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

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

Fifth meeting

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 30 September - 1 October 2004

**ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES
AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES IN THE UNECE REGION ***

Submitted by Finland

1. The annex to this document contains a draft outline of the assessment of the status of transboundary watercourses and international lakes, which will be a major contribution of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (WGMA) to the fourth assessment report of the state of the environment for the sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in 2007.
2. The proposed outline was prepared by Finland, lead Party for this activity, with inputs from some countries and organizations.
3. An open-ended Task Force on the Assessment of the Status of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes was established to carry out the assessment. The draft outline will be examined and further developed during the first Task Force meeting (St. Petersburg, 1 October 2004). In particular, there is a need to further develop the draft

· This document has not been formally edited.

outline regarding quantity aspects of surface water monitoring and assessment (water level and discharge measurements, assessments regarding floods, droughts and ice drifts), and groundwater monitoring and assessment. Moreover, there is a need to pay more attention to human health and safety aspects as in some countries and sub-regions inadequate water quality and quantity still cause water-related diseases. Water pollution due to industrial accidents, leakages from pipelines and pollution from the navigation of ships on rivers are other issues to be taken into account.

4. The task force is also expected to seek the cooperation with other competent partners. Examples include relevant bodies established under the Water Convention, the Industrial Accidents Convention, the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the European Environment Agency, the International Association of Hydrogeologists, as well as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Cooperation will also be sought with the Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

Annex

DRAFT OUTLINE OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will be developed step-by-step; it will contain the basic data sets of the different characteristics of transboundary waters in the UNECE region, which can also be used as a source of information for other reporting purposes. The very first activity of the Task Force is to plan very carefully the format for these data sets.

The following issues will be discussed in this chapter:

- Transboundary watercourses and international lakes (or their basins) in the UNECE region (maps and statistical geographical information on transboundary waters);
- The importance of transboundary watercourses and international lakes in different member States of UNECE (maps and statistical information on water resources, their use, etc.).

Chapter 2: Present monitoring and assessment activities

The preparation of this chapter will be the most laborious and time-consuming part of the whole assessment process. All members of the WGMA are expected to actively participate in the implementation of this part. The drawing up of the questionnaire will be one of the first issues of the task force. It will be undertaken together with other partners, especially with the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The following issues will be discussed in this chapter:

- Present monitoring programmes: metadata of monitoring programmes (maps and statistics based on replies by competent authorities, organizations, institutions and/or individual experts in the UNECE region to various questionnaires and/or based on consultations with the partners involved):
 - In Europe;
 - In Central Asia;
 - And, if possible, in Northern America.This part could be presented as a separate annex to make the core assessment shorter and more concise;
- The monitoring activity of the different pressure factors (especially the operational monitoring of waste-water loading);
- Present situation with the reporting on the state of transboundary watercourses and international lakes (statistics based on different types of questionnaires and on consultations);
- Some successful cooperation experiences of organizing the monitoring activities, (based on proposals by the Task Force);
- Evaluation of the monitoring activities;

- Most limiting factors for monitoring activities.

Chapter 3: The loading to and the state and trends of transboundary watercourses and international lakes

This chapter will be written based on the information from the previous questionnaires or consultations. The final content will both depend on the data received through the questionnaires and consultations, and the later discussions with the EEA and other partners. The preliminary work will be done as teamwork in the task force, and finalized in the WGMA.

The following issues will be discussed in this chapter:

- The biggest pollution problems (as eutrophication, organic pollution, hazardous substances, acidification) and its impact on human health and safety, and the present status of water bodies (maps and statistics based on reports from member States by questionnaires or Internet sources)
 - In Europe;
 - In Central Asia;
 - And, if possible, in Northern America.
- The trends of the state of transboundary watercourses and international lakes
 - In Europe;
 - In Central Asia;
 - And, if possible, in Northern America.
- Some successful case reports, based on proposals by the Task Force.

Chapter 4: Evaluation of the future state of transboundary watercourses and international lakes

This chapter will present a summary of the possible trends in (selected) representative transboundary waters. If possible, also some estimates of the necessary water protection measures and their costs will be done in this context. Also this part of the work will be done as teamwork in the task force, and finalized in the WGMA.

The following issues will be discussed in this chapter:

- The scenarios of future state of transboundary watercourses and international lakes;
- A rough estimate of the measures (and costs) needed in coming years for improving the status of water bodies.

Chapter 5: Summary

This part may later become the Executive Summary.

References

Sources of information, material used, etc.