Agenda Item (title): Progress update from the Expert Group on Transboundary Waters

Background Brief
30th UN-Water Meeting – 31 January and 1 February 2019 – Rome, Italy

Background Brief prepared by: UNECE and UNESCO-IHP

Main Issues of this Agenda Item:

- Brief status update on the Expert Group on Transboundary Waters, co-coordinated by UNECE and UNESCO-IHP.

Introduction / Background / Rationale (less than 200 words please)**:**

In recent years, transboundary water cooperation has gained increased attention at the global level: with its recognition in the Sustainable Development Goals, several debates at the UN Security Council, the first report on SDG indicator 6.5.2 launched in 2018 etc. The important role of international water law and the two global Conventions in this regard has been increasingly highlighted.

In March 2018, a second call for expressions of interest to join / reconfirm membership in the Expert Group on Transboundary Waters was launched. The Group is now composed of experts from 19 organizations, namely (*Cf. Annex 1*): Conservation International, GWP, UNDP, ESCWA, WMO, WWF, UNESCO WWAP, IAH, IGRAC, Water.org, WaterLex, IHE Delft, Ramsar Convention, SIWI, UNU, UNECE, UNESCO and IUCN.

The main activity of the expert group is currently the preparation of a UN-Water Policy Brief on the United Nations Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention, entered into force in 2014) and the Convention on the Protection of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) serviced by UNECE which was opened for accession to all UN Member States in 2016. Several rounds of feedback on the first full draft have taken place between UNECE and UNESCO.

Progress Update (less than 200 words please)**:**

It is foreseen that an advanced first draft (focusing on the compatibility/complementarity of both conventions and on the benefits of ratifying both of them[1]), will be shared with the members of the Expert Group for contributions, comments, and feedback in **January 2019**. Subsequently, comments will be integrated, the revised draft will be shared with UN-Water members and partners and the policy brief is expected to be finalized by mid-2019.

[1] Working title: 'Why Widespread Accession to the Global Water Conventions is Needed'

Proposed Action by UN-Water, if any (less than 100 words please)**:**

Members of the Expert Group and subsequently all UN-Water members are requested to review and comment the policy brief and subsequently, once finalized, to foster its implementation.

N/A

Proposed Draft Decision, if any (less than 100 words please)**:**

N/A

Annexes (if any)**:**

- List of Expert Group members
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