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**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Third meeting,
Madrid, Spain, 26-28 November 2003
Item 10 (a) of the provisional agenda

**PARTNERSHIP ON WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM) IN COUNTRIES
IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA (EECCA)**

Prepared by the secretariat

1. In their Declaration (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, paragraph 51), the Ministers of Environment of the UNECE region welcomed water-related initiatives and partnerships from all donors and the support they will provide to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. One of these partnerships is the “Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development” aiming at urban water supply and sanitation (WSS) including work on innovative financing mechanisms for water infrastructure and integrated water resources management (IWRM), including transboundary river basin and regional seas issues among countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).
2. As regards its implementation, the *Statement on the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development – East European, Caucasian and Central Asian Component of the EU Water Initiative* (see ECE/CEP/111, paragraphs 22 and 23) underlines two important aspects:

- The need for a mechanism to coordinate, follow up and monitor the initiative during the implementation phase, starting 2003 and lasting until 2015
- The requirement that the initiative should - to the extent possible – use, and benefit from, existing mechanisms and institutions.

3. The document outlines the possible contribution of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention to the implementation of the *Partnership* regarding its thematic component on integrated water resources management, including transboundary waters and regional seas issues, with a focus on transboundary issues. It also proposes that inputs to the thematic component “urban water supply and sanitation, including financing of infrastructure” should be made as far as these are linked to the Protocol on Water and Health.

Draft decisions

4. The Meeting of the Parties may wish to:

(a) Examine the secretariat’s proposal to insert a new programme element 2.7 on integrated management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in the work plan for the period 2004-2006 (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex II);

(b) Request the UNECE secretariat to draw up with the assistance of a consultant an action programme on transboundary aspects of integrated water resources management, which fall under the Partnership on water for sustainable development, and invite the Parties to provide the secretariat with the necessary resources;

(c) Invite the Parties to contribute to the activities of the Partnership to be outlined in the action programme and join forces with other partners competent on transboundary and non-transboundary aspects of integrated water resources management in EECCA countries (e.g. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), European Commission, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Global Water Partnership (GWP), Organization for Security and Cooperation In Europe (OSCE) and the relevant Regional Environmental Centres);

(d) Invite all EECCA countries to continue implementing, the Governments of Denmark and the Russian Federation to continue leading, and all other countries and relevant international organizations and institutions in the region to continue contributing to the Partnership in line with the outcome of the Kiev Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, paragraph 51).

Annex

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE PARTNERSHIP AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

I. ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Starting in November 2002 and continuing through 2003, under the leadership of and financed by Denmark, a programme document has been drawn up that describes the EECCA component and sets out future issues and directions for implementation of the *Partnership*. This document has been prepared in cooperation with UNECE, the Task Force for Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP Task Force, serviced by OECD), UNDP and UNEP, and was subject to discussion and inputs by all interested stakeholders, including representatives from the EECCA region, before and after the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

2. The *Partnership* will build on existing structures and mechanisms already set up and functioning for other purposes, where these can be instrumental in achieving the goals of the *Partnership*. Achievements will be reported to two main forums: the *Multistakeholder Forum*, set up under the auspices of the EC, and the *Task Force for Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe* (EAP Task Force), which would also oversee the development of the environmental strategy for EECCA countries under the Environment for Europe process, following the decisions of the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

3. A *Steering Group* responsible for coordination of activities between partners and across the two thematic pillars, IWRM and WSS, for review of progress and reporting to other forums is being established with representatives of the lead countries (for IWRM presently Denmark and the Russian Federation), representatives of the EAP Task Force, UNECE, UNEP, the European Commission, NGOs and others. This *Steering Group* may be supplemented as necessary. Denmark has committed resources and offered to continue as lead country for at least one more year, including resources for lead country support.

II. POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP

4. The programme document on the *Partnership* states that “UNECE has been a key player in the region in relation to IWRM and transboundary waters, inter alia, through the preparation and assistance in the implementation of important international conventions like the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), the 1999 London Protocol on Water and Health and the 2003 Kiev Protocol on Civil Liability for Damage to Transboundary Waters.”

5. This statement clearly recognizes the competence of UNECE regarding transboundary water management issues, and acknowledges the role of UNECE in: (a) linking water

management in transboundary and non-transboundary contexts^{1/}; (b) networking with other partners to link IWRM with coastal zone management and the protection of the marine environment^{2/}; and guiding work, together with WHO/EURO on the prevention, reduction and control of water-related diseases.

6. There are mainly four areas that call for an input by the Parties to the Convention and/or the governing body of the Convention and its working structures as follows:

- Assessments
 - Assess the priority needs of the EECCA countries, recommend key activities that would be relevant and effective to address those needs, evaluate progress towards achievement of the IWRM goals of the Partnership
- Development of implementation projects
 - Assist countries and other partners in the implementation of integrated water resources management policies related to transboundary waters.
- *Establishment and development of cooperation*
 - Assist countries in establishing and developing cooperation on transboundary waters following the respective provisions of multilateral environmental agreements, particularly the Water Conventions and its protocols and other applicable UNECE environmental conventions.
- *Capacity building*
 - Support a process of “mutual learning by doing” among partners in the region through exchange of information and experience, including workshops and training courses.
- *Networking*
 - Promote collaboration between national ministries/partner groups and the different transboundary and regional networks in the EECCA area, including the Global Water Partnership, Regional Environment Centres, river basin organisations and joint bodies, and networks of other international governmental/non-governmental organisations.

