

## Report by the Regional Environmental Center ([www.rec.org](http://www.rec.org)) at UNECE 7<sup>th</sup> MOP 2015, Budapest, 19 November 2015

Workshop “Promoting transboundary water cooperation in the Middle East and Northern Africa region on the basis of the Water Convention” was held on Monday 16 November 2015 in Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture. Workshop was organized by Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, in cooperation with the Regional environmental Center, as back-to-back event to the Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties of UNECE Water Convention in Budapest, organized on 17-19 November 2015.

Workshop represented excellent venue for representatives from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, intergovernmental and international organizations as well as civic sector to assess current progress towards accession of the UNECE Water Convention in the MENA region. Common issues related to interpretation, accession and implementation of the UNECE Water Convention were discussed. Workshop was excellent opportunity for MENA countries to prepare their contributions to the Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties of UNECE Water Convention.

Main outputs of the Workshop are listed below:

- MENA countries understand the added value of the UNECE Water Convention and seriously examining its adoption.
- It was confirmed that four countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia) have already started the process of accession to the Water Convention, and expressed interest in receiving further support concerning technical, institutional and capacity building.
- MENA countries acknowledge Water Convention as useful tool for strengthening regional cooperation and expressed their interest in receiving support to combat the several challenges.
- At the national level the challenges regard interpretation, accession and implementation, and at the international level the challenges are related to cooperation and coordination of activities between riparian countries.
- MENA countries expressed the need for capacity building, institutional strengthening and more regular exchange of experiences.
  - REC is ready to coordinate with UNECE water convention Secretariat our ongoing regional project in the MENA region supported by Sweden with 6M EUR on “Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management” (<http://www.watersum.rec.org/>) with the main aim to promote the more sustainable use of water resources and local water security action planning in the MENA region
- International organizations are playing an import role and can continue to provide their valuable support.
- At the international level there is a need for coordination with donors acting in the region for maximizing the use of limited resources.

Workshop participants concluded that this format of discussion is useful and could be maintained in future.