

# Bangladesh becomes 1st South Asian country to join UN Water Convention

Bangladesh has officially acceded to the UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UN Water Convention), becoming the first country in South Asia and the 56th globally to join the treaty.

The UN Water Convention offers a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to foster cooperation over shared surface and groundwater resources.

Environment, climate change and water resources adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said “Accession to the UN Water Convention is a landmark step for Bangladesh. Climate change, growing populations, and rising water demand require enhanced transboundary cooperation. The Convention will support us in developing more effective and inclusive water policies to ensure long-term water security.”

Bangladesh has longstanding bilateral water agreements and institutions including the Joint Rivers Commission and the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India, and maintains cooperation with Nepal, China, and Bhutan.

Bangladesh has actively engaged with the Convention since 2012 and participated in its 10th Meeting of the Parties held in Slovenia in 2024.

Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), welcomed Bangladesh’s accession, saying, “This is a significant move for South Asia. The Convention is a critical instrument for strengthening cross-border water cooperation in a time of increasing climate

pressure.”

Sonja Koeppel, Secretary to the UN Water Convention, congratulated Bangladesh and encouraged other South Asian nations and UN member states to join.

She reaffirmed the UN system’s support for Convention implementation, particularly in the lead-up to the next UN Water Conference, to be held from 2 to 4 December 2026 in the United Arab Emirates.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called upon all UN member states to join and implement Convention.