^{1/} See the Declaration adopted by the Parties to the Convention at their first meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/2, annex I, para. 2) and the relevant provisions of the Protocol on Water and Health (article 5).

^{2/} See for example the report of the second meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT/5) and the report of the Second international conference on sustainable management of transboundary waters in Europe (ECE/MP.WAT/8).

- Establish and links with the bodies under the Partnership that are responsible for integrated water resources management in a non-transboundary context as well as coastal zone management and the protection of the marine environment.
- Establish and maintain links with the bodies under the Partnership that are responsible for urban water supply and sanitation.

III. ACTION PROGRAMME

7. For the meetings of the Bureau of the Water Convention, the Steering Group and the EAP Task Force, the UNECE secretariat will draw up and update an action programme related to transboundary waters. This action programme will include in significant detail, down to fiches of individual projects, what should be achieved until the Kiev+1 Ministerial Conference. The action programme on transboundary waters should become an integral part of the work programme under the Water Convention. It could also include proposals for cooperation on non-transboundary issues of integrated water resources management as well as proposals regarding urban water supply and sanitation as far as these are linked to the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health.

8. In the process of developing and updating the action programme, other actors including donors and international organizations as well as the 12 EECCA countries and other interested non-EECCA countries will be approached in order to identify planned and on-going activities, agree on their inputs and discuss future activities

9. The action programme will consist of a number of individual projects for which good opportunities exist in terms of political will as well as funding for implementation within a few years. One should not necessarily wait for an approved final version of the action programme in order to plan or start specific activities. Preliminary versions of the action programme could be used for planning purposes, even if the action programme has not been formally adopted by the Meeting of the Parties or another body established under the Convention (e.g. the Bureau).

10. Clear-cut indicators should be used to follow the implementation of the action programme, such as: (a) countries that have ratified UNECE environmental conventions and protocols; (b) bilateral and multilateral agreements drawn up, signed and/or ratified; (c) joint bodies established; and (d) number of trained experts on different subjects.

11. The UNECE secretariat and the Meeting of the Parties should follow and record the developments of the action programme related to transboundary waters. Annually, a status report would be presented to the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties, the Steering Group, the EAP Task Force and other relevant bodies.

12. The action programme will assess the human and financial resources needed to implement each individual project. The extent of the role and contribution by the UNECE secretariat will depend on resources made available. In particular, it would be an advantage,

if financial resources would be made available by the Meeting of the Parties so that a consultant could assist the secretariat in developing the action programme.

13. It should not be the aim of the UNECE secretariat and the Meeting of the Parties to be actively involved in all or even the majority of the projects. Their role should be to participate in the discussion and planning of projects, while others (most importantly the EECCA countries themselves) would have the responsibility for the implementation.

14. There are different sources to start developing the action programme: At the Moscow workshop on transboundary water cooperation (see MP.WAT/2003/7), projects related to the Partnership have been proposed and the UNECE secretariat started with preliminary preparations of activities (see report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Water Management, MP.WAT/WG.1/2003/2).

15. Projects related to the *Partnership* could include the exchange of experience between managers of transboundary waters, mainly staff of joint bodies, and the dissemination of information and know-how in order to create a framework for the cross-fertilization between the different bodies acting in the region and to allow transfer of capacity from successful institutions from outside the region. This can be achieved through a series of workshops, each focusing on specific aspects of cooperation (e.g. legal, regulatory and institutional framework; joint monitoring and assessment, including exchange of information, information systems, early warning and alarm systems; pollution prevention, control and reduction; allocation of water resources and sustainable use of water; river basin management plans and relation with the EU Water Framework Directive - integrated water resources management including the ecosystem approach, environmental objectives and public participation; relation and policy integration with regional seas issues; flood prevention and flood protection).

16. These workshops should be attended by managers of transboundary waters in the region, by representative of well-established joint bodies (including joint bodies for the protection of the marine environment), by experts from international organizations, the private sector and NGOs. During the workshops, the situation in the different joint bodies and the level and development of cooperation related to the themes should be analyzed; participants should also be invited to review their approach and propose solutions. As an outcome, general recommendations for the region, as well as specific recommendations for specific river basins should be drawn and deadlines for their implementation set. The workshops should be hosted by different countries in the EECCA region and be combined with a visit to a joint commission, which should present its structure, organization, management strategies, main problems and achievements.

17. The workshops' results will be issued in the UNECE Water Series or other appropriate publications in order to widely disseminate general and specific guidance for transboundary water management in the region.