Statement by Ms. Lea Kauppi, Director General of the Finnish Environment Institute, Finland

Finland organized the 20th Anniversary in September 2012. In presentations and discussions several aspects of the successes and challenges were raised:

- to achieve water and food security for growing population, in the context of climate change, new solutions are needed. These problems cannot be solved without transboundary cooperation
- The experience acquired and the guidance developed under the Water Convention has value well beyond the UNECE region, it is therefore important to ensure a wide dissemination of the guidelines, model provisions and other resources developed under the Water Convention.
- Even after 20 years of implementing the Convention, we can see that its main objectives are still relevant. One of the successes has been the capacity to adapt the activities to new and emerging challenges
- Within the framework of the Convention, many of the parties have entered into bilateral or multilateral agreements and have established joint bodies
- Challenges: support to parties and potential new parties is still very important
- Linkages between water, food and energy sector are strong and complicated. Integrative solutions taking all aspects into account are urgently needed
- Dispute prevention and dispute solving are central elements of the Water Convention. The establishment of the Implementation Committee is an important step in the Convention's evolution which will make the Convention's framework stronger and better equipped to address future challenges
- To ensure a proper implementation of the Convention, it is crucial to strengthen the political support to it, increase its visibility, enhance advocacy activities and correct the misinterpretations of its obligations.
- The last 20 years have been a success but there is still a lot to do, within and outside the UNECE region. The culture of openness, discussion and cooperation of the Convention will provide a strong foundation for tackling tomorrow's challenges.