



Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourse and International Lakes – legal and institutional mechanism to support transboundary water cooperation

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Main messages

- Transboundary water cooperation is a prerequisite for food and energy security, health protection, conflict prevention and climate action
- The UN system needs to step up efforts in this area
- The UN Water Convention provides an effective framework for UNRCOs and UNCTs engagement and can be used better
- There are many needs and opportunities for joint programming at the national and regional levels, creating synergies with CC action, biodiversity, peace and security

How are the UN global water conventions useful?



Support transboundary cooperation when it is not established

Support ≠ replace existing treaties and where basin agreements are to be created the Conventions can facilitate negotiations and cooperation

Promote the gradual improvement of cooperation when it is established and strengthen implementation, for example, through a platform to share experiences and good practices

Instruments of preventive diplomacy and confidence-building between riparian states

For the UN system: they allow us to come together with common objectives, common principles and approaches and common messaging



The Water Convention: how does it work?

A global legal framework

To foster cooperation over transboundary waters (both surface and groundwaters) to ensure that they are sustainably and equitably managed

Based on the general principles of international water law:

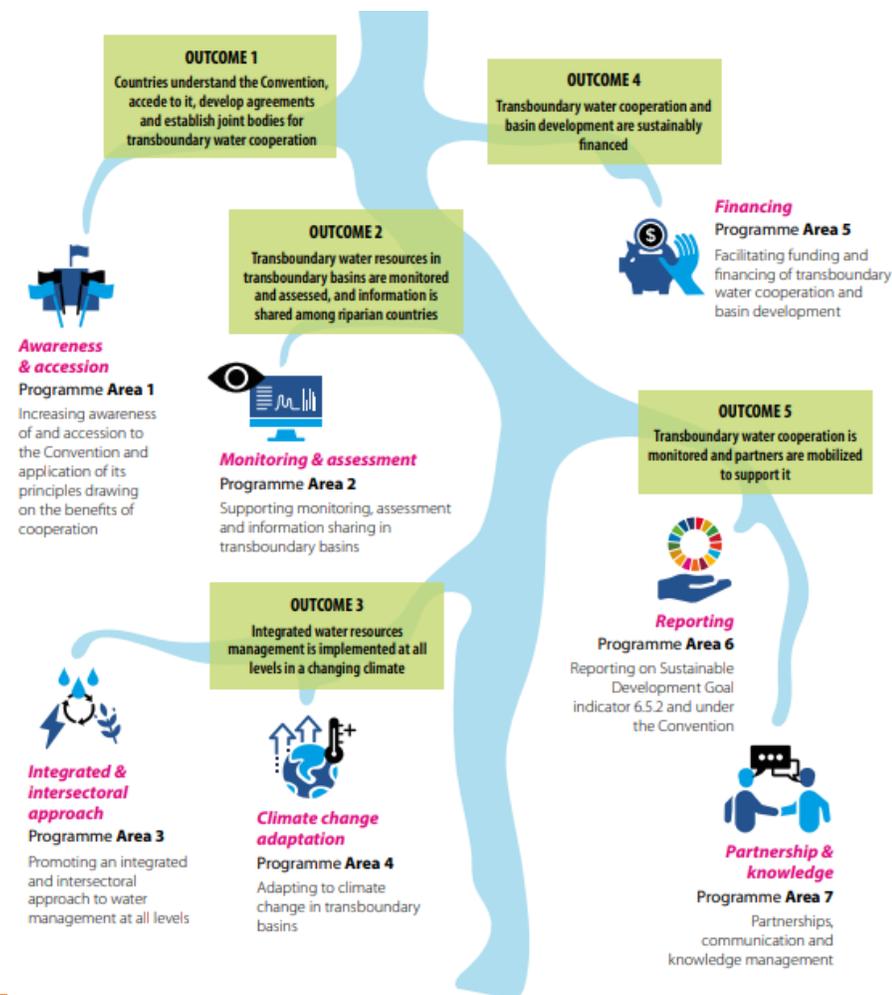
- Do no harm
- Equitable and reasonable use
- Principle of cooperation

