

# **CONTEXT OF ACCESSION TO BOTH UN GLOBAL WATER CONVENTIONS, THE VALUE ADD FOR GHANA**

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**GHANA**

**NATIONAL WORKSHOP RELATED TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND  
INTERNATIONAL LAKES: TANZANIA'S ACCESSION PROCESS**

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DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA**

# Context of Accession to Both UN Global Water Conventions (1)

## ***Ghana's Transboundary Water Resources Concerns:***

- About 30% of the freshwater flows from outside of Ghana's international borders
- Provide substantial water supply, hydropower, irrigation and industrial needs; link the populations
  - Creates socioeconomic interdependencies between the riparian countries
- Recent extreme events (floods) and pollution occurrences in the transboundary basins (Volta, Tano and Bia) have been of grave concern.

## ***Her Position:***

- Ensure pragmatic solutions anchored on negotiations and dialogue
- Cooperate fully with her riparian neighbours and other global watercourse countries.

## ***The Needs:***

- Need for international legal agreements, to serve as vital tools
  - to guide, foster and secure the required transboundary water cooperation
- Ghana sees the 1992 Water Convention and 1997 Watercourses Convention as the vital tools to promote her position on transboundary cooperation.

## Context of Accession to Both UN Global Water Conventions (2)

- Both Conventions cover international watercourses - surface and underground freshwater, and serve as mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation.
- The Conventions embody a number of principles on: *equitable and reasonable utilization; obligation not to cause significant harm; general obligation to cooperate; etc.*
- They are compatible, not contradictory, and in many ways complementary:
  - 1997 Watercourses Convention complements the 1992 Water Convention by detailing the factors relevant to equitable and reasonable utilization (article 6).
- Differences between the two conventions on the same subject matter are of greater or lesser stringency or detail rather than a matter of conflicting prescriptions.
  - 1997 Watercourses Convention leaves confined groundwater outside its scope, 1992 Water Convention covers all transboundary groundwater, including confined aquifers.
- The differences are rather a strength since the more detailed provisions in one instrument can inform the implementation of the other.
- It's good to sign up to both hence, Ghana's accession to both Conventions.

# The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits (1)

- The Conventions have proven their effectiveness as an international legal regime that provides benefits for Ghana as a member.
- Water Convention provides Ghana with:
  - Platform for enhancing international cooperation for shared rivers and aquifers.
    - Framework and support in establishing agreements and bodies for specific basins - the ongoing case of the Comoe, Bia and Tano basins
  - Specific timeframes, standards and procedures for Ghana in developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure.
    - Developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure such as the Sogakope-Lome water supply, and the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam projects.
- Applicable provisions to promote data exchange and information sharing as well as joint training programmes and relevant seminars and meeting on data exchange.
  - Developing agreement on obligatory minimum amount of water that should flow into Ghana from Burkina Faso for use especially in the dry season.

# The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits (2)

- Step by step mechanisms to pursue conflict prevention and resolution.
  - Creates room for Ghana to engage its neighbours on activities inimical to us as the downstream country.
- Provisions for implementing obligations, especially the obligation aimed at prevention, control and reduction of significant transboundary impacts.
  - Addressing impacts – the perennial spillage from Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso into Ghana and pollution of Bia River in Cote d'Ivoire from mining activities in Ghana.
- Enhancing Good Governance and Investment:
  - Accession has signalled to other countries, international organizations, financial institutions and other actors the willingness to cooperate on the basis of transboundary norms and standards.
  - Enhancing the trust of international investors in terms of good governance (clear processes, rules, standards and norms).
  - Provides the necessary framework - international principles, standards and practices to enhance sound management of international watercourses and contribute to the implementation of SDG target 6.5.

## The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits (3)

- In terms of Enhancing Good Governance, as part of **regional bodies** the need for transboundary cooperation has been given key importance. E.g.
  - The ECOWAS WRCC has been key in galvanizing the countries in the region to enter into management arrangements for transboundary water governance where non-exists and improve the existing ones.
  - At the VBA level the development of a Water Charter that embodies the principles of the global water conventions and goes further to ensure equitable and reasonable uses of shared water has put the riparian states to the table on the basis of trust to negotiate flows.

## The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits (4)

- Technical Assistance and Support:
  - Ghana as a party to the 1992 Water Convention could benefit from the use of the Convention's trust fund –
    - Technical assistance to parties on studies and pilot projects; and support for capacity building (priority is given to parties).
  - Benefits from existing experiences, such as guidance documents, activities and projects on the ground.
    - E.g. the Water Convention's activities on adaptation to climate change and on transboundary flood management.
- Support from the Community of Parties
  - The water convention is a collective forum. Ghana as a party may bring its needs and expectations to the attention of all other parties - a party is not left alone in its dealings.
  - Assisting in spreading the accession message and sharing experiences
- Contribution to International Peace and Security
  - Participation in and cooperation through the Water Convention intergovernmental platform reduces uncertainty and builds relationships - contributing to international peace and security.

# Developing a Road Map to Accede to the Water Convention

- Key to the Accession is a clear Roadmap to be followed through.
- Developing the Roadmap involved the following:
  - Lead institution to lead the process
  - Developing a Ratification Toolkit
  - Identification of Key Stakeholders
  - Engagement/Consultation of the Stakeholders
  - Materials and platforms for communication
  - Timelines for the accession
  - Resources and Support Required (Internal and External).



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**THANK YOU**