



Living with change in transnational river basins - some typical cases

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A world of increasing population, increasing pressure on economic production and scarce water resources is prone to conflicts of interest. Such conflicts may erupt between proximate users or user groups in local arenas, but also between conflicting upstream and downstream land and water uses. Transnational river basins are particularly interesting in this regard due to the international dimension of the emerging conflicts and potential windows of opportunity for peaceful cooperation. A contrasting set of transnational river basins will be analysed in terms of their prospects in the next few decades as driven by population growth and socio-economic development. The basins will be characterised in terms of water scarcity alterations and implications of socio-economic development differences between riparian countries, and projecting the type of upstream/downstream conflicts of interest that can be foreseen. Finally, some reflections will be made on the policy implications and long-term dimension of basin agreements. International freshwater agreements may help alleviate water stress (conflict), but when unresponsive to changing circumstances or not based on (good) science, they may exacerbate efforts to find basin-wide solutions.