**Glossary**

**Absolute water right:** A water right that has been placed to a beneficial use.

**Accession:** Act whereby a State becomes a Party to an international agreement already negotiated and closed for signature. Accession has the same legal effect as ratification, although an acceding State has not signed the agreement.

**Acre-foot (acre-ft):** The volume of water required to cover 1 acre of land (43,560 square feet) to a depth of 1 foot. It is equal to 325,851 gallons or 1,233 cubic meters of water.

**Ad-Hoc Groups:** Ad hoc groups may be created to address specific issues of concern that require focused attention.

**Appropriation doctrine:** The prior appropriation doctrine is based on the concept of 'First in Time, First in Right'. The first person to take a quantity of water and put it to Beneficial Use has a higher priority of right than a subsequent user. Appropriative rights can be lost through nonuse; they can also be sold or transferred apart from the land. This is direct contrast with Riparian Water Rights.

**Aqueduct:** Man-made canal or pipeline used to transport water.

**Aquifer:** A geological formation or structure that stores and/or transmits water, such as to wells and springs. Use of the term is usually restricted to those water-bearing formations capable of yielding water in sufficient quantity to constitute a usable supply for people's uses.

**Artificial recharge:** A process where water is put back into ground-water storage from surface-water supplies such as irrigation, or induced infiltration from streams or wells.

**Basin:** A groundwater reservoir defined by the overlying land surface and underlying aquifers that contain water stored in the reservoir.

**Beneficial use:** Beneficial use is the use of a reasonable amount of water necessary to accomplish the purpose of the appropriation, without waste. Some common types of beneficial use are: irrigation, municipal, wildlife, recreation, mining, household use.

**Catchments Area:** The entire geographical area drained by a river and its tributaries.

**Civil Society Organisation:** According to the London School of Economics, the CSO refers to the arena of un coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community...
groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

Conference of Parties (COP): The COP is a formal body of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (negotiations). The COP is the meeting of negotiators from countries that have ratified a Convention. It meets periodically (often once a year) to review Convention implementation and to take decisions on how to improve the implementation process.

Conjunctive use: The planned use of groundwater in conjunction with surface water to optimize total water resources.

Consumptive use: That part of water withdrawn that is evaporated, transpired by plants, incorporated into products or crops, consumed by humans or livestock, or otherwise removed from the immediate water environment.

Cubic foot of water: The amount of water needed to fill a cube that is one foot on all sides; about 7.5 gallons.

Dam: A structure built to hold back a flow of water

Delta: A Fan-shaped area at the mouth of a river (where seas are relatively calm)

Desalinization: The removal of salts from saline water to provide freshwater. This method is becoming a more popular way of providing freshwater to populations

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Domestic water use: Water used for household purposes, such as drinking, food preparation, bathing, washing clothes, dishes, and dogs, flushing toilets, and watering lawns and gardens. About 85% of domestic water is delivered to homes by a public-supply facility, such as a county water department.

Drainage basin: A drainage basin is an extent of land where water from rain or snow melt drains downhill into a body of water, such as a river, lake, dam, estuary, wetland, sea or ocean. The drainage basin includes both the streams and rivers that convey the water as well as the land surfaces from which water drains into those channels. The drainage basin acts like a funnel - collecting all the water within the area covered by the basin and channeling it into a waterway. Each drainage basin is separated topographically from adjacent basins by a ridge, hill or mountain, which is known as a water divide or a watershed. Other terms that can be used to describe the same concept are catchment, catchment area, catchment basin, drainage area, river basin and water basin.

Ecosystem: An interacting network of groups of organisms together with their non-living or physical environment.

Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs): The ENGOs are non-profit organisations that are either national or international, and have charitable
missions. They do not represent individual countries; they are free to take positions that promote the environmental values of their memberships. ENGOs have also created coalitions to advance common goals.

**Estuary**: A place where fresh and salt water mix, such as a bay, salt marsh, or where a river enters an ocean.

**Freshwater**: Water that contains less than 1,000 milligrams per liter (mg/L) of dissolved solids; generally, more than 500 mg/L of dissolved solids is undesirable for drinking and many industrial uses.

**Glacier**: A huge mass of ice, formed on land by the compaction and recrystallization of snow that moves very slowly down slope or outward due to its own weight.

**Ground water**: (1) water that flows or seeps downward and saturates soil or rock, supplying springs and wells. The upper surface of the saturate zone is called the water table. (2) Water stored underground in rock crevices and in the pores of geologic materials that make up the Earth’s crust.

**Headwater**: (1) the source and upper reaches of a stream; also the upper reaches of a reservoir. (2) the water upstream from a structure or point on a stream. (3) the small streams that come together to form a river. Also may be thought of as any and all parts of a river basin except the mainstream river and main tributaries.

