organizing the side event “Achieving Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation through Water Resilience” (12 November), led by ECE in the framework of UN-Water.

74. The secretariat also contributed to the meetings of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee, the Action for Water Adaptation and Resilience initiative, activities under the Water and Climate Coalition, as well as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Bali, Indonesia, 23–28 May 2022), with an online side event “Governance of the climate and technological risks in transboundary water bodies” (27 May), organized in cooperation with the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

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<sup>15</sup> See <https://wecoop.eu/>.

#### 4.2 Supporting transboundary basins in financing climate change adaptation

75. In 2022, activities included capacity-building on financing climate change adaptation in transboundary basins through the organization of dedicated sessions at certain global meetings and events, including through two side events at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC.

76. Partners included: the Adaptation Fund, the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Global Centre on Adaptation, FAO, GEF, GWP, Green Climate Fund, IDB, INBO, the International Water Management Institute, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, OSCE, SIWI, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention), UNDP, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNFCCC, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Bank, WMO, Zoï Environment Network and several joint bodies.

### F. Programme area 5: Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development

77. Based on requests received by several partners, river basin organizations and countries in 2022 to develop a summary of the publication *Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development*,<sup>16</sup> the secretariat developed a brief entitled *How to accelerate the funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development?*,<sup>17</sup> which provides, in a shorter and more reader-friendly format, an overview of the financial aspects of transboundary cooperation in terms of key opportunities and challenges, needs for the development and operations of joint bodies and basin development projects, and possible financing and funding sources available.

78. The brief was developed to raise awareness on the issue of financing and funding transboundary water cooperation and basin development and the need to take it into account in the ongoing global discussion on financing water, especially in the framework of the work of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water.

79. The secretariat piloted the inclusion of dedicated sessions on financing during national workshops organized in countries in the process of acceding to the Water Convention (e.g., Abuja, Nigeria, 27–29 July 2022). These sessions made it possible to raise awareness on the topic and to create a dialogue space between donors and countries.

80. Partners included: AfDB, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), EIB, GEF, GEF IW:LEARN, IDB, OECD, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the World Bank.

### G. Programme area 6: Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

#### 6.1 Supporting reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

81. Regional progress reports on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 were prepared for the Arab States,<sup>18</sup> Ibero-America<sup>19</sup> and Africa by, respectively, ESCWA, CODIA and ECA, based on national reports on indicator 6.5.2, and with inputs from ECE and UNESCO.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/61.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/72.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.unescwa.org/publications/sdg-indicator-6-5-2-transboundary-cooperation-arab-states](http://www.unescwa.org/publications/sdg-indicator-6-5-2-transboundary-cooperation-arab-states).

<sup>19</sup> See <https://codia.info/noticias/publicacion-analisis-del-indicador-6-5-2-avances-y-retos-en-la-cooperacion-en-materia-de-gestion-de-aguas-transfronterizas-en-los-paises-del-ambito-iberoamericano/>.

82. The third reporting exercise for 2023 was prepared in collaboration with UNESCO. The co-custodian agencies introduced minor revisions into the reporting template, among other things, to include gender aspects in the reporting template. To encourage countries to coordinate their replies at the basin level, ECE and UNESCO prepared a document entitled “Opportunities to coordinate with neighbouring countries when completing the SDG indicator 6.5.2 national report”<sup>20</sup> and produced a short flyer summarizing the main information and available guidance on indicator 6.5.2.

83. The co-custodians continued the process of developing an online reporting system. However, due to budgetary, human resources and technical constraints, it has proven impossible to set up the online reporting system on time for the third reporting cycle with the needed technical requirements, including automatic data verifications. Consequently, the system will not be in place for the third data drive in 2023.

84. ECE and UNESCO continued consultations with countries to validate Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 national values. The data reported by countries were submitted to the United Nations Statistics Division in February 2023.

85. Upon countries’ requests, several workshops and webinars were held to support countries (including Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and ASEAN countries) in overcoming data gaps and other obstacles in the calculation of the indicator.

86. The publication *Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation under the Water Convention: Second Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, 2017–2020*<sup>21</sup> was translated into French and Russian.

## 6.2 Promoting the use of the reports for enhancing transboundary water cooperation

87. Data on indicator 6.5.2 have informed policy processes related to the 2030 Agenda, such as: the preparations of Voluntary National Reviews; deliberations at the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Ninth World Water Forum, World Water Week 2022, the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC and the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater; and activities under the Convention. The co-custodians also contributed with indicator 6.5.2 information to the Preparatory Meetings for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference of each regional commission.

88. Under the aegis of the UN-Water Integrated Water Monitoring Initiative for Sustainable Development Goal 6 (IMI-SDG6), ECE was involved in different activities on capacity-building and support, monitoring and communication on indicator 6.5.2 data. Among other things, ECE and UNESCO prepared “Acceleration snapshots”<sup>22</sup> to highlight that accelerated progress is possible.

