

UNECE

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



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SECOND REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES

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Top: Casamance and Gambia River Basins

Middle: Ili River Delta flowing into Lake Balkhash in Kazakhstan

Bottom: Aldeadavila Dam on the Douro/Duero River at the border between Spain and Portugal

FOREWORD

I am pleased to share with you the second report on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The report focuses on progress in the implementation of the Convention in the period 2017–2020 and builds on the national reports submitted by all the Parties to the Convention in the framework of the second reporting exercise on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention.



For the first time, the geographical scope of the report covers the implementation of the Water Convention by its new Parties beyond the UNECE region, namely in sub-Saharan Africa. This demonstrates progress in transforming the Water Convention into a global legal instrument and institutional platform for transboundary water issues. It also shows the increased relevance of the Convention for supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to implement their climate change commitments, including those in the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The report points out that strengthened water governance, peace, better water quality and conservation and protection of ecosystems are among the concrete benefits of cooperation in the framework of the Water Convention. With the globalization of the Convention, these benefits are accessible to all countries interested in improving the management of their transboundary waters.

The report also clearly shows that the Water Convention is a dynamic instrument of cooperation. Its Parties continuously make efforts to improve their cooperation and extend it to new topics, to identify and implement innovative solutions, and to assist each other through the exchange of experience and good practices. Many new agreements, action plans and strategies developed for transboundary basins, as well as the work of the basin commissions and other joint bodies described in the report, illustrate what can be achieved through cooperation on the basis of the legal and institutional framework provided by the Convention.

The practical value of the second report lies in the identification of hotspots, gaps and problematic areas in the implementation of the Convention and the recommendations to Parties and international partners on possible actions to improve integrated water resources management and transboundary cooperation. Although the present report is first and foremost addressed to Parties, I see it as an important tool for countries that are considering accession to the Water Convention and for other interested stakeholders. It provides a very useful insight into the application of the provisions of the Convention by its Parties.

I hope that the present report will inspire action to improve transboundary water cooperation on the basis of the Water Convention, in particular the negotiation and adoption of agreements and arrangements and the establishment of joint bodies and joint activities to adapt to climate change, build resilience to disasters and protect and restore ecosystems in transboundary basins.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Algayerova'.

Olga Algayerova

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Secretary of the
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



Douro/Douro River valley, Portugal

PREFACE

The second progress report under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was prepared by the Convention secretariat in line with decision VIII/1 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention. In that decision, the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare regular reports, based on the national reports received, for future sessions of the Meeting of the Parties on the implementation of the Convention.

The present report was prepared as part of activities dedicated to reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention, under programme area 6 of the programme of work for 2019–2021 under the Convention. However, the report will support implementation of all areas of the programme of work, by shedding light on problematic areas and encouraging Parties, individually and collectively, to strengthen implementation of the Convention and improve transboundary water cooperation.

The second progress report provides an analysis of the national reports submitted by Parties to the Convention based on a common reporting template, and therefore closely mirrors the template structure. Following an introduction, providing the context for the second reporting exercise and its results, the responses of Parties to the main parts of the reporting template are reviewed. These are analysed in the chapters on transboundary water management at the national level, agreements and arrangements for transboundary waters, joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation and activities related to the implementation of transboundary water cooperation. A chapter on selected basins takes an in-depth look at the same aspects at the basin level. In the concluding chapter, achievements in the period 2017–2020 are highlighted and detailed recommendations are provided.

The analysis presented in the second report is primarily based on the answers provided by the Parties in the reporting template, and the use of other sources is both limited and secondary to those responses.

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The Implementation Committee under the Water Convention reviewed the findings of the report at its thirteenth meeting on 20 and 21 May 2021.

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