An institutional framework

A UN global platform to develop policy and review progress of transboundary water cooperation



A program of activities





The Water Convention: obligations (1)

Obligations for all Parties (Part I)

- Rational water management, conservation of water resources and environmental protection
- Conservation and restoration of ecosystem
- Limit and monitor waste-water discharges
- Application of BAT for industrial and municipal waste-water and of best environmental practices for diffuse pollution
- Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution and contingency planning
- Application of EIA and other assessments
- Water quality objectives
- Monitoring and assessment
- Research and development
- Exchange of information



Due diligence obligations => progressive implementation



The Water Convention: obligations (2)



Obligations for Riparian Parties (Part II)

Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and creation of joint bodies (Art. 9)

Joint monitoring and assessment (Art. 11)

Common research and development

Exchange of information between Riparian Parties (Art. 13)

Consultations (Art. 10)

Warning and alarm systems (Art. 14)

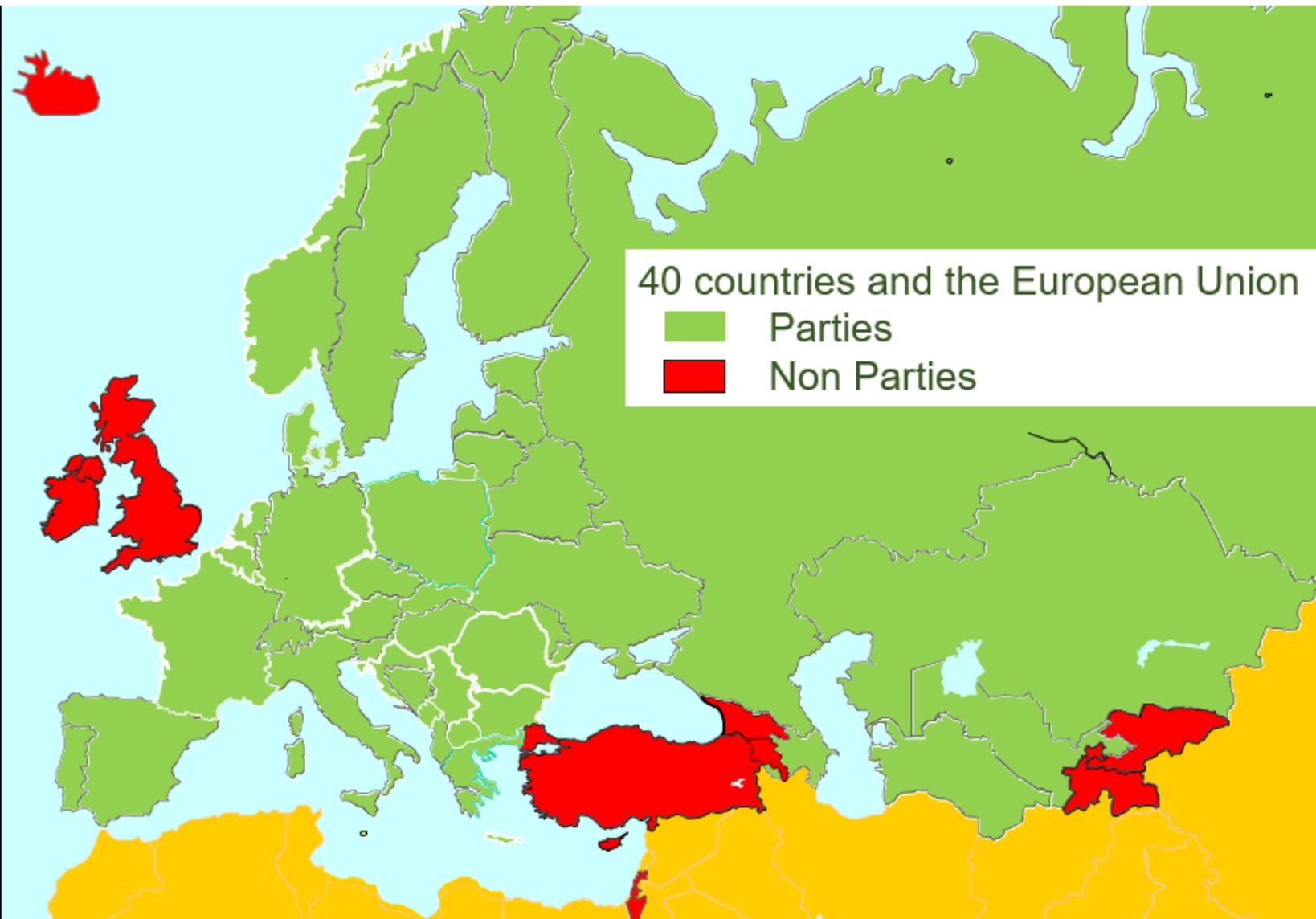
Mutual assistance (Art. 15)

