



**UNECE**



## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **National workshop related to 1992 United Nations Water Convention & 1997 United Nations Watercourses Convention: Zimbabwe's accession process to the UN global water conventions**

**The Rainbow Towers Hotel and Conference Centre  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
20 – 21 March 2024**

#### **Background**

Nestled in the heart of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe shares a total of five (5) watercourses and one international lake with neighbouring countries. These are namely; Buzi, Limpopo, Pungwe, Save and Zambezi watercourses and Kariba dam. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these vital water resources, Zimbabwe has forged collaborative agreements with its riparian States, establishing a robust framework for the harmonious governance and stewardship of these shared water resources. This collective commitment to transboundary river management underscores the region's dedication to the integrity of these life-giving arteries, ensuring their development, management and sustainable utilization for the benefit of present and future generations.

Zimbabwe's unwavering commitment to sustainable water management is evident by the signing of several key agreements and arrangements, including the SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses (2000), the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) Agreement, the Limpopo Watercourse Commission (LIMCOM) Agreement, Joint Water Commissions (Mozambique and Zimbabwe and South Africa and Zimbabwe) and the Buzi, Pungwe, and Save (BUPUSA) Watercourses, Establishment and Hosting Agreement and establishment of the Zambezi Water Authority. These agreements establish a framework for equitable utilization, joint planning, and sustainable development of shared water resources within the region. Further strengthening its commitment, Zimbabwe has initiated the accession process to the two global water conventions and subsequently developed a roadmap to accede to the same. These moves underscore Zimbabwe's dedication to promoting sustainable and equitable water management practices at a national, regional and international level.

Zimbabwe's intention is to accede to both the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (1992 UN Water Convention) and the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (1997 UN Watercourses Convention) collectively referred to as 'the UN global water conventions'. These global legal frameworks for cooperation on transboundary waters, especially the dynamic inter-governmental framework of the 1992 UN Water Convention, will open up new prospects for enhanced cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict prevention, promotion of peace and regional stability among other benefits. The conventions do not replace existing bilateral and multilateral agreements but rather fosters their establishment, implementation, and further development. They establish principles and rules that form the basis for countries working together to protect and sustainably use their shared freshwater resources. By embracing cooperation and collaboration, Zimbabwe is ensuring the long-term sustainability of these precious water resources, safeguarding the well-being of its people and the environment for generations to come.

### **Workshop Objectives**

The general objective of the workshop is to inform stakeholders about the global water conventions, to share the processes initiated by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe to become party to the global water conventions, to get input from stakeholders and to discuss the next steps in the accession process.

Specifically, the workshop will allow to:

- (a) Inform stakeholders about the global water conventions;
- (b) Identify the benefits, possible advantages and strategic objectives of a possible accession to the conventions for Zimbabwe;
- (c) Inform about the accession process, benefits and implementation by African Parties;
- (d) Discuss the practical implementation of the Water Convention to meet the challenges of water resource development and utilization in Zimbabwe, based on the experience of existing Parties;
- (e) Present the initiatives by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development as part of the accession process to the global water conventions;
- (f) Hold a Question-and-Answer session to respond to questions from stakeholders about the global water conventions;
- (g) Discuss the next steps and road map in the accession process and the contribution of this process to Zimbabwe's transboundary and national water management.

## **Expected Results**

The expected results pursued through this workshop are to:

- (a) Inform stakeholders about the global water conventions;
- (b) identify the advantages and benefits to becoming party to the global water conventions;
- (c) respond to questions from stakeholders about the global water conventions;
- (d) inform on the next steps of the accession process and the its contribution to the development of water resources transboundary water cooperation are discussed;
- (e) define a roadmap, with key milestones agreed, for accession to the UN global water conventions.

## **Participation**

The workshop will bring together representatives from:

(a) Relevant ministries:

- (i) Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development,
- (ii) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,
- (iii) Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs,
- (iv) Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife,
- (v) Ministry of Energy and Power Development,
- (vi) Ministry of Mines and Mining Development,
- (vii) Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry,
- (viii) Ministry of Women Affairs, Community & SMEs and
- (ix) Ministry of Youth Empowerment Development

(b) Relevant basin organizations and regional organizations:

- (i) ZAMCOM
- (ii) LIMCOM
- (iii) BUPUSA Commission
- (iv) SADC Water
- (v) Zambezi Water Authority

(c) Relevant diplomatic missions,

(d) Relevant international organisations

(e) Relevant academia,

(f) Civil society and independent national and international experts.