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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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

Fourth meeting  
Bonn (Germany), 20–22 November 2006  
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

**DRAFT DECLARATION OF BONN**

Prepared by Germany in consultation with the Bureau

1. WE, THE PARTIES TO THE UNECE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES, gathered at Bonn from 20 to 22 November 2006 for our fourth meeting, stress again the importance of multilateral and bilateral cooperation and coordination on transboundary watercourses and international lakes as well as in international river basins. The Convention provides important guidance for this work with regard to different aspects of sustainable water management. Therefore we reaffirm the commitments we made at our three previous meetings (Helsinki, 2–4 July 1997; The Hague, Netherlands, 23–25 March 2000; and Madrid, 26–28 November 2003).
2. [We welcome Serbia, which has ratified the Convention since our third meeting.] We call upon further countries, in particular countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE), to ratify the Convention and its amendment.
3. We further encourage UNECE countries to update, where necessary, their agreements and arrangements and to conclude and ratify new ones in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, and we offer them assistance through the Convention's Advisory

Service. We also encourage countries that are riparian to the same transboundary waters to prepare and carry out joint projects.

4. We reaffirm our commitment to the decisions adopted at the thirteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in April 2005 on water, sanitation and human settlements, and we believe that the Convention and its protocols will provide a useful framework for the regional implementation of these decisions.

5. We urge the Parties to ratify the amendment to articles 25 and 26 opening the Convention to countries outside the UNECE region. We reiterate our invitation to States outside the UNECE region – especially, but not only, those sharing waters with UNECE countries – to cooperate within the framework of the Convention. We believe that the involvement of such States could be of mutual benefit by enriching the processes under the Convention and its protocols and affirming the global relevance of their standards while at the same time strengthening transboundary water cooperation and contributing to peace and security worldwide.

6. We welcome the entry into force on 4 August 2005 of the Protocol on Water and Health and the intention of several countries to ratify this protocol in the near future. We invite other countries to ratify the Protocol. We acknowledge the progress achieved in the implementation of the Protocol and the preparation of the first meeting of the Parties, which will take place in Geneva on 17–19 January 2007. We are committed to cooperate with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on all issues of common relevance.

7. We urge all States, especially the Signatories, to ratify the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters that was adopted in Kiev on 21 May 2003.

8. We appreciate the contributions of the Parties to the Convention's trust fund as well as their in-kind contributions. We invite further countries, financial institutions and funding mechanisms to contribute to the achievement of the objectives and purposes of the Convention.

9. We encourage all Parties to contribute actively to the implementation of the workplan 2007–2009, especially in the working groups.

10. We express our appreciation to the working groups and other bodies for the excellent work accomplished under the workplan 2004–2006, which will contribute to achieving the objectives and purposes of the Convention. We adopt the *Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines*, the *Rules on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management*, the *Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management* and the *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*, and we commit ourselves to their promotion and implementation.

11. We appreciate our cooperation with the governing body of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) as the first example of formalized cooperation between UNECE conventions. We are committed to further joint work and to supporting the activities of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial

Accidents in order to provide guidance to prevent, prepare for and respond to industrial accidents capable of having transboundary effects on shared waters.

12. Capacity-building is a vital element for the successful implementation of the Convention. There is an obvious need to provide training for national and local authorities on the various aspects of water management. We recognize the usefulness of the Convention's project "Capacity for Water Cooperation" to address the capacity-building needs of authorities in EECCA. We welcome the results of the first three workshops under the project (The Legal Basis for Transboundary Cooperation, Kiev, 22–24 November 2004; Information Management and Public Participation, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 8–10 June 2005; and Joint Monitoring and Assessment of Shared Water Basins, Including Early Warning and Alarm Systems, Tbilisi, 31 October – 2 November 2005) and support the project's continuation. We also support the other capacity-building activities in the 2007–2009 workplan and call upon Parties and non-Parties to contribute to them.

13. We take note of the outcome of the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico (16–22 March 2006), which stressed the need for "Local actions for a global challenge" in order to promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

14. We appreciate the activities of the EU Water Initiative, especially the Mediterranean and EECCA components, which are closely related to the Convention's implementation in the UNECE region. We will support the work of UNECE in the development of National Policy Dialogues under the EECCA component to strengthen integrated water resources management.

