



**Final communiqué of the second ministerial meeting  
on the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin**

We, the Ministers in charge of water from the Republic of the Gambia, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Republic of Senegal, sharing the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin, met during our second ordinary session on 22 October 2024 in Ljubljana under the presidency of His Excellency Ms. Amal Maouloud, Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on the occasion of the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, aware of our shared responsibility to ensure the sustainable management of this precious resource in the face of growing environmental challenges. Following this meeting,

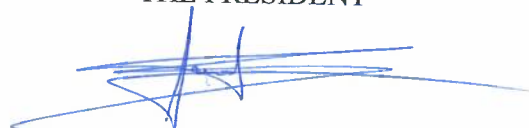
1. We reaffirm the strategic importance of the groundwater resources of the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin (SMAB) for sustainable development, resilience to climate change, peace and stability in our countries and for strengthening cooperation between us, where 80% of whose population depends on the access to these waters;
2. We recall the Ministerial Declaration on SMAB adopted in Geneva on 29 September 2021, which sets out a common vision for the sustainable and concerted management of SMAB, including the regional programme supporting the realisation of this vision;
3. We confirm our commitment to strengthening groundwater governance, improving scientific knowledge of groundwater, its present and future uses, and its physical interaction with surface water, and building capacity in our ministries for monitoring and assessment, data and information management and exchange;
4. We also confirm our commitment to strengthening cross-border cooperation for the strategic, integrated, and concerted management of water resources in the Senegal-Mauritania aquifer basin;
5. We manifest once again our desire to establish an institutional and legal framework for cross-border cooperation to protect, preserve and sustainably manage the waters of the SMAB;
6. We note with satisfaction the progress made towards consolidating the cooperation regarding the SMAB under the aegis of the Regional Working Group (RWG) with the participation of the Organisation for the Development of the Gambia River (OMVG) and the Organisation for the Development of Senegal River (OMVS) and thank the members of the RWG for their work. We would also like to thank partners such as the World Bank, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, the Geneva Water Hub, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, for supporting this process;
7. We welcome the preliminary agreement on the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin drawn up by the RWG with the support of the Water Convention Secretariat and the Water Convention Implementation Committee; 

8. We request the Secretariat of the Convention, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the RWG, to formally submit the draft agreement to the Member States so that the competent authorities in our respective countries can start the negotiation process and to support the official negotiations in order to finalize the agreement for adoption at the United Nations Water Conference in 2026. To this end, we decide to strengthen the RWG so that it can have the necessary competencies, capacities and powers to successfully complete this negotiation;
9. We welcome the set of project proposals developed by the RWG with the support of the World Bank, which support elements of the RWG's vision and regional programme. We encourage technical and financial partners, particularly the World Bank, to support their implementation;
10. We welcome the start of activities under the Global Environment Facility project, implemented by OSS and UNEP, which contributes to achieving the objectives set out in the RWG's strategic vision and regional programme;
11. We welcome the interest of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and the European Union in the Team Europe Initiative on Transboundary Water Management in Africa, and invite them to support the implementation of the vision and regional programme for cooperation on SMAB;
12. We ask the RWG, in accordance with its mandate, to continue to ensure that existing initiatives and future projects are properly coordinated;
13. We compliment the High-Commissioners of the OMVG and the OMVS for signing the memorandum of understanding between OMVG and OMVS for the operationalisation of the RWG secretariat, and call on these two organisations to ensure that adequate resources are made available for the continuity of the responsibilities and functions of this secretariat;
14. We ask the High Commissioners of OMVG and OMVS to regularly inform their respective Councils of Ministers of the status of progress of the process, including on the agenda a permanent item on the importance of groundwater and cooperation within the SMAB framework;
15. We request the RWG Secretariat to encourage the participation as observers of the Republic of Guinea, member of OMVG and OMVS, and the Republic of Mali, member of the OMVS, whose respective national territories are not situated in the hydrogeological limitations of the SMAB, so that they can benefit from the exchange of scientific and practical experiences and knowledge, aiming to strengthen the dialogue regarding the shared benefits of their joint management of groundwater and surface water;
16. We would like to thank the European Union, UNESCO, Swiss Cooperation, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility for their financial support for the process underway in the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin;
17. We call on all technical and financial partners to continue to work together through the RWG to ensure the integrated and sustainable management of the waters of the SMAB, in order to promote peace and prosperity in our region;
18. We have decided to remain seized of the issue and to hold regular meetings to ensure follow-up. The next ministerial meeting should take place no later than the United Nations Water Conference in 2026; 

19. The delegations of the Republic of the Gambia, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and the Republic of Senegal, appreciating the fraternal and warm welcome and the generous hospitality extended to them during their stay in Ljubljana, express their deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Slovenia.

Done at Ljubljana, 22 October 2024

THE PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping horizontal and vertical strokes, positioned below the text 'THE PRESIDENT'.