

WCC-2020-Res-015-EN

Cooperation on transboundary fresh waters to ensure ecosystem conservation, climate resilience and sustainable development

CONCERNED that the majority of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater basins, which are shared by 153 countries and contain 40% of the world's population, lack a cooperative management framework, as indicated by the first report on the Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 6.5.2;

RECOGNISING that transboundary water cooperation is key for the sustainability of ecosystems, particularly transboundary ecosystems, and the livelihoods of populations living there;

NOTING that a significant proportion of pollution of the marine environment is conveyed to the sea by transboundary rivers;

RECALLING the importance of transboundary water cooperation to address climate impacts, such as floods and droughts, to avoid consequences of maladaptation and to harness the co-benefits of improved regional cooperation;

UNDERLINING the importance of international commitments related to freshwater cooperation and conservation, particularly the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention), the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration for 2021–2030;

NOTING that the UN Secretary-General is calling upon countries to accede to both the Watercourses Convention and the Water Convention and to strive for their full implementation;

WELCOMING the entry into force of the Watercourses Convention in 2014, as well as the promotion efforts by IUCN and others to achieve this, and the accessions by Chad and Senegal to the Water Convention following its global opening in 2016; and

RECALLING Resolutions 4.065 *Freshwater biodiversity conservation, protected areas, and management of transboundary waters* (Barcelona, 2008) and 5.089 *Dams and hydraulic infrastructure* (Jeju, 2012);

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. REQUESTS the Director General to ensure that the IUCN Secretariat contributes to strengthening the governance of transboundary waters, in particular by disseminating information on the role of the Watercourses Convention, the Water Convention and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and by building capacity for acceding and implementing them;
2. CALLS ON IUCN Members, in particular civil society organisations, to promote the cooperative, equitable and sustainable management and protection of transboundary waters, and to foster accession to and implementation of the Watercourses Convention, Water Convention and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
3. URGES governments to:
 - a. ratify/accede to and implement the Watercourses Convention, the Water Convention and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
 - b. fulfil relevant commitments under international instruments, towards achieving global goals and targets on water, environment and development; and
 - c. develop and implement operational arrangements for transboundary water cooperation for all shared basins, fostering conservation and sustainable management of freshwater and related ecosystems and their biodiversity; and
4. ENTREATS governments to:
 - a. cooperate in developing and implementing strategies and measures, in particular nature-based solutions, to adapt to climate change in transboundary basins; and

b. integrate a source-to-sea approach to transboundary water cooperation to reduce marine pollution, including plastics pollution.