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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE**

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the  
Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses  
and International Lakes

and

Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water  
and Health to the Convention

Working Group on Water and Health

Sixth meeting  
Geneva, 31 May – 2 June 2006  
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda

**DRAFT DECLARATION OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

Note by the secretariat \*

1. The draft contained in the annex has been prepared by WHO/EURO based on the Helsinki Declaration, done at the first Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Helsinki, 4 July 1997); the Declaration of the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (London, 16 – 18 June 1999); the Declaration of the Peace Palace, done at the second Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (The Hague, 23 – 25 March 2000); the Declaration of Madrid, done at the third Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Madrid, 26-28 November 2003); the UN

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\* This document was submitted on the above date owing to a lack of human resources in the secretariat. This document has not been formally edited.

General Assembly Resolution 58/217: International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015; the General Comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Declaration of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, Hungary, 23 – 25 June 2004); the Outcome of the Conference of Ministers of Economy/Finance, Environment and Water and their partners from OECD on financing water supply and sanitation in EECCA (Yerevan, Armenia, 17 – 18 November 2005); and the Declaration at the fourth World Water Forum “Local Actions for a Global Challenge (Mexico City, Mexico, March 21 – 22, 2006).

2. The Working Group may wish to examine and further work on the draft declaration and agree on the modalities for finalizing the document for submission to the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

Annex

**DECLARATION OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL**

**[References and reconfirmations]**

1. We, the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, gathered at XXX from XX to XX January 2007 for our first meeting reaffirm the commitments made during the adoption of the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes at the third Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Health (London, 16 – 18 June 1999).
2. We reaffirm our commitment to achieve the internationally agreed goals on environmental sustainability, including integrated water resources management, access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation agreed upon in Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
3. We welcome the Parties that have ratified since the first Meeting of the Signatories (Budapest, 2 - 3 November 2000). We encourage all UNECE and WHO European Member States to ratify the Protocol on Water and Health, and invite all other countries to draw on its provisions when formulating water and health policies.
4. We recognize and stress that the right to sustainable access to safe water and adequate sanitation is an essential human right, to be enjoyed by all.
5. We recall the proclamation by the UN General Assembly in December 2003 of the years 2005 – 2015 as the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” to implement the international commitments on safe water and adequate sanitation.
6. We renew our commitments to the priorities announced at the conclusion of the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, 23 – 25 June 2004) and, in particular, to the pledge made to ensure that measures are taken to improve safe water supply and sanitation for all children of the European Region to reduce their diseases burden arising from gastrointestinal disorders and other health effects as the first Regional Priority Goal under the Children’s Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE).
7. We welcome other frameworks of cooperation, such as the Fourth World Water Forum (Mexico, 16 – 22 March 2006) which underlined the need to include water and sanitation as priorities in national development processes, in particular national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.
8. [Reference to the Environment for Europe Process]

[i. We acknowledge the added value that the Protocol on Water and Health could bring to countries outside the current region, and therefore decided to amend the Protocol to allow for global ratification.]

**[Adoption of the documents of the 1-MOP-PWH]**

8. We adopt the following documents submitted to us:

**[Highlights for action]**

9. We note with concern that significant populations in the European region do not yet have sustainable access to safe water and adequate sanitation. Interruption of water supplies, failure in microbiological and chemical quality as established against internationally recognized guidelines such as those published by the WHO continue to be considerable threats to the health and well being of many Europeans, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas.

10. We therefore invite Parties and Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health to set as their primary target the attainment of microbiologically safe drinking water for the entire population of the region. To attain this goal, we recommend that the following steps be taken:

(a) Identify regions with deficient water supply and sanitation, and increased water-related disease burden;

(b) In such regions where microbial hazard is the result of structural shortcomings, appropriate risk management measures such as in-house treatment of water or community supplies need to be adopted without delay;

(c) Water safety plans need to be installed in reticulated networks as soon as possible to optimize the risk assessment and hazard management in drinking water supply from source to tap;

(d) Rural area water supply and sanitation should be given high attention, including through the promotion of community-based water supply and sanitation systems;

11. In order to monitor progress towards this target, we recognize the need to extend current information systems on water supply and sanitation with information on water quality and system performance as an essential tool for national target setting, progress monitoring, facilitation of comparisons between countries and regions, and national and international reporting.

[ii. We are aware of current efforts undertaken jointly by the World Health Organization and the European Union in integrating water safety plans into drinking water provisions, and pledge our support to this effort.]

12. We commend the work done by the Parties, supported jointly by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe as Co-Secretariats, in providing the methodological background for a core set of indicators on water and health, taking into account the need to avoid duplication and promote synergy with other reporting mechanisms, particularly those operated by the European Union.

13. Furthermore, we recognize the work done by the WHO Computerized Infectious Disease Information System (CISID) which now covers the priority diseases identified by the expert group on water-related disease surveillance at its meetings in Bonn, Germany and Budapest, Hungary. We underline the importance of this work as a tool towards the setting of realistic targets and the monitoring of progress in the control of the burden of water-related diseases.

14. We are concerned on the effects of extreme weather events, particularly floods, droughts, heat waves and cold waves in different parts of the European region, and their consequences for the sustainable management of water resources and human health. We call on all Parties to extend cooperation in implementing measures to anticipate, detect and prevent impacts on human health.

#### **[Priorities for the work programme]**

15. Our co-operation during the next three years will focus on four programme areas, as elaborated in the 2007 – 2009 work plan:

- (a) Monitoring of the quality of drinking water and the quality of service;
- (b) Progress towards the goal of zero microbial failure, including through the intensified use of in-house treatment and community-based action particularly in rural areas;
- (c) Water-related disease surveillance

#### **[Cooperation with partners]**

16. We promote international cooperation on the basis of the Protocol Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14. To this end, we urge all Parties to take note of the outcome of the Budapest consultation on surveillance of water-related diseases, and urge cooperation for the strengthening of outbreak detection capacity through mutual assistance

17. We welcome the progress made on the implementation of the EU water framework directive, the entry into force on XXXXX of the European Union's Bathing Water Directive, and the proposed revision of the drinking-water directive, and look forward to synergy in these areas.

18. We invite donors, financial institutions and funding mechanisms that carry out assistance projects (such as the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, and the European Commission, and subregional assistance programmes) to give high priority to relevant joint

country initiatives when deciding on funding. In this regard, we acknowledge the initiative of the Norwegian government to hold the Oslo Roundtable on Water and Health, and continue to promote international cooperation.

19. We, the Parties, note with appreciation that at this meeting Member Countries of the UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe that have not yet become Parties to the Convention have associated themselves with this declaration.

20. We call on ECE member countries which have not yet become Parties to base their cooperation relating to transboundary waters and on issues related to water and health on bilateral and multilateral agreements consistent with the Convention and its Protocol.

21. [Thank to organizers].