Public information (Art. 16)

Dispute settlement mechanisms (Art. 22)



Parties from to the Water Convention from ECE region

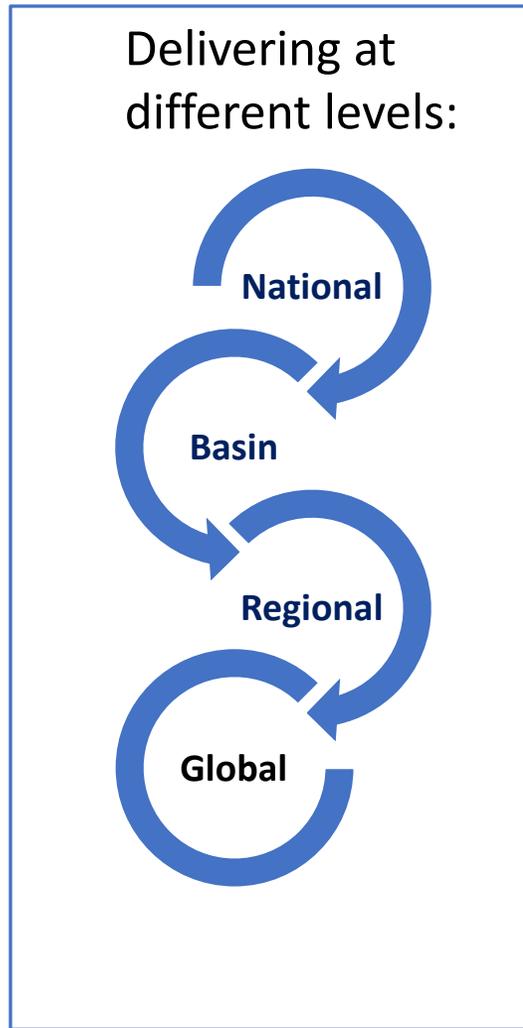
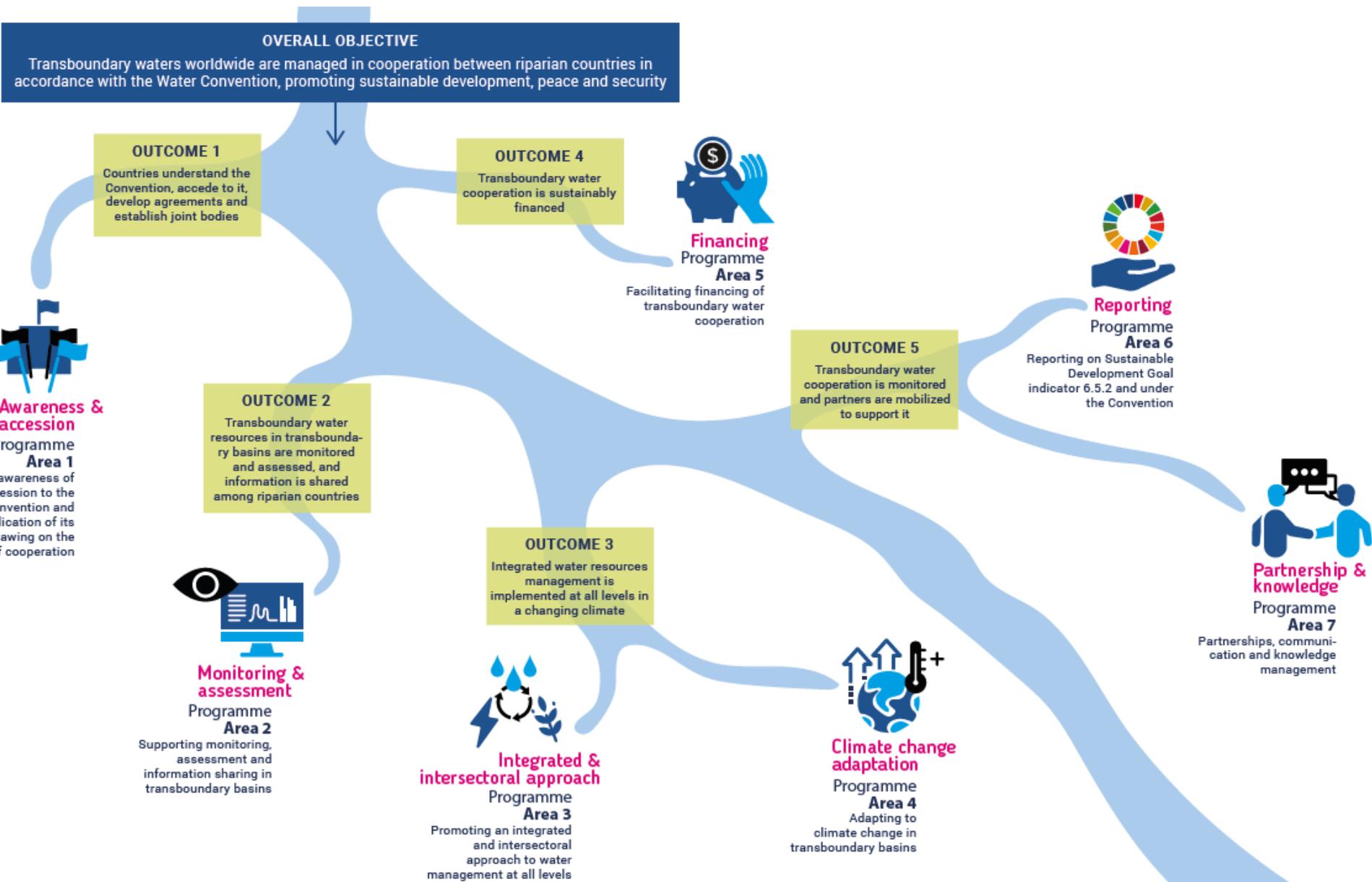