**Hydroelectric power**: The use of water in the generation of electricity at plants where the turbine generators are driven by falling water.

**Hydrology**: Hydrology is the study of the movement, distribution, and quality of water throughout the Earth, and thus addresses both the hydrologic cycle and water resources.

**Industrial water use**: Water used for industrial purposes in such industries as steel, chemical, paper, and petroleum refining. Nationally, water for industrial uses comes mainly (80%) from self-supplied sources, such as a local wells or withdrawal points in a river, but some water comes from public-supplied sources, such as the county/city water department.

**Informal Bodies**: The President of the COP or the Chair of a subsidiary body may establish ‘informal consultations’ or other groups to help find consensus among the diverse interests of MEA Parties. The Chair may appoint individuals to preside over these informal sessions.

**Integrated Water Resource Management**: An integrated water resources perspective ensures that social, economic, environmental and technical dimensions are taken into account in the management and development of water resources. The basis of IWRM is that different uses of water are interdependent.

**International watercourse**: An ‘international watercourse system’ is a watercourse system, components of which are situated in two or more States.
Irrigation water use: Water application on lands to assist in the growing of crops and pastures or to maintain vegetative growth in recreational lands, such as parks and golf courses.

Livestock water use: Water used for livestock watering, feed lots, dairy operations, fish farming, and other on-farm needs

Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA): A generic term for treaties, conventions, protocols, and other binding instruments related to the environment. Usually applied to instruments of a geographic scope wider than that of a bilateral agreement (i.e., between two States).

Million Acre-Feet (MAF): A million acre-feet, or 1 MAF of water is equal to the quantity that would fill an area of one million acres to a mean depth of one foot.

Non-Governmental Organization(s): Applied to community groups and not-for-profit organizations. In the UN system, it also includes business associations. The term gathers organizations with different mandates (e.g., research, education and awareness building, lobbying, technical assistance, field projects, etc.).

Plenary: The main meeting of the Conference of the Parties. At plenary meetings, each delegation is represented and all delegations sit in a single large room. State representatives can have an opportunity to address the Convention. All votes take place in the plenary meeting.

Potable water: Water of a quality suitable for drinking.

Preparatory Committee (PrepCom): A committee mandated to prepare a meeting. It can be mandated to address substantive issues or not. The phrase is often used to refer to the meetings of the preparatory committee.

Public water use: Water supplied from a public-water supply and used for such purposes as firefighting, street washing, and municipal parks and swimming pools

Recharge: Increases in groundwater storage from precipitation, infiltration from streams, or human activity (artificial recharge), such as putting surface water into spreading basins.

Reclaimed water: Wastewater that has been cleaned so that it can be reused for most purposes except drinking

Reservoir: A pond, lake, or basin, either natural or artificial, for the storage, regulation, and control of water.

Return flow: (1) That part of a diverted flow that is not consumptively used and returned to its original source or another body of water. (2) (Irrigation) Drainage water from irrigated farmlands that re-enters the water system to be used further downstream.
Riparian countries: Countries which share the river or aquifer are called riparian countries.

Riparian water rights: The rights of an owner whose land abuts water. They differ from state to state and often depend on whether the water is a river, lake, or ocean. The doctrine of riparian rights is an old one, having its origins in English common law. Specifically, persons who own land adjacent to a stream have the right to make reasonable use of the stream. Riparian users of a stream share the stream flow among themselves, and the concept of priority of use (Prior Appropriation Doctrine) is not applicable.

Run of the River Project: The type of hydroelectric project which requires little or no storage to generate the electricity.

Runoff Water: Liquid water that travels over the surface of the Earth, moving downward due to the law of gravity; runoff is one way in which water that falls as precipitation returns to the ocean.

Seasonal River

Secretariat: Undertakes the day-to-day activities of coordinating the implementation and makes arrangements for the meetings of the COP.

Siltation: The deposition or accumulation of silt in the reservoir.

Stream: The type of runoff where water flows in a channel downhill because of the pull of gravity.

Tributary: A smaller river or stream that flows into a larger river or stream. Usually, a number of smaller tributaries merge to form a river.

Water cycle: The movement of water from the air to and below the Earth's surface and back into the air.

Water discharge: The amount of water flowing past a location in a stream/river in a certain amount of time - usually expressed in liters per second or gallons per minute.

Water logging: When water is applied to a field that is not adequately drained, it builds up in the root zone, creating conditions unsuitable for plant growth.

Water scarcity: Condition in which the annual availability of renewable freshwater is 1,000 cu m or less per person.

Water stress: Water stress occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available amount during a certain period or when poor quality restricts its use.

Watershed: A geographical portion of the Earth's surface from which water drains or runs off to a single place like a river; also called a drainage area.