



## **Lessons and Perspectives on Water Cooperation for Africa and Europe: From the 2022 Dakar Forum to the 2023 UN Water Conference**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Date and time**

10 June 2022- Geneva, Palais de Nations - Room TPS2, 14.00-16.00

#### **Language**

French / English

#### **Organisers**

The event is co-organised by the Permanent Representation of Senegal to the United Nations Office in Geneva, the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

#### **Context**

One hundred and fifty-three countries share transboundary waters, which account for more than 60% of the world's freshwater flow. In Africa, 90% of the water is located in sixty-three transboundary basins on the continent. International cooperation in the management of shared water resources, whether surface or groundwater, is therefore essential to ensure the economic and social development of the countries bordering the region's shared basins and to help prevent conflicts.

However, the majority of transboundary basins are not covered by an operational water cooperation arrangement. The 2020 monitoring exercise for SDG indicator 6.5.2, carried out by UNECE and UNESCO as the lead agencies, shows that only 24 of the 153 countries sharing transboundary waters have all their transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements.

The fundamental role of transboundary water cooperation for peace and sustainable development has been reaffirmed both at global and regional level, including in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by the UN Security Council, in the African Ministers' Council on Water Strategy 2018-2030, and in the EU Council Conclusions on Water in EU External Action adopted in 2021.

The 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) provides a unique intergovernmental framework under the United Nations to support cooperative development and prevent conflicts over shared waters. Since the global opening of the Water Convention in 2016, five African countries including Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Togo have joined the Water Convention. Several other states have officially expressed their interest in becoming members and are engaged in the process. The EU fully supports such an extension of the Water Convention.





The momentum towards accession to the Water Convention in Africa is a very promising step towards the UN Water Conference in 2023. Indeed, the UN Water Conference will provide an opportunity to mobilise all relevant actors to accelerate actions for the implementation of sustainable development goals in the field of integrated water resources management, particularly in the area of transboundary cooperation. However, the role of transboundary cooperation in the 2023 Conference still needs clarification.

Moreover, cooperation was one of the four priorities of the ninth World Water Forum, which was held from 21 to 26 March 2022 in Dakar. Organised for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, the World Water Forum was recognised by the UN General Assembly as a preparatory stage for the UN Water Conference in 2023. The Dakar Declaration reaffirmed the urgency of stepping up water diplomacy efforts to promote cooperation and achieve SDG 6.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of the event is to promote transboundary cooperation and raise awareness on the Water Convention in Africa and the opportunities offered in view of the 2023 UN Water Conference. The event will also provide an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the Dakar World Water Forum.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- Promote good practice experiences in Africa and Europe regarding cross-border cooperation;
- To discuss the instruments offered by the Water Convention on promoting cooperation on transboundary waters;
- Present the results of the World Water Forum in Dakar;
- Discuss how to promote transboundary cooperation in view of the 2023 UN Water Conference

### **Target audience**

The event is aimed at:

- Permanent Missions of the States of the African region to the United Nations Office at Geneva
- Permanent Missions of the European Union Member States to the United Nations Office in Geneva
- Experts and relevant organisations in Geneva

### **Programme - 2 hours**





**Moderators:** H.E. Yackoley Kokou Johnson, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations in Geneva and H.E. Kirsti Kauppi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations in Geneva (tbc)

**Introduction by moderator (4 min) :**

H.E. Yackoley Kokou Johnson, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations in Geneva (4 min)

**Opening session**

- H.E. Coly Seck, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations in Geneva (4 min)
- H.E. Lotte Knudsen, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva (4 min)
- Mr Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (4 min)
- H.E. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (4 min) tbc

**Panel I. Managing transboundary water interdependencies: good practices in Africa and Europe**, moderated by H.E. Kirsti Kauppi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations in Geneva, tbc

- ***Cooperation at the African level: Namibian perspective:*** H.E. Carl Hermann Gustav Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Namibia, Chairman of the African Ministers' Council on Water, (7 min) tbc
- ***Experience of African basins: the Senegal River Basin and the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin,*** H.E. Ahmed Semega, High Commissioner of the Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Sénégal (7 min)
- ***Cooperation at the European level:*** Ms Daniela Buzica, Directorate-General for the Environment, European Commission (7 min)
- ***Cooperation at the level of a European basin: the Sava River Basin,*** Mr Aleš Bizjak, Vice President of the Water Convention, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, EU Coordination and International Relations Office, Slovenia (7 min)

**Questions / answers (20 min)**





**Panel II. Relevance of the global legal framework on shared water resources and initiative to accelerate transboundary cooperation in Africa**, moderated by H.E. Yackoley Kokou Johnson, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations in Geneva

- ***Intervention on the importance of the Water Convention: opportunities and interests***, Ms Emmanuelle Lachaussée, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva, France, Presidency of the EU, (7 min),
- ***Intervention on the experience of accession to the Water Convention: opportunities and interests***, H.E. Muhammadou M.O. Kah, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the United Nations in Geneva (7 min)
- ***Experience of a new Party to the Convention: opportunities and interests***, Ms. Bernadette Araba Adjei, Director, Legal and Monitoring Department, Water Resources Commission, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana (7 min)
- ***Presentation of the Team Europe Project on Transboundary Water Management***, Mr Arnaud de Vanssay, Head of Water Sector, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission (7 min)

**Interventions/ Questions / Answers (20 min)**

**Concluding remarks (5 min)**

- H.E. Mr. Jamshed Khamidov, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tajikistan, Co-Chair 2023 UN Water Conference (tbc)
- H.E. Ms. Nathalie Olijslager, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Netherlands, Co-Chair 2023 UN Water Conference