Parties to the Water Convention outside the ECE region:

- ✓ Chad
- ✓ Senegal
- ✓ Ghana
- ✓ Guinea-Bissau
- ✓ Togo
- ✓ Cameroon
- ✓ Nigeria
- ✓ Iraq
- ✓ Namibia
- ✓ Panama
- ✓ The Gambia



Programme of work for 2022-2024



Events planned in 2023-2024

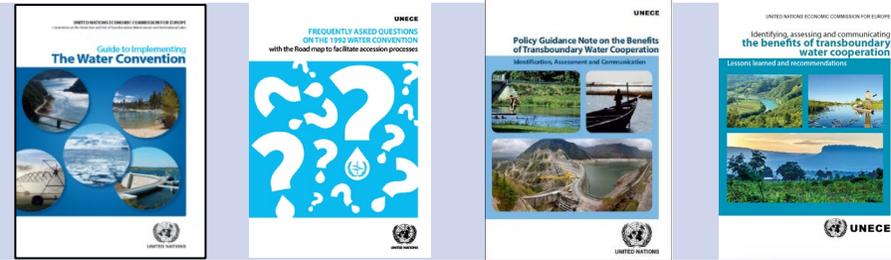


- **Global workshop on conjunctive management of transboundary surface water and groundwater**
(16-17 October 2023, Geneva)
- **18th Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment**
(17-18 October 2023, Geneva)
- **Global workshop on developing agreements**
(7-8 November 2023, Budapest)
- **Strategic Roundtable on Increasing Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector**
(13-14 November 2023, Geneva)
- **Global workshop on financing transboundary water cooperation**
(5-6 December 2023, Geneva)
- **8th meeting of the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus**
(7-8 December 2023, Geneva)
- **Global workshop on transboundary climate change adaptation and mitigation**
(26-27 February 2024, Geneva)
- **Meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate**
(28 February 2024, Geneva)
- **Joint session of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment**
(6-8 May 2024, Geneva)
- **Tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties**
(Ljubljana, 23–25 October 2024)

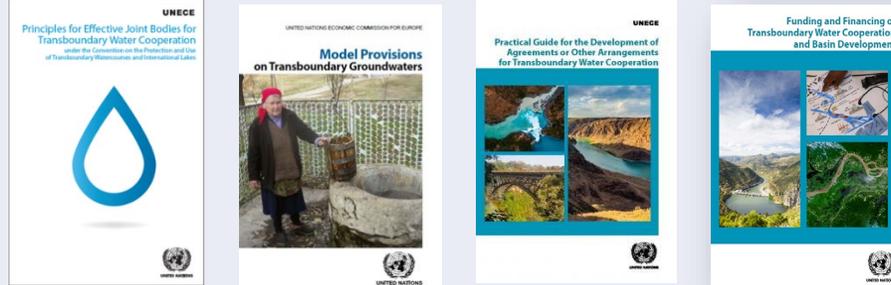
Tools and guidance to support cooperation



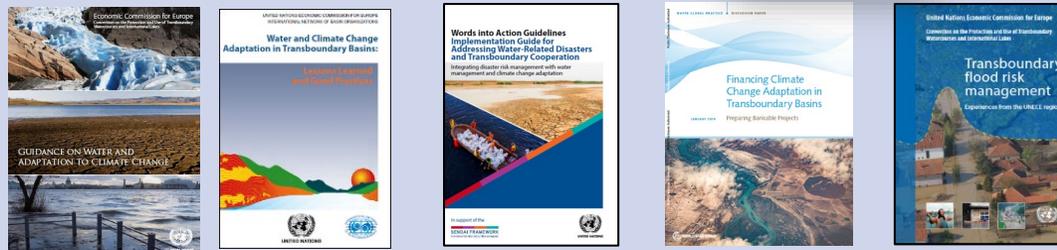
Establishing principles and inspiring cooperation



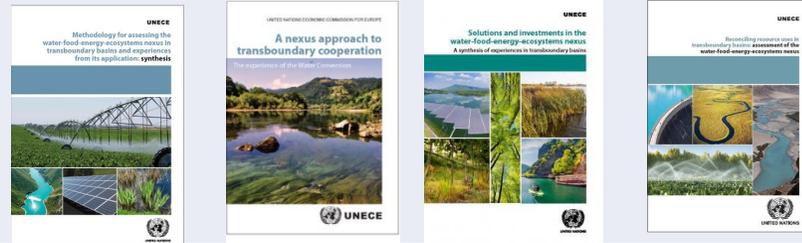
Supporting the development of agreements, creation of basin org° and financing



