

# Public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health

Chantal Demilecamps  
Co-secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health

## **General provisions and principles for public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health:**

### Parties shall:

- Create frameworks, in which the public can contribute towards the improvement of water management for the purpose of preventing, controlling and reducing water related diseases (Art. 4 (5))
- Supplement public participation (and access to information) by appropriate access to judicial and administrative review of relevant decisions (Art. 5 (i))
- In implementing this Protocol, due account should be given to local problems, needs and knowledge. (Art. 5 (n))

## **“Operational Articles” on public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health**

- In the process of setting targets for the standards and levels of performance, and in the development of water management plans to promote the achievement of the targets, Parties shall make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for public participation, within a transparent and fair framework, and ensure that due account is taken of the outcome of the public participation (Art. 6 (2) and 6 (5b))
- Make appropriate arrangements for public involvement in the review of compliance (Art.15)

## Putting principles into practice

### Public involvement in target setting under the Protocol

#### Recommendations - Guidelines on setting targets and reporting :

- Enhance social acceptance of targets, contribute to target-setting process, helps in implementation of the programme of measures
- Disseminate proposed targets, target dates and relevant programme of measures as much as possible to the broader public
- Use local, provincial and national consultations as mutually reinforcing
- Take into account public and stakeholders opinion in elaboration of and further revision of the targets and programme of measures
- Allow informed participation of public and stakeholders through information on target-setting published and updated on Internet

# **Putting principles into practice**

## **Public involvement in the reporting**

### **Draft guidelines and template for summary reports:**

- In the preparation process, Parties are encouraged to consider the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the preparation and use of the summary reports, incl. NGOs, civil society, local communities, the private sector and media

# The Public & review of compliance

## (Art 15)

- Compliance Committee composed of independent members, including representatives of the civil society
- Protocol provides the possibility for members of the public to make communications to the Compliance Committee on cases of alleged non-compliance with the Protocol
- Guidelines on communications from the public developed by the Compliance Committee: simple format, basic questions (who, why, when, what, how ? etc)

# **The Protocol and public participation**

## **Current status and possible improvement**

- Progress since the entry into force in 2005: currently most of the Parties are in the process of setting their targets
- Many challenges still faced: the national reports received from Parties during the first reporting cycle showed that involving public in the implementation of the Protocol remains a major challenge
- No case of non compliance with the Protocol has been communicated by the public to the Compliance Committee