15. We will continue to cooperate with initiatives within the UNECE region promoting transboundary cooperation in water management such as the Petersburg II/Athens Declaration Process. This Process began successfully in December 2005 with an international roundtable in Berlin and is designed to provide a platform for a continuing structured dialogue among representatives of all countries of SEE, involving international and regional as well as non-governmental organizations, on opportunities, constraints and emerging issues in the management of the many transboundary waters in this rapidly changing part of Europe.

16. We acknowledge the implementation of the first steps of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), especially the analyses of the water bodies in river basin districts and the strengthening of international river basin commissions for enabling cooperation between EU countries and between EU and non-EU countries. These successful activities demonstrate the advantage of basin-wide international cooperation in the water sector, and especially the importance of assessment of transboundary waters to show progress in reducing impacts. We recognize the synergies and complementary roles of the WFD and the Convention. In this regard we welcome the results of the two workshops on transboundary water management along the EU border, the first one focusing on the north-eastern border and held in Debe (Poland) on 18–19 October 2005, and the second one focusing on SEE and held in Belgrade on 2–3 March 2006.

17. We acknowledge the important role that the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) has played for the Convention. We thank the Government of the Netherlands for having hosted and supported the centre since its establishment in 2000, and we also thank all other

members participating in the IWAC network. We welcome and gratefully accept the offer of the Government of the Slovak Republic to host the centre in the future. We are committed to supporting IWAC so that it can continue its tasks as a collaborating centre under the Convention, support implementation projects and make a substantive contribution to the water-related activities of the United Nations family.

18. We stress that pilot projects have played and will continue to play an important role in implementing the obligations under the Convention. They helped to establish effective and efficient monitoring and assessment programmes sustainable in the specific economic context of the countries concerned. They also helped to initiate bilateral and multilateral cooperation, leading to institutional strengthening and capacity-building. We therefore call upon international organizations, institutions and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission, to provide further funding for new pilot projects initiated under the auspices of the Convention.

19. We will contribute actively to the sixth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007). To this end, we will prepare an assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters to illustrate progress made in the prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impacts; trends and remaining pollution problems; and measures for improving the status of watercourses and preventing overuse of water resources. Together with the governing body of the Industrial Accidents Convention, we are committed to examining experience gained in the implementation of the Protocol on Civil Liability, investigating obstacles to the Protocol’s ratification and implementation, and proposing recommendations to the Ministerial Conference.

20. We recognize the importance of UNECE water-related technical cooperation activities, developed together with the Regional Adviser on Environment, for strengthening the Convention’s implementation.

21. We consider that our activities under the Convention can contribute substantially to overcoming the water and sanitation problems faced by many developing countries. We will therefore continue to assist the secretariat in playing a key role in the activities of UN-Water and the compilation of the third edition of the United Nations *World Water Development Report*, to be published in 2009. In particular, our input will provide insight into UNECE experience in the protection and sustainable use of transboundary waters, and it will focus on governance related to shared water resources, the protection of water and water-related ecosystems, the assessment of shared water resources, the prevention of industrial accidents and civil liability for damage caused by them, and the fight against water-related diseases.

22. In view of the flood catastrophes in several UNECE countries in the last three years, we stress the importance of increased transboundary cooperation, especially with regard to joint strategies and action programmes for flood protection, prevention and mitigation.

23. We recognize the need to take into account the value of ecosystem services for implementing integrated water resources management. We therefore commit ourselves to

applying the *Rules on Payments for Ecosystem Services* for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems. Based on the experience gained, we will further develop these Rules.

24. We greatly appreciate and will continue our joint work with the bodies established under the other UNECE environmental conventions as well as with other United Nations bodies and governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions active in sustainable and integrated water management, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the European Environment Agency (EEA), GEF, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), OSCE, the World Bank and the regional environmental centres. We thank them for their support to date and invite them to keep cooperating actively in our work so that we all can benefit from each other's experience. We will also seek new partners, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

25. We acknowledge the vital role of the secretariat services for the Convention and its Protocols in enabling us to support and intensify our activities concerning information dissemination, exchange of experiences and know-how, training and capacity-building.

26. We, the Parties, note with appreciation that at this meeting UNECE countries that have not yet become Parties to the Convention have associated themselves with this declaration.

27. We express our gratitude to the Government of Germany for hosting our meeting and for its hospitality.

28. We welcome the offer of the Government of ... to host our fifth meeting in the year 2009.