



United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe



Ministry of Infrastructure and the
Environment



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation,
Building and Nuclear Safety



World
Meteorological
Organization
Weather • Climate • Water

SECOND WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Geneva, 19-20 March 2015

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 19 March 2015

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

The first workshop on transboundary flood risk management, which was held in April 2009, highlighted that there are common problems, objectives and approaches to flood risk management in the UN-ECE region and beyond. The workshop identified a number of useful tools for managing transboundary flood risks and provided important conclusions for flood risk management, including, among others, the need to strengthen political support, improve communication among riparian countries, data sharing and facilitate capacity-building.

The second workshop on transboundary flood risk management will be organized on 19-20 March 2015 within the framework of the programme of work of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). This workshop will bring together professionals from all over the world working on transboundary flood risk management and will provide a platform to:

- Exchange experiences concerning the latest developments and the progress made in the transboundary case studies since the 2009 Workshop;
- Identify relevant problems, successful strategies for transboundary flood risk management and new cooperation models and develop new ideas and approaches;
- Present best practice examples of successful transboundary cooperation on flood risk reduction and management;
- Analyse lessons learned from the latest flooding events in 2014 (e.g. in the Danube River Basin);
- Consider the experiences made in the European Union during the implementation of the EU-Flood Directive and the current work on flood risk management plans; and
- Review and update the recommendations of the 2009-workshop.

By recalling the previously submitted case studies and recommendations from 2009 and presenting progress in these areas, the participants will be able to receive impulses for initiatives in their river basins to help facilitate sound flood risk management. Information on the previous workshop can be found at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_flood_workshop.html

II. Organisation of Work

In order to make the discussions as practical and useful as possible, the workshop will build on the presentation and in-depth analysis of previous (2009) and new case studies from transboundary basins with flood risk management problems. The presentations - held by representatives of the riparian countries – should include different aspects of flood risk management and represent a wide geographic coverage. They will be followed by a reaction from experts, and a discussion with the audience.

The case study teams from 2009 will be contacted directly to review whether any progress can be presented at the conference. Additionally, we are seeking interesting new case studies from all countries highlighting good practice and challenges in transboundary flood risk management. To emphasize the transboundary nature of flood risk management, it is suggested that the case studies for water basins submitted jointly by affected countries, insofar this is feasible.

Experts interested in making a contribution to the workshop should inform the organizers as soon as possible (maria.berglund@fresh-thoughts.eu and anna.kaplina@unece.org), by 15 January at the latest; a template for contributions is attached.

The workshop should create an interactive platform for communication among participants with different backgrounds and representing different sectors. We would like to maximize the time for discussion and the exchange of experience for all.

A detailed provisional programme for the workshop will be issued at the beginning of February 2015.

III. Background

Extreme flood events and especially the economic, social and environmental as well as human life losses they cause have significantly increased during the last years in the UNECE region. Major flooding occurred across Europe the summer of 2013, recalling the significant floods of 2002, with further major events throughout 2014. After the storm surge in northern Europe in October, then flooding and storms in Slovenia, Czech Republic and parts of the Balkans, the severe weather thought to be caused by the remnants of Hurricane Gonzalez, moved to parts of southern Europe with Greece and Turkey significantly impacted. This past summer heavy rains caused particularly significant damage in southern Siberia, affecting an area covering 400.000 km, the worst floods since record-keeping began. Southeast Asia also saw large-scale flooding return in 2013, with Cambodia being hit the hardest. At the same time, flood risk areas represent vital assets to the economy of many members of the region that can and should not be abandoned. Due to the transboundary nature of many rivers in the region, flooding often has transboundary consequences and thus cooperation is required.

Due to importance of the issue, under the UNECE Water Convention, Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention were adopted in 2000 and subsequently Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management were adopted in 2006. The fourth meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention in 2006 created a new Water and Climate Task Force which was entrusted with activities in two main areas of work: transboundary flood risk management and water and climate change adaptation. In the area of transboundary flood risk management, the work programme for 2007-2009 focused on the transfer of the experience and results of the European Network of Expertise on Flood Risk Management to non-European Union countries. To this end, a Workshop on Transboundary Flood Risk Management was organized on 22-23 April 2009.

The workshop aimed to take stock of current problems, recent progress and remaining challenges in transboundary flood risk management, all on the basis of concrete examples. The workshop was prepared in close cooperation with the Parties to the Convention as well as non-Parties, who

elaborated the case studies by analysing in depth flood risk management problems in the different basins. Moreover, a background study was prepared to guide the discussions.

Against this background, the Second Workshop on Transboundary Flood Risk Management will take place to on the one hand discuss the progress made in the case studies from 2009 and on the other hand review new case studies from different basins. The workshop is organized by the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection, Building and Nuclear Safety, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Netherlands, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

IV. Practical Information

The workshop will start at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, 19 March 2015 and end at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, 20 March 2015. It will be held in Salle VII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The working languages will be English, French and Russian.

The workshop is intended for all those who are involved in flood risk management and flood prevention in transboundary basins at the transboundary, national and local levels. Focal points are requested to disseminate information on the workshop and to facilitate nomination of relevant experts from their respective countries.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the seminar; however, available funds are limited. Requests for financial support should be submitted using the attached financial support request form to the UNECE secretariat [water.convention@unece.org and anna.kaplina@unece.org] as soon as possible, but not later than 30 January 2015. Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to experts providing inputs to the workshop. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the UNECE secretariat as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is usually four weeks. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least four weeks before the meeting.

In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the registration form available online (<https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=lb4Mdn>). On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the UNECE website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 229171606.

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>.

For further queries please contact: anna.kaplina@unece.org

Further information and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course:

http://www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_flood_risk_management_2015.html