



**High-level Preparatory meeting of the United Nations Conference on the
Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of
the International Decade for Action
“Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028**

Statement by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Thank you, Mr. President and many thanks to the Governments of Tajikistan and The Netherlands for all their efforts to prepare and make next year Conference the success it needs to be.

Previous interventions have underlined the very good framework provided by the suggested themes and their relevance.

I would like to stress the importance of ensuring linkages between the different themes, and not have silos discussions, as solutions are linked.

For instance, the topic of transboundary water cooperation should not be confined to the fourth theme, as it is also very closely related to all other themes.

As an example, in relation to theme 2, transboundary cooperation can reduce trade-offs between sectoral policies and objectives at the regional level and help identify cooperative “nexus” solutions that support social and economic development.

Also in relation to theme 3, transboundary water cooperation is key for climate action, to reduce risks and vulnerability and to increase resilience. It not only can prevent action that may otherwise negatively redistribute vulnerability or displace or magnify risk from one place to another. It also can help identifying and implementing more effective and efficient solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. And exactly the same can be said on the importance of transboundary cooperation for biodiversity protection.

This is why, as mentioned by the UN Secretary-General, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, serviced by UNECE, should be made us of to advance transboundary water cooperation, ratified and implemented by all countries sharing transboundary waters. It is very positive that more than 15 countries from different continents are in the process of accession; and I encourage them to complete it by the Conference, as a clear commitment to transboundary water cooperation.

I would also like to underline as it was done by many, the importance of inclusivity of the conference and in that respect, the role of river and lake basin organizations is very important. Their participation in the Conference is very important and should be ensured as they are actors of change (one could say game changers themselves).

Thank you, Mr. President