

Joint statement of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition on the occasion of the UN 2023 Water Conference

Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world's freshwater flows. More than 3 billion people depend on them. Cooperation over transboundary surface and groundwater is therefore essential to promote sustainable economic development, human and environmental health, biodiversity, climate action and resilience, disaster risk reduction, and peace.

The existence of effective and sustainable transboundary water cooperation can catalyze regional integration, drive cooperation in other areas, or build sustainable peace. The absence of such cooperation is at best a waste of resources and, in the worst cases, can multiply risks that can contribute to the destabilization of societies and threaten security.

Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the monitoring of SDG indicator 6.5.2, cooperation in most transboundary basins is not adequate to deal with future challenges, and progress is too slow.

This is why more than 40 countries, regional integration and international organizations, international financial institutions, NGOs, academic and research centers decided to join forces under the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition to sustain and advance transboundary water cooperation.

We jointly call for increased ambition of the world's efforts in this area. In particular, we need more action to:

- Take better advantage of the economic, social, environmental and political benefits of transboundary cooperation, and build on them to develop sustainable and resilient cooperation and overcome bottlenecks towards mutually beneficial outcomes, including beyond water per se
- Create enabling legal, policy and institutional environments as well as economic, financial and political incentives for cooperation, across borders and sectors, over transboundary surface and groundwater, from source to sea
- Improve the governance framework for transboundary water cooperation by developing or strengthening agreements between riparian States, which respond to changing pressures, such as climate change, by setting up and increasing the impact and effectiveness of existing basin and aquifer organizations, and, as appropriate, by fostering accession and use of the 1992 UN Water Convention and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention, and the use of the Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers
- Strengthen the scientific and information base for decision-making by improving the technical-political interface, enhancing hydrometeorological monitoring networks, supporting data, information and knowledge generation, and adopting open data and information exchange policies
- Enhance capacity at all levels to manage shared water resources in an integrated, sustainable and inclusive manner by increasing education and training, as well as through technical assistance and the sharing of best practices
- Increase international and national financing for transboundary water cooperation, strengthen the financial resilience of transboundary basin organizations, and increase public and private investments in transboundary basins which combine regional and national benefits, such as investments in joint investment plans, cooperative infrastructure, and nature-based solutions.

Coalition members have submitted commitments supporting the above needs and have inspired others to do the same. We are determined to leverage our capacity and expertise to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation.

The Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition is a diverse, multi-stakeholder coalition of actors made up of the following countries: Chile, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Namibia, The Netherlands, Panama, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland, Uganda; the European Union as a regional integration organization; as well as and the following organizations: ESCWA, Global Environment Facility (GEF) , Inter-American Development Bank (IaDB), Organization of American States (OAS), UNCDF, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank , Centro Regional para la Gestión de Aguas Subterráneas en América Latina y el Caribe (CeReGAS), EcoPeace Middle East, Geneva Water Hub, Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), IUCN, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) , University of Kinshasa, Water Diplomacy Center/Jordan University of Science and Technology.