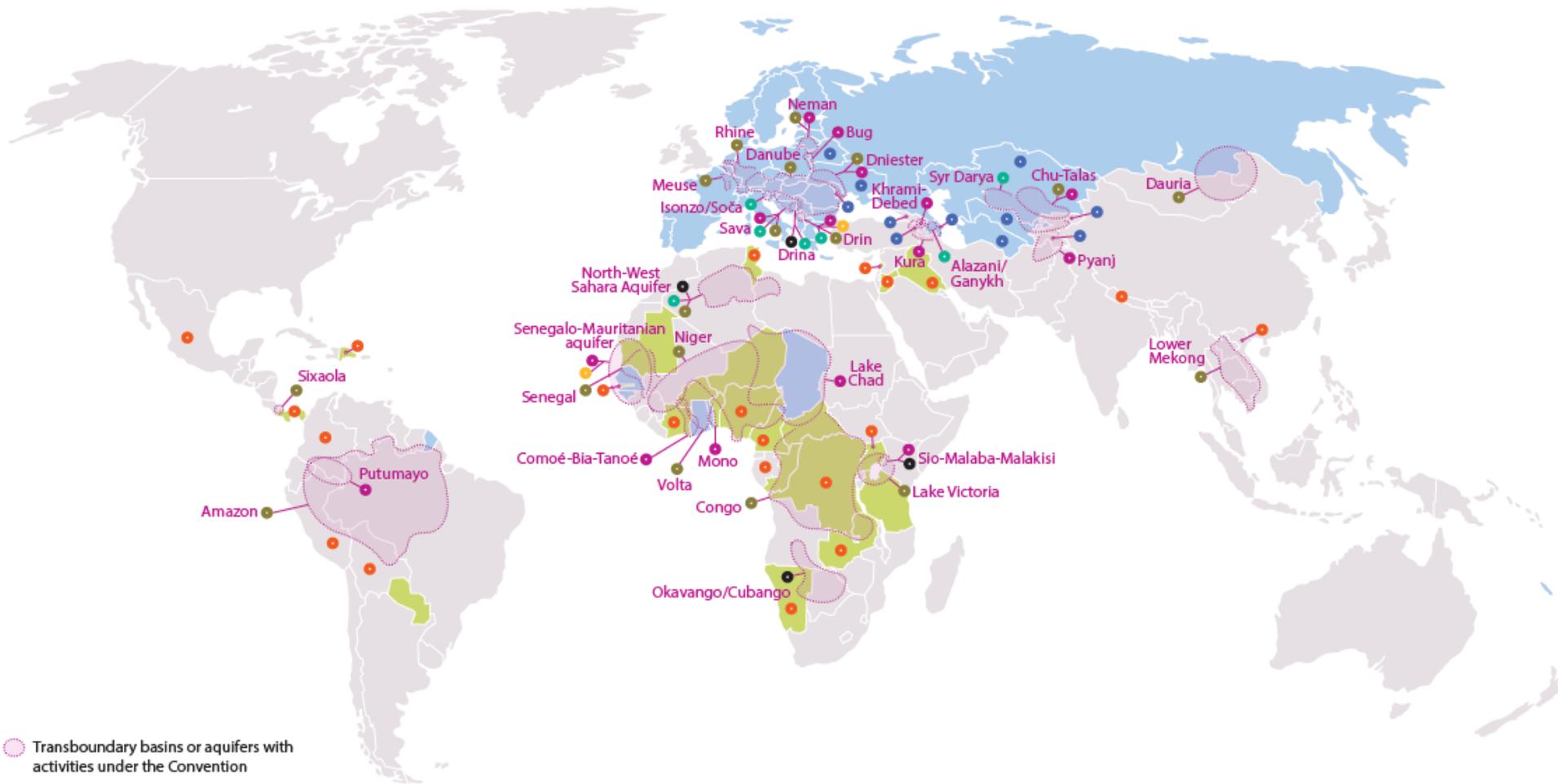
Helping countries adapt to climate change



Supporting the reduction of cross-sectoral trade-offs and conflicts



Activities under the Water Convention 2015-2022



Transboundary basins or aquifers with activities under the Convention

Areas of work

- Support the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies
- Identify, assess and communicate the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- Assess and promote the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins

- Adapt to climate change in transboundary basins
- Increase knowledge of and accession to the Water Convention
- Monitor, assess and share information in transboundary basins
- National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the European Union Water Initiative

