



Transboundary Water Cooperation Seminar

Strasbourg, France, 11 December 2013

1 – Background

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation (IYWC) to promote and strengthen sustainable management of the world's freshwater resources.

Water has been the basis of diplomatic agreements since dawn of time. The numerous agreements made between riparian States have proven the benefits of cooperation. Joint management of water resources is a long-term social endeavor and examples show the importance of mediation, water diplomacy, information, shared views and goals, and of enabling institutional, financing and legal conditions to support cooperation and sustainable outcomes.

2 – Objectives

In 2012, the World Water Council dedicated the 6th World Water Forum to the *Solutions for Water*. As an objective, the Forum intended to improve water cooperation by increasing the amount of agreements and joint management initiatives throughout the world to place inter-State cooperation for transboundary water high on the global agenda.

The objective of the seminar is to pursue efforts made during the 6th World Water Forum by promoting successful cooperation programs and demonstrate mutual benefits of joint-management according to different approaches to feed the preparatory process of the 7th World Water Forum on hydropolitics.

3 - Audience

The invitations are extended to all members of the World Water Council, European parliamentarians, competent UN bodies and policy makers. This event will be organised by invitation, 150 to 200 participants are expected to attend the seminar.

4 - Structure of the seminar

The seminar aims to promote concrete solutions of transboundary water agreements by demonstrating different assets of joint-management through specific examples of cooperation:

- **Plenary Session 1: The Itaipu dam - Sharing the flows for energy**

Brazil and Paraguay elaborated 50 years ago a joint program in order to the share the flows of the Parana River and meet their energy needs. Nowadays, the Itaipu dam provides the 75% of Paraguay's needs of electricity and meets 20% of Brazil's demand. This session will highlight how the Itaipu dam has been a pioneer in water cooperation for energy supply and how hydropower may satisfy future needs within a climate change context.

- **Plenary Session 2: The Mekong River, from a peace process to a nexus approach**

The constitution of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in the 1950's offered, despite the political context, one of the first spaces for regional environmental negotiations. The MRC has recently initiated an evolution towards a nexus approach. The session will demonstrate how the issues discussed among the MRC members reflect an international situation where social and economic choices are to be made in order to guaranty a sustainable future.

- **Plenary Session 3: Achievements of the European Water Framework Directive**

In 2000, the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted and changed water policies among all member states of the European Union by putting the ecological state of the water bodies at the heart of management decisions. The session will review the successes of the WFD over the past years and provide recommendations to further improve the implementation process.

- **Plenary Session 4: Transboundary groundwater cooperation**

About 97% of the world's available freshwater resources are found among 400 transboundary aquifers worldwide. The lack of specific legal and institutional arrangements to manage these aquifers demonstrates the need to strengthen the science and policy interaction. The session will discuss transboundary aquifer management from a multi-disciplinary perspective, focusing on its scientific-hydrogeological, socio-economic and legal-institutional dimensions.

- **Plenary Session 5: What outcomes for transboundary water cooperation?**

The 1992 UNECE Water Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has been in force since 1996. On 6 February 2013, amendments entered into force, opening it for accession by non-UNECE countries, thus turning it into a global legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. This recent evolution has strengthened political support to transboundary water cooperation. This session will highlight the latest developments on this matter.