89. Engagement with national statistical commissions offered an opportunity to promote indicator 6.5.2 reporting, particularly amongst countries where an indicator value is not currently available. Within the Arab Region, contributing to the ESCWA webinar “An Interagency and Experts Collaboration to Improve the Production and Dissemination of SDG indicators from Official National Sources” (24 May 2022) illustrated the value of engaging national statistical offices in indicator 6.5.2 awareness-raising and reporting activities.

90. Relationships with United Nations country teams are increasingly important as they sometimes facilitate contacts and mobilize reporting, but also serve to mainstream indicator 6.5.2 country data into common country analyses and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. ECE and UNESCO contributed to the Global United Nations country team Output Indicator Framework for Measuring the United Nations Contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals which now includes an indicator on measuring country team support to transboundary water cooperation. The Framework will offer both an opportunity to strengthen the profile of transboundary water cooperation

<sup>20</sup> See [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Coordination\\_document\\_SDG\\_Indicator\\_652\\_EN.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Coordination_document_SDG_Indicator_652_EN.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> ECE/MP.WAT/67.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-acceleration-snapshots-what-progress-looks](http://www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-acceleration-snapshots-what-progress-looks).



amongst country teams and, eventually, data on the extent to which country teams provide country support for transboundary water cooperation.

91. Partners in this programme area included ASEAN, CODIA, ECA, ESCWA, ESCAP, GWP, GWP-Central America, UNEP-DHI, UNESCO, UN-Water and all IMI-SDG6 agencies.

## **H. Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and knowledge management**

### **7.1 Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements**

92. The secretariat actively contributed to the preparatory process for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, especially to raise political attention to the importance of transboundary water cooperation issues and ensure their inclusion in the Conference's programme. ECE, the Permanent Mission of Senegal and the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva organized the high-level event "Lessons and Perspectives on Water Cooperation for Africa and Europe: From the 2022 Dakar Forum to the 2023 UN Water Conference" (Geneva, 10 June 2022). At the regional level, ECE and UN-Water organized the "Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UN 2023 Water Conference" (Geneva, 12–13 April 2022). ECE contributed to many other preparatory events, including the Dushanbe Water Process Conference (6–9 June 2022), the First Round of the African Regional Consultations on the Mid-term Review of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13–15 June 2022) and the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater. ECE and UNESCO co-led the development of the background paper for "Interactive dialogue 4: Water for Cooperation".

93. Ahead of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, the secretariat spearheaded the creation of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition, a multi-stakeholder partnership of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, regional integration organizations, international financial institutions, academic institutions and civil society organizations, working to highlight the critical importance of cooperating over shared water resources for water security and sustainable development. The Coalition was launched on 8 December 2022 during the UN-Water Groundwater Summit. It contributed to the submission of commitments on transboundary cooperation to the Water Action Agenda.

94. The secretariat contributed to UN-Water inter-agency cooperation efforts, for example, by continuing to co-lead the UN-Water Expert Groups on Water and Climate Change and on Transboundary Waters. The secretariat highlighted the importance of transboundary water cooperation at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (Montreal, Canada, 7–19 December 2022) and at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention (Wuhan, China, and Geneva, 5–13 November 2022).

95. In line with decision IX/5 on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.2), cooperation was continued with numerous global and regional partners, such as regional economic communities, regional economic commissions and international financial institutions. Cooperation with United Nations resident coordinators and country teams proved to be important in assisting countries in the process of accession and accompanying new Parties in the Convention's implementation.

96. The secretariat contributed to numerous global events to promote transboundary water cooperation. The Convention's position as a global platform and reference for transboundary water cooperation was reconfirmed, for example, during the Ninth World Water Forum, at which the Convention secretariat led an action group on transboundary cooperation, co-organized and contributed to several high-level sessions, and organized the first-ever Pavilion on Transboundary Water Cooperation. Consequently, knowledge and the visibility of the Water Convention were increased.

## **7.2 Activities of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents**

97. In the framework of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, mainly supported by the secretariat of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, a seminar on emerging risks in accidental water pollution: focus on natural hazard-triggered accidents and the meeting of the Group were organized (Budapest (hybrid), 5–6 October 2022). Future activities of the Group were discussed, including plans for capacity-building on early warning systems. The seminar developed conclusions for three main areas: understanding and preventing accidental water pollution as a result of natural hazards; safe industrial installations in a changing climate; and innovative approaches to limit the consequences of accidental water pollution.

## **7.3 Communication and knowledge management**

98. In 2022, the secretariat disseminated information on the Convention's activities, particularly through the Water Convention/Protocol on Water and Health newsletter. The secretariat also published news releases and articles on the ECE website.

99. Regular updates on activities under the Convention were shared on social media, Twitter (@UNECE\_Water), Facebook (@UNECEWater) and LinkedIn,<sup>23</sup> raising interest from an increasing number of followers.

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<sup>23</sup> Available at [www.linkedin.com/company/water-convention-protocol-on-water-health](http://www.linkedin.com/company/water-convention-protocol-on-water-health).