Country Status

- Parties to the Water Convention
- Countries in the process of accession



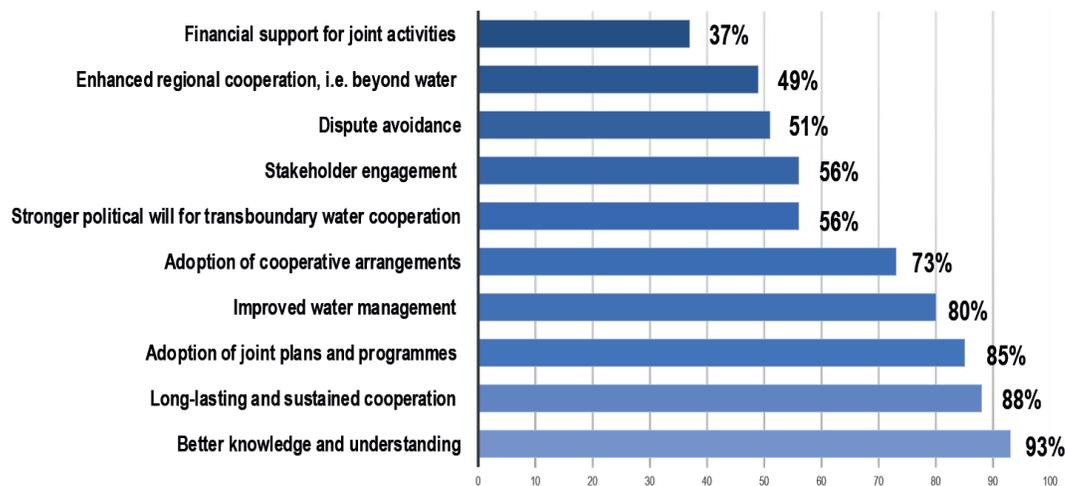
Positive impact of the Water Convention in the region

High levels of cooperation: Average value of the SDG 6.5.2 for Parties: 80% (global average: 58%)

19 of 24 countries with 100% value: Parties

... but still many challenges

WHAT DO PARTIES TO THE WATER CONVENTION ACHIEVE THROUGH TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION?



Note: Based on the Second report on implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes 2017–2020 (UNEP, 2021).

Building political will
addressing **structural barriers** and finding **innovative financing mechanisms** is needed to address current financing shortfalls

Upscale capacity development

Capacity building is important for negotiating and implementing operational arrangements

Leveraging and mobilizing expertise
There is a need to **upscale and coordinate** the activities of international organizations to **provide targeted support** to countries

Strengthen legal frameworks
The water conventions and the draft articles on transboundary aquifers offer a **solid basis** upon which to **revise or negotiate** new arrangements

Address Data Gaps
There has been **strong country engagement** in the monitoring exercise, but data remains a challenge, particularly for transboundary aquifers and countries with **no SDG indicator value**



How can UNRCOs/ UNCTs engage?

1. Use the results of the SDG6 indicator 6.5.2 to strengthen political will to cooperate
2. Encourage/support governments in preparing their national report on SDG 6.5.2 (KGZ, TJK and TUR)
3. Support governments to accede to the UN Water Convention (political advocacy, legal and technical measures) (GEO, TJK?)
4. Mainstream transboundary water cooperation and implementation of the Water Convention into CCAs and UNSDCF, as well as in NAPs
5. Design more joint national and regional programs to advance transboundary water cooperation and related issues (water cooperation and climate, and peace and security, and food security) and mobilize climate finance
6. Use the Convention tools and methodology in your programmes



The Water Convention's secretariat stands ready to work with you!

For more information:

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Transboundary basins in the pan-European region



Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region, <https://unece.org/info/publications/pub/21808>



Dedicated mechanism to address problems of compliance and implementation: Implementation Committee

- **Objective:** Mechanism to facilitate, promote and safeguard the implementation, application and enforcement of the Convention.
- Established in 2012 for **conflict prevention** and case-oriented practical assistance.
- 9 members in their **personal capacity**, leading lawyers and water professionals. Meets twice a year in an open, public and transparent manner.
- **Functions:** Considers requests for advice; self-presentation or party-to-party presentation; undertake committee initiative.
- **Actions:** national implementation plan, transboundary water agreement, capacity building, facilitation technical assistance.

