



MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Follow up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties: advocacy for the inclusion of a dedicated indicator for transboundary cooperation among the SDGs indicators

Dear focal points and points of contacts for the Water Convention, dear participants in the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties,

First of all, I would like to thank you once again for your trust in electing me as Chair of the Meeting of the Parties. The next three years will be crucial for the Convention, as we will lay the foundation for its implementation at the global level. The great interest by countries outside the UNECE region that was reiterated in Budapest shows that, in the words of United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, we can build “an essential intergovernmental platform and a home in the United Nations system for dealing with transboundary water issues”. I look forward to working with all of you in this endeavour.

Indeed, in the face of growing water challenges, transboundary cooperation will become ever more important to fight poverty, foster sustainable development and ensure peace and stability. As also emphasized by the Meeting of the Parties, the inclusion of a reference to transboundary cooperation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - in target 6.5 of the SDG on water and sanitation - is an important recognition of the importance of the issue.

However, the monitoring framework for the SDGs currently under discussion by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) does not include an indicator for transboundary water cooperation. The omission of such an indicator in the final framework for monitoring progress on the SDGs would be a drawback and fail the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

Still, there is now a narrow window of opportunity to revert the situation. The IAEG is currently holding a consultation open to countries that are not members of the IAEG as well as other stakeholders on the so-called “grey indicators”, the indicators on which the group has not yet agreed. Among them, there is an indicator for integrated water resources management for target 6.5.

In line with the decision of the Meeting of the Parties, I would like to urgently encourage you to reach out to your colleagues from the statistic offices involved in the consultation to explain them the importance of including in addition to the indicator on integrated water resources management, a specific indicator for transboundary cooperation. Such indicator is key to increase the political profile and international attention to the issue, which are important prerequisite for progress.

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As for the specific proposal for such an indicator, UN-Water has proposed to the IAEG “Percentage of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation”, (as indicator 6.5.2), which is described at <http://www.unwater.org/publications/publications-detail/en/c/296330/>.

Such proposal has already been backed by several countries, also because, from the technical point of view, the indicator is easily measurable and a global baseline exists.

As the open consultation is extremely short and will already close on Tuesday 15 December, I encourage you to take immediate action on this. I very much count on your cooperation; together we can create the needed critical mass to ensure that progress on transboundary cooperation is monitored and supported. More information is available at <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>.

I wish you and your families a happy and peaceful holiday season and healthy and prosperous 2016.

Sincerely yours,



Péter Kovács
Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the
Convention on the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes