



United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe



Ministry of Transport, Public
Works and Water
Management of the
Netherlands



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Con
and Nuclear Safety



World
Meteorological
Organization
Weather • Climate • Water

WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT Geneva, 22-23 April 2009

to be held in Conference Room VIII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 22 April 2009

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

1. A workshop on transboundary flood risk management will be organized on 22 and 23 April 2009 within the framework of the programme of work of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), back-to-back with the second meeting of the Convention's Task Force on Water and Climate (24 April 2009).
2. The workshop aims to:
 - (a) exchange experiences and support the transfer of results from research projects and other recent activities concerning flood management in the European Union to non-EU countries, e.g. the work of the European exchange circle on flood forecasting (EXCIFF), the European exchange circle on flood mapping (EXCIMAP) and the EU Working Group on Floods;
 - (b) provide a platform for exchange of positive and negative experiences and lessons learned by Parties that have developed flood risk management plans taking into account the transboundary context and those which are currently developing or planning to develop such programmes;
 - (c) analyse in depth flood management problems in a limited number of transboundary basins in the UNECE region and provide recommendations for improving transboundary cooperation regarding flood risk management in these basins.
3. The workshop is targeted at all those who are involved in flood risk management in transboundary basins at the transboundary, national and local levels - in particular governmental and ministerial representatives, representatives from national hydrological and meteorological services, academia and non-governmental and international organizations - from the entire UNECE region.

II. Background

4. Extreme flood events and especially the economic, social and environmental as well as human life losses they cause have significantly increased during the last years in the UNECE region. At the same time flood prone areas represent vital assets to the economy of many members

of the region that can and should not be abandoned. Due to the transboundary nature of many rivers in the region, flooding often has transboundary consequences and thus cooperation is required.

5. For this reason, under the Water Convention, Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention were adopted in 2000 and subsequently Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management were adopted in 2006. The European Union member states are currently implementing the Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks (EU Floods Directive). The World Meteorological Organisation's Associated Programme on Flood Management is supporting countries in implementing an integrated approach to flood management, aiming at minimizing the losses of life from flooding while maximizing the net-benefits derived from flood plains.

6. The workshop is organized under the joint leadership of the Government of Germany, the Government of the Netherlands and in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organisation.

III. Organization of work

7. The workshop will address: (a) international guidelines and regulations for flood risk management; (b) joint flood forecasting and warning; (c) joint flood risk management planning and flood prevention; (d) coordinated flood response and recovery (e) institutional and legal arrangements for cooperation.

8. The workshop will consist of the following sessions:

- *Session 1: Setting the scene: new requirements and approaches for transboundary flood risk management*
- *Session 2: Joint transboundary flood forecasting and warning / exchange of information and data: Case studies*
- *Session 3: Joint transboundary flood risk assessment and management planning: Case studies*
- *Session 4: Institutional and legal arrangements as well as financial aspects of transboundary cooperation: Case studies*
- *Session 5: Conclusions and recommendations*

9. In order to make the discussions as practical and useful as possible, the Workshop will build on the presentation and in-depth analysis of a limited number of case studies from transboundary basins with flood management problems in the UNECE region. These should focus on different aspects of flood risk management. They will be presented by representatives of the riparian countries, followed by a reaction from experts, and a discussion with the audience. Countries were invited to submit proposals for such case studies between December 2008 and beginning of February 2009. Experts interested in making a contribution to the workshop should inform the UNECE secretariat as soon as possible (water.convention@unece.org).

10. The workshop should create an interactive platform for communication among participants with different backgrounds and representing different sectors. We would like to maximize the time for discussion and the exchange of experience for all. At the same time, participants should take into account the time constraints; thus interventions from the floor should be focused and not too lengthy.

11. A detailed provisional programme for the workshop will be issued at the end of March 2009.

IV. Background documentation and workshop outputs

12. Background material for the workshop will be made available online at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_flood_workshop.htm
13. Participants are welcome to make available any other relevant materials at the workshop.
14. The expected outputs of the workshop are:
 - (a) A Chairperson's summary with main conclusions;
 - (b) Specific recommendations for the case studies discussed.

V. Practical information

15. The workshop will start at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 22 April 2009 and end at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 23 April 2009. It will be held in conference room VIII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The workshop will be organized back-to-back with the second meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (24 April 2009). The working languages will be English and Russian.
16. The workshop is intended for all those who are involved in flood risk management and flood prevention in transboundary basins at the transboundary, national and local levels. Focal points are requested to disseminate information on the workshop and to facilitate nomination of relevant experts from their respective countries.
17. Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the seminar. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat [olga.carlos@unece.org] as soon as possible, but not later than **10 March 2009**. Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to experts providing inputs to the workshop. **No application will be accepted after this deadline due to changes in visa and travel arrangement regulations.**
18. Participants requiring entry visas should inform the UNECE secretariat as soon as possible. Due to the entry of Switzerland in the Schengen Zone in December 2008, visa procedures have become more complicated. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is now 15 working days. **Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.**
19. In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the registration form available online (http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_flood_workshop.htm) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat by **6 April 2009** at the latest either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0621) or e-mail (olga.carlos@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the UNECE Protocol website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1926.
20. Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. For further queries please contact: water.convention@unece.org

21. Further information, the registration form and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course:
http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_flood_management_workshop.htm
