



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

To: Participants in the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention

9 November 2015

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you in my capacity of Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). The seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (Budapest, 17-19 November 2015) is fast approaching. With this letter I would like to bring to your attention some substantial and practical issues.

The upcoming meeting will represent an important milestone in the history of the Convention and more broadly for transboundary water cooperation. It is held against the backdrop of the adoption of new global commitments that will shape the world future development. The meeting gives us the concrete opportunity to model the evolution of the Convention to best serve countries in their efforts towards transboundary water cooperation and the achievement of such commitments.

The strategic discussions during the High Level Segment on 17 November should give us directions on the Convention's opening to all United Nations Member States and its role in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global commitments. They will also represent a solid background for the ensuing discussions on the following agenda items.

Both parts of the High Level Segment will be kicked off by an exchange between panellists followed by interventions from the floor. Given the importance of the issues discussed, I warmly encourage heads of delegations of Parties, non-Parties and other actors under the Convention to actively participate in the discussions, taking due account of the 3-minute limit for the interventions.

The decisions that the Meeting of the Parties will be invited to adopt are also closely related to the above topics:

The decision on reporting under the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/7) will give a formidable new tool to countries and other actors involved in the Convention's implementation to measure progress in transboundary water cooperation, identify challenges and needs, and demonstrate impacts of measures taken.

Massimo Cozzone

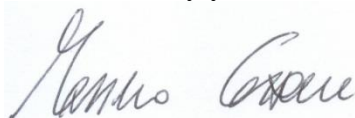
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The closely interlinked decisions on establishing a framework for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/12) and on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2015/11) give clear political directions on these two issues. They will also practically define the next step in this respect: a strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level. Such a strategy will be developed through a broad participatory approach involving Parties, non-Parties and other actors from all over the world. The reflections at the seventh session on key aspects of such strategy, such as the role of partners, of the secretariat, the relation with the Watercourses Convention, and the role of the Convention vis-à-vis the SDGs and other global commitments, will lay the basis for the future development of the strategy. I would like to underline that given that these issues do not only concern Parties, non-Parties and observer organizations will be invited to associate themselves to both decisions.

Finally, the programme of work under the Convention for 2016-2018 that will be adopted in Budapest, will address many of the main challenges for transboundary water cooperation, including issues which will prove essential to achieve the SDGs, such as intersectoral cooperation across borders, and cooperation on climate change adaptation (and mitigation) in transboundary basins. The ambition is that future work under the Convention will be more global and integrated than ever, mobilizing countries and partners from all over the world from a variety of sectors. I invite all delegations to express clearly their intention to participate and contribute to the proposed activities and pledge financial support for the implementation of the programme.

I look forward to working with you in Budapest to make the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties a great success, and send you all my best wishes for your final internal preparations for the meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Massimo Cozzone
Chair of the Bureau to the UNECE Convention on the
Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes