



High-Level Ministerial Conference on
Strengthening Transboundary Freshwater Governance
- *the Environmental Sustainability Challenge*
Bangkok, Thailand
20 – 22 May 2009

BANGKOK PLAN of ACTION
for Strengthened Transboundary Freshwater Governance

We, the Ministers gathered here in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, on 22 May 2009, together with the Heads of River and Lake Basin Organizations, other government and non-governmental representatives and international experts,

Appreciating the efforts made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in convening the High-Level Ministerial Conference on Strengthening Transboundary Freshwater Governance – the Environmental Challenge.

Thanking the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for having agreed to host the Conference in Bangkok from 20 – 22 May 2009.

Convinced that transboundary freshwater governance is a serious challenge to the viability and long term sustainability of water ecosystems and human well-being.

Further convinced that cooperation among River and Lake Basin Organizations is essential for the improvement of transboundary freshwater governance, including in the fields of improving sanitation and impacts of dams.

Taking note of the outcomes of the technical segment of the Conference.

Recognizing that environmental changes, including climate change, call for strengthened technical, political and financial capacity of River and Lake Basin Organizations.

Recalling the relevant discussions at the recent World Water Forum held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Encouraging UNEP to provide increased political, technical, scientific and legal support to River and Lake Basin Organizations, regional water commissions, and other related bodies, on transboundary freshwater governance in cooperation with relevant partners.



Agree to adopt this Plan of Action for strengthened transboundary freshwater governance and to:

a) Call upon Governments to recognize the recommendations to the High-Level Ministerial Segment contained in the Chair's Summary of the Technical Segment and to work together with UNEP and other relevant partners in the implementation of these recommendations.

b) Call upon Governments to seriously review and consider the UN Convention on Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers.

c) Request UNEP to, building on existing initiatives (as for example the International Network of Basin Organizations, INBO), provide a regular forum and global inventory of transboundary basins as well as general assistance to basin organizations in order to help improve the recognition of environmental considerations in the governance of these basins and to improve the sharing of lessons learned and information by and among basin organizations. The first such forum will, at the kind invitation of its Royal Government, be convened in Thailand in 2011.

d) Call upon UNEP to promote the awareness and recognition of the environmental dimension of water law/regulatory frameworks at all levels, particularly with respect to the harmonization at the transboundary level and the development of cooperative frameworks governing transboundary water ecosystems.

e) Call upon UNEP to promote the environmental dimension of transboundary aquifers at technical and political levels in support of the existing efforts made by the International Law Commission, UNESCO and others.

f) Request UNEP, UNESCO and other international organizations to enhance the promotion of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at transboundary levels.

g) Call on international donors and relevant financial institutions to assist UNEP in the implementation of this Plan of Action.

h) Call on international organizations and relevant fora to invite and use UNEP's expertise and mandate in the promotion of transboundary freshwater governance and its environmental dimension.

i) Invite the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand to maintain the support for transboundary freshwater governance at national, regional and international levels and to this end work together with UNEP and other relevant partners in the implementation of this Plan of Action.

Bangkok, 22 May 2009