



Convention of the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
Task Force on Water and Climate
Eighth meeting

Geneva, Switzerland, 15 September 2016

Draft concept note on the development of the Sendai Framework “Words into Action” Implementation Guide for river basin management and transboundary cooperation

Background

At the special session on the global opening of the Water Convention and its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global commitments, held during the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (Budapest, 17-19 November 2015)¹, it was noted that the Convention can be useful in the development of a “Words into Action”² guide on disaster risk reduction in transboundary basins.

The Task Force will therefore be invited to discuss the need for and modalities of the preparation of the “Words into Action” Implementation Guide for river basin management and transboundary cooperation, in the context of possible cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in light of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030.

The draft concept note, contained in the annex, was prepared under the leadership of the Netherlands with support from the Water Convention secretariat and the UNISDR.

ANNEX: Draft concept note

Topic	River Basin Management and Transboundary Cooperation in disaster risk reduction
Proposed Target stakeholder	The main target group is water managers and institutions responsible for water management, and people and institutions responsible for disaster risk reduction, at local, regional, national and international level. As water management cannot be separated from water users, the guide will also target water users, among others from the industry, agriculture and energy sectors.
Proposed Priority Focus	The guide will provide information on the global mechanisms on hydro meteorological issues to support the Sendai framework and will go beyond this by making a case of integration of disaster risk management into water management and climate change adaptation, and for improved cooperation between water and disaster communities. Water is frequently the central medium through which climate change affects communities and most disasters are water-related. Water management is thus central in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. At least 60% of the rivers and a similar amount of groundwater bodies cross boundaries. Therefore risks and challenges are shared between countries and solutions need to be coordinated. Unilateral adaptation measures can have negative effects on other riparian countries. Cooperation in disaster risk reduction, at the same time, can help to find better and more cost-effective solutions, by considering a larger geographical area in planning measures, by broadening the information

¹ Advance version of the meeting report is available at <http://www.unece.org/env/water/mop7/documents.html#/>

² Detailed information about the “Words into Action” guides is available here: <http://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/sendai-framework/wordsintoaction/>

	<p>base, by exchanging data and by combining efforts. Transboundary cooperation in disaster risk reduction is therefore included in the Sendai framework in several places stating that cooperation on all levels, including the transboundary level, is needed to prevent and reduce disaster risk.</p>
Reason for priority	<p>Water related disasters affect a large number of people yearly (over the past 25 years (1990-2015), 4,179,263,507 people were affected by floods or droughts (www.emdat.be)) and this is expected to increase as a result of climate change. The vulnerability of people to flood hazards and droughts has increased through population growth, poverty, land shortages, urbanization and the poor condition of flood protection and drainage infrastructure, especially in developing countries, and will continue to do so. Moreover, droughts, as slowly developing disasters, may lead to the collapse of social structures and to refugees that may cause disruptions in social structures of adjacent regions. And as disaster risk management is usually less well organized in transboundary regions, leading to a higher number of people affected, transboundary cooperation is essential.</p> <p>Proper water management can help to reduce disaster risks caused by flooding and droughts. For instance, natural and artificial water retention measures can help to reduce flooding impacts. As human use is already over 50% of all renewable and “accessible” freshwater flows, water demand management is an important means to reduce the impacts of droughts. Moreover, ecosystems have a pivotal role to play in both flood and drought risk reduction and ecosystem-restoration is therefore a priority for water management and DRR. Despite of all this, cooperation between water managers and DRR experts is often insufficient.</p>
Proposed schedule and deadline	First draft by late 2017
Proposed lead Party	Netherlands
UNISDR Focal point	TBA