



**Ministry of Agriculture of
the Republic of
Kazakhstan**

Geneva and Astana, 18 July 2018

Dear Mr. Tardieu,

We have the honour to invite you to the eighth session of the **Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)**. This high-level meeting is organized by the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) which services the Water Convention. The meeting will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 10 to 12 October 2018. It will be preceded, on 9 October, by a half-day high-level workshop on financing transboundary basin development.

The Water Convention represents a key United Nations legal and institutional framework promoting sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation. It is a unique instrument for supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - in particular SDG target 6.5 which calls for transboundary water cooperation - the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of peace and regional integration.

Originally negotiated as a regional framework for the pan-European region, it was amended to allow accession by all United Nations Member States. The eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties in Astana will mark a historical milestone in the Convention's development as it will see the participation of the first Parties from Africa.

The Meeting will consider different aspects of transboundary water cooperation that have been in the 2016-2018 Convention's programme of work, such as the benefits of transboundary cooperation, the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and industrial safety. Progress in implementing the Water Convention and transboundary water cooperation more broadly will be reviewed, notably by launching the first report on the implementation of the Water Convention, and by discussing the first reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2, jointly supported by UNECE and UNESCO. Finally, the meeting will adopt a strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level and the Convention's programme of work for 2019-2021.

The high-level segment on 10 October will discuss how to share waters in the context of growing water scarcity, the relevant impacts on development, peace and stability and how the Convention can promote reasonable, equitable and sustainable water allocation and benefit sharing.

Mr. Eric Tardieu
Director General
International Network of Basin Organizations/ International Office for Water

The workshop on financing transboundary basin development, organized by Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the World Bank, GEF IW:LEARN, the Asian Development Bank, the European Investment Bank and the Water Convention secretariat, will facilitate knowledge sharing and peer learning among ministers and state secretaries on raising funds for transboundary water cooperation and enhancing its financial sustainability.

The provisional agenda and additional practical information are available on the meeting website: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/mop8>. In case of questions, please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat of the Water Convention (water.convention@un.org).

The Astana Meeting of the Parties will be an important opportunity to share your organization's experiences and priorities, foster partnerships, strengthen efforts regarding transboundary water cooperation and contribute to the implementation of the Convention and its programme of work for 2019-2021.

We kindly invite you to designate your representative(s) by 15 August 2018. Given the historic significance of this particular session of the Meeting of the Parties, we hope for ministerial or other high-level participation. We look forward to welcoming you and your delegation in Astana.

Yours sincerely,



Olga Algayerova
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe



Umirzak Shukeyev
Deputy-Prime Minister of the
Republic of Kazakhstan
Minister of Agriculture of the
Republic of Kazakhstan