



CONCEPT NOTE

I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS IN LATIN AMERICA

November 8th and 9th, 2018

Lima, Peru, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1. Background

Transboundary water resources pass through national, political and administrative borders across the globe, supporting the majority of the world's populations and ecosystems in a myriad of ways. Surface water and groundwater do not respect international borders. This means that States must cooperate to administer water.

Latin America is a privileged region in relation to the availability of water resources, having around 31% of the world's freshwater sources; however, this region could be one of the most affected regions in an eventual crisis caused by climate change. Additionally, the region is characterized by the abundance and scarcity of this resource, due to its geographic diversity, which presents areas with high levels of precipitation and, at the same time, highly arid zones. This represents new challenges to water management in Latin America.

In the same way, the region is in an incipient state regarding the institutionalization of regional mechanisms for the cooperation and use of the shared waters between countries, which leads us to the need to bring together Latin American countries to take the region to a vanguard position over the governance of transboundary water resources, through the exchange of experiences and the identification of new opportunities for regional and multilateral cooperation.

2. Rationale

The initiative of the I International Symposium on Transboundary Waters in Latin America addresses the need to hold discussions to generate unity regarding water governance in Latin America, in a transboundary context. Therefore, it is necessary to establish regional fora to contribute to the strengthening of the institutions related to the management of transboundary waters, in accordance with International Water Law.

To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, through the National Water Authority of Peru, and different international organizations, promote this initiative of effective water governance and implementation of actions to guide and facilitate cooperation through the strengthening of regional capacities.



3. Objectives

General:

Explore new opportunities for cooperation and exchange of experiences with international subject-matter experts.

Specific:

- a) Bring together the main decision makers at the regional level regarding the management of transboundary waters and encourage discussion among Latin American countries on the governance of shared water resources.
- b) Strengthen the capacities of actors involved in water resources management in aspects related to water governance, international law and hydrodiplomacy, proposing strategies, tools and technical inputs that facilitate consensus to strengthen the management of transboundary basins.
- c) Evaluate the region's countries approach to the main international legal instruments on international waters.
- d) Bring into discussion the possible need to develop a regional cooperation agreement on transboundary basins that could guarantee the equitable and reasonable use of water and promote the sustainable management of shared natural resources, or the convenience for the Latin American countries to adhere to the New York Convention (1997) or to the Helsinki Water Convention (1992).

4. Participants

The I International Symposium on Transboundary Waters in Latin America will be addressed to all those responsible or participating in the decision-making process and management of cooperation in transboundary water. For these purposes, in the first place, the participation of government representatives at ministerial level will be privileged. However, the participation of water managers and representatives of joint bodies, such as representatives of transboundary water commissions and representatives of international organizations will also be considered.

5. Expected results

One of the expected results from this workshop is to systematize the existing knowledge on the subject, generate a platform for the exchange of experiences among the representatives that are involved on the management of transboundary basins.

The workshop is expected to improve the skills of the participants to support the planning of actions and policies, providing tools for decision makers to recognize the importance of integrated water management as a strategic axis to ensure water security for the region.

New opportunities for cooperation are expected to emerge.



6. Date and place

Date: November 8th and 9th, 2018

Place: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lima – Peru

7. Work organization

The Symposium will consist of 7 sessions, which will include a combination of presentations, working groups and round tables to gather the opinions from all participants and to enrich the final outcome of the event. The working languages will be Spanish and English.

8. Partners involved

The Symposium will be organized under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, through the National Water Authority of Peru, with the support from international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and cooperation from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.