



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA



Invitation to the

15th meeting of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace Transboundary Groundwater – a catalyst for cooperation?

16th November 2021 from 14:00 to 16:00

WMO Room C2, followed by an aperitif, or
<https://unige.zoom.us/j/66799949490>

Invitation à la

15ème réunion du Groupe d'amis sur l'Eau et la Paix Les aquifères transfrontières – un catalyseur pour la coopération ?

16 novembre 2021 de 14h00 à 16h00

OMM Salle C2, suivi d'un apéritif, ou
<https://unige.zoom.us/j/66799949490>

Agenda

1. Welcome address from the Slovenian Chairmanship and the Geneva Water Hub
2. Water Dialogue: Transboundary Groundwater – a catalyst for cooperation?
 - Neno Kukurić, Director, IGRAC
 - Sonja Koepfel, Secretary of the Water Convention, UNECE
 - Jenny Grönwall, Advisor Water Policy & Rights, SIWI
 - Karen Villholth, Principal Researcher, IWMI
3. Discussion and Q&A
4. Any Other Business
5. Conclusion

1. Mot de bienvenue de la Présidence slovène et du Geneva Water Hub
2. Dialogue eau : Les aquifères transfrontières – un catalyseur pour la coopération ?
 - Neno Kukurić, Directeur, IGRAC
 - Sonja Koepfel, Secrétaire de la Convention sur l'eau, CEE-ONU
 - Jenny Grönwall, Conseillère en politique et droits de l'eau, SIWI
 - Karen Villholth, Chercheuse principale, IWMI
3. Discussion et question-réponse
4. Varia
5. Conclusion

Competition for water resources is increasing globally due to population and economic growth, exacerbated by climate change. When people talk about water, they mostly think of rivers, lakes, or the sea. We seldom think of the invisible source, the groundwater. Nevertheless, some 2.5 billion people depend solely on groundwater to satisfy their daily drinking and other domestic water needs. 40% of water for irrigated agriculture and 30% of water supply for industry come from groundwater.

Slowly but surely, groundwater is turning from an invisible issue to a topical one. World Water Day 2022 will be dedicated to groundwater, as will the 2022 World Water Development Report. In December 2022, a high-level summit on groundwater will be held in Paris under the auspices of UNESCO IHP.

And it is high time. Aquifers across the globe are being depleted due to unsustainable abstraction rates, or are affected by pollution. Many countries lack data, capacity and nationwide regulation on groundwater allocation or management.

There are almost 500 transboundary aquifers identified today. Most of them lack legal frameworks, which represents a risk for future conflicts.

Rules relating to sustainable and equitable exploitation of transboundary aquifers do exist and are based on the principles of International Water Law. Additionally, emerging law – the 2008 ILC Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers and the 2012 Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwater developed within the framework of the UNECE Water Convention – can serve as guidance to aquifer states.

While the effects of climate change on groundwater are not fully determined, the relevance of groundwater and aquifers in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation is clear. The use of thermal groundwater can reduce the use of hydrocarbons, and aquifers offer great opportunities for storing water.

The guiding questions:

- How do we increase the visibility of groundwater and its relevance, and inform and inspire action?
- How do we encourage sustainable and equitable management of transboundary aquifers and transform them from a potential source of conflict to a catalyst for cooperation?
- How can existing and emerging international water law help frame this cooperation? Do we need to develop the existing rules further?

