

Global Workshop on Droughts in Transboundary Basins

Hanna Plotnykova

Water Convention, UNECE



Global workshop on droughts in transboundary basins

UNCCD, UNDRR, WMO, World Bank, INBO

26-27 February 2024, Geneva

- Every part of the world now suffers from droughts. As droughts cannot be avoided, it is imperative that **measures are taken to reduce the impact of droughts and prevent droughts from becoming disasters.**
- **Droughts are generally a common concern in transboundary basins**, although the priority may differ between riparians depending on whether they are upstream or downstream, the proportion of the basin they share, and their water-related economic activities. It should be borne in mind that **cooperation has economic benefits and that water security is a prerequisite for food security.**
- As drought management is a multi-sectoral, transboundary challenge, **it is necessary to develop appropriate institutional frameworks, consultation and coordination mechanisms at both national and transboundary levels.** Water should be seen not as a sector but as a **nexus between food, energy, ecosystems and livelihoods**, and water management should therefore be taken very seriously.
- **Strengthening regional/transboundary bodies and institutionalising cooperation**, e.g. through strong agreements and supporting dialogue, can support cooperation. Joint bodies, such as **transboundary basin organisations**, are well placed to advise member states in their decisions **to maximise the benefits of their collective action** in transboundary cooperation to a level that cannot be achieved by unilateral action.

- The mandates of joint bodies should cover **both surface and groundwater**. Existing and future **transboundary agreements** should take into account hydrological changes and extremes such as **droughts as a result of climate change**. They should be designed to be flexible and adaptable.
- **Monitoring, data management, data analysis, modelling, decision support systems and early warning systems** are essential for effective drought risk reduction. At the transboundary level, this requires coordination between stakeholders, timely data sharing and coherent communication channels to disseminate data and information in local languages. It is essential to combine **local indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge** to make climate information relevant to and empower communities.
- **Drought management plans and integrating drought issues into river basin management plans**, including at transboundary level are important.
- The same basins are often affected by floods and droughts; thus, **drought management plans also need to be developed in a continuum with flood management plans**, as both share the objective of slowing down the water cycle.
- Once plans are in place, they need to be implemented. Many robust basin (drought) management plans sit on a shelf without being implemented on the ground. **Dedicated resources (financial, technical and human) need to be mobilised** through sustainable mechanisms to ensure that key functions of the planning process are not project-dependent but can be routinely carried out by basin organisations. **Increased funding and financing for drought management** is needed from national and international sources.

Events in 2024

2024

- **23-24 April:** Workshop on increasing capacities to prevent, prepare for and respond to accidental water pollution from tailing facilities
- **3-5 June:** Joint session of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment
- **23-25 October:** Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (to take place in Slovenia)

Tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention

[Environmental Policy](#) ▷

[Water Convention](#) ▷

[Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention](#) ▷

23 - 25 October 2024

Slovenia

<https://unece.org/info/events/unece-meetings-and-events/environmental-policy/water-convention>



Thanks for
your attention!

Water Convention Secretariat contact:

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

sonja.koeppel@un.org

hanna.plotnykova@un.org – for climate change

For more information:

www.unece.org/env/water/