

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health**

**Bucharest, 22-25 November 2010**

### **Point of Agenda 4(a)**

#### **Statement by The Netherlands**

The Netherlands ratified the Protocol only recently, in 2009. So far, no specific (co-ordinating) structure has been introduced for the implementation of the Protocol. We will use existing structures.

We delivered a very concise summary report. Next year we will start to work on setting targets in accordance with Article 6 of the Protocol.

One of the problems we faced with the reporting was to summarise our extensive legal and institutional framework, the many regulations, policy papers, management plans, targets, data, etc.

We also needed all our experts to work on the first generation of River Basin Management Plans as well as the overarching National Water Policy Plan.

Moreover, we have been very busy with drafting new legislation and regulations. In particular: the new Water Act and the new Drinking Water Act.

The situation in the Netherlands with respect to water supply and sanitation is very good. There is 100% access to centralised systems and the drinking water quality is very good. There are of course challenges. The main challenge is to keep water supply and sanitation at the current high level of performance. And, of course, other related challenges are 1) the protection of the water resources and 2) climate change.

The new Drinking Water Act (2009) is a comprehensive piece of legislation, replacing the old Water Supply Act. The act covers a wide range of subjects, such as: organisation, governance, tariffs, access to drinking water, drinking water quality, risk assessment/risk management (source to tap), planning, continuity, emerging supplies, efficiency and performance of water suppliers, public information, reporting and enforcement.

Benchmarking of water supply companies was introduced in 1997. Since then benchmarking takes place every 3 years. The experiences with this instrument are very good and we have seen tangible results as to further improving the performances of the water supply companies.

So far, this benchmarking covers 4 aspects: drinking water quality, environment, service (consumer's satisfaction) and cost-efficiency. With the introduction of the new Drinking Water Act, benchmarking has become mandatory. And also a 5<sup>th</sup> aspect is added: research and innovation.

As for sewerage, waste water treatment and regional water management, forms of benchmarking have been introduced quite recently.

Materials and products in contact with drinking water could impair the drinking water quality. Therefore, control of materials and products is necessary to protect human health. An interesting development in this area is the agreement between France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to work together on the harmonisation and implementation of regulatory instruments for the approval of materials and products. The outcome of this so called Common Approach could be of interest for all Parties and non-Parties.

In recent years The Netherlands has been involved in quite a number of government-to-government projects with Parties and non-Parties in the region. Water and environment are important issues in our G2G-programme. The Netherlands will continue with this programme, although we face budget cuts.

As to the Programme of Work 2011-2013 under the Protocol, the possibilities of the Netherlands to contribute are still very uncertain.