



On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Platform for International Water Law,
Geneva Water Hub, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva

CONFERENCE

The implementation of international water law: global, regional and basin perspectives

Wednesday, 4 December 2019, from 10:00am to 6:00pm
World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)
7bis Avenue de la Paix, Geneva

For registration, please send a message to Oeykue.Irmakkesen@unige.ch by 1 December 2019

Background note

The UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (the UN Watercourses Convention) and the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the UNECE Water Convention) play a key role in assisting States for adopting and implementing legal instruments at the regional and basin levels. The importance of these two instruments for water diplomacy and cooperation was emphasised in the debates held at the UN Security Council in 2016 where many countries referred to these two main agreements of international water law. In its report “A Matter of Survival”, the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace recommended their ratification and implementation.

The Agenda 2030 and its SDG 6 on water and sanitation aim to promote Integrated Water Resources Management and transboundary cooperation. Moreover, in this context, detailed indicators have been developed to monitor the achievement of SDG 6 as well as the implementation of freshwater legal instruments.

The conference on “The implementation of international water law: global, regional and basin perspectives” will include three panels. The first panel will address the role of universal freshwater agreements in water diplomacy. The second panel will examine the role of basin mechanisms in ensuring the sound implementation of freshwater legal instruments. The third panel will assess how other areas of international law, such as international environmental law and human rights law, can assist with the implementation of international water law.

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Programme

09:45 – 10:00 **Welcome and coffee**

10:00 – 10:20 **Welcoming remarks**

Bénédict Foëx, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva

François Münger, General Director, Geneva Water Hub

Sonja Koepfel, Secretary, UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

10:20 – 12:15 **Water diplomacy and universal freshwater agreements: the role of the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**

Chair: *Laurence Boisson de Chazournes*, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva; Co-Director, Geneva Center for International Dispute Settlement; Member of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace

Strengthening the implementation of universal freshwater agreements at the regional and basin levels – *Stephen McCaffrey*, Carol Olson Endowed Professor of International Law, McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific; former Special Rapporteur of the International Law Commission on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses; Member of the Implementation Committee of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

The contribution of the UNECE Implementation Committee to water diplomacy – *Dinara Ziganshina*, Deputy Director, Scientific Information Center of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia; Member of the Implementation Committee of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

The contribution of international courts and tribunals to the formation and implementation of international water law – *Lucius Caflisch*, Honorary Professor, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

The role of development organizations in helping the implementation of the principles of international water law – *Christina Leeb*, Senior Counsel, The World Bank; Fellow, Platform for International Water Law, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva.

DISCUSSION

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12:15-13:30 LUNCH

13:30-15:25 The role of basin mechanisms in the implementation of international water law

Chair: *Ximena Fuentes Torrijo*, Ambassador and Director of National Directorate of Borders and State Boundaries (DIFROL), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile; Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Universidad de Chile

Fragmentation or cross-fertilization? - Lessons from the interactions between European law and river basin commissions – *Gábor Baranyai*, Head of the Institute for Sustainable Development Studies, National University of Public Service, Budapest

The contribution of river basin organizations in Africa to the implementation of international water law – *Komlan Sangbana*, Legal Officer, UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; Fellow, Platform for International Water Law, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva

Key features of the joint water institutional bodies established between Ecuador and its neighboring countries – *Diego Jara*, Legal Officer, IUCN Environmental Law Centre

The implementation of international water law through the institutional regimes of the Dniester, Danube and Prut rivers – *Felix Zaharia*, Deputy Director-General, Danube Commission, Budapest.

DISCUSSION

15:25-15:45 COFFEE BREAK

15:45-17:40 How do other areas of international law contribute to the implementation of international water law?

Chair: *Mara Tignino*, Reader, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva; Lead Legal Specialist, Platform for International Water Law/Geneva Water Hub

The human right to water: challenges to implementation – *Salman M.A. Salman*, Fellow, International Water Resources Association (IWRA); Editor-in-Chief of Brill Research Perspectives in International Water Law (by Skype)

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The contribution of international economic law to the implementation of international water law – *Makane Moïse Mbengue*, Professor and Director, Department of Public International Law and International Organization, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva. Fellow, Platform for International Water Law, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva

The contribution of international environmental law to the implementation of international water law – *Alejandro Iza*, Director, IUCN Environmental Law Centre, Head, IUCN Environmental Law Programme

How do the Sustainable Development Goals contribute to the implementation of international water law? – *Catherine Brölmann*, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam

DISCUSSION

17:40-17:55

CONCLUSIONS

Attila Tanzi, Full Professor, Department of Legal Studies, University of Bologna; Chair of the Implementation Committee of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; Associate Member, 3VB Chambers, London (UK)

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