



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE**

**FACULTE DE DROIT**  
Department of public international law  
Platform for International Water Law

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: WHERE DO WE STAND IN INTERNATIONAL LAW?**

**13 DECEMBER 2013**

**Palais des Nations, Room V**

Since the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 in 1992, public participation has been recognized as playing a key role in the decision-making process on environmental matters and management of natural resources. A number of international framework instruments, such as the 1998 Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, have been pioneering the definition of the norms regarding public participation. The 1999 London Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has been inspired by these principles: it recognizes the vital role of public participation in the decision making process for a better management of water resources. Moreover, mechanisms developed in the context of river basin commissions show the variations of the norms and standards regulating public participation, the way these norms are adapted to specific cases and the evolution of their implementation over time.

This conference will offer an opportunity to analyse current trends and innovative thinking for the involvement of non-state actors in the management of freshwater resources. It will also provide a platform to discuss good practices to ensure public participation in decision-making for freshwater resources management and access to justice.

The working languages of the conference are English and French with simultaneous interpretation.

**09:30**      **Welcome coffee**

**10:00**      **Welcome remarks**

*Laurence Boisson de Chazournes* - Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Geneva and Responsible for the Platform for International Water Law

*Nicholas Bonvoisin* - Secretary to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

**Session 1**      **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ITS REGIONAL VARIANTS**

**Chair :**      **Introduction of the session**

*Laurence Boisson de Chazournes* – Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Geneva and Responsible for the Platform for International Water Law

**10:20**      **Public participation and the Protocol on Water and Health**

*Chantal Demilecamps*, Environmental Affairs Officer, Secretariat to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Protocol on Water and Health, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

**10:35**      **Public participation in the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River**

*Benedikt Mandl*, Technical Expert, Public Participation and Communication, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

**10:50**      **The Guarani Aquifer Agreement and the role of non-State actors**

*Francesco Sindico*, Reader, University of Strathclyde

**11:05**      **Commentator: Ana Drapa**, Senior Adviser, Department for Waters, Forests and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Romania

**11:15**      **DISCUSSION**

**Chair**      **Introduction of the session**

*Makane Moïse Mbengue* – Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva and Member of the Platform for International Water Law

**11:40**      **The state of the integrated water resources management process in the of the Niger Basin: the experience of the involvement of non-state actors**

*Robert Dessouassi*, Director of the Observatory of the Niger Basin (ABN)

- 11:55**      **Public participation in the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (OMVS)**  
*Komlan Sangbana*, Teaching and research assistant and Member of the Platform for International Water Law, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva
- 12:10**      **The principle of public participation and the International Joint Commission between Canada and United States**  
*Mara Tignino*, Senior Researcher and Coordinator, Platform for international water law, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva
- 12:25**      **Commentator: Alistair Rieu-Clarke**, Reader in International Law, IHP-HELP Center for Water Law, Policy and Science, University of Dundee
- 12:35**      **DISCUSSION**
- 13:00**      **Lunch**
- Session 2**      **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS**
- Chair**      **Introduction of the session**  
*Laurence Boisson de Chazournes*, Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Geneva and Responsible for the Platform for International Water Law
- 15:00**      **The interactions between international law and domestic law: the case of India**  
*Philippe Cullet*, Professor, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
- 15:15**      **Water and hydroelectricity actors in Switzerland and France: the case of the Rhone Basin**  
*Géraldine Pflieger* and *Christian Bréthaut*, Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Institute of Environmental Science, University of Geneva; Post-doctoral Researcher, Institute of Environmental Science, University of Geneva
- 15:30**      **Public participation in river basin joint bodies: the role of NGOs**  
*Serhiy Vykhryst*, Expert, European ECO-Forum
- 15:45**      **Commentator: Jean Benoit Charrin** - Director, Waterlex, Geneva
- 15:55**      **DISCUSSION**

**Session 3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, COMPLIANCE AND SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

**Chair Introduction of the session**

*Stephen McCaffrey* – Distinguished Professor, McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, Member of the Implementation Committee of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

**16:20 Public participation in water resources management, the Aarhus Convention and its innovative compliance mechanism**

*Fiona Marshall*, Environmental Affairs Officer, Secretariat to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

**16:35 The Bystroe case and the Implementation Committee of the Espoo Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context**

*Félix Zaharia*, Vice-chair, Implementation Committee, Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

**16:50 Justice by any other name? The complaint mechanisms of development banks**

*Vanessa Richard*, Researcher, Centre for International and European Studies and Research, University of Aix-Marseille

**17:05 Access to water and human rights courts**

*Owen McIntyre*, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University College of Cork

**17:20 Commentator: Yves Lador** – Permanent representative of Earth Justice at the United Nations, Geneva

**17:30 DISCUSSION**

**18:00 END OF THE SESSION**