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

Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism

Third meeting

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Future programme of work for the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism for 2011–2013

Progress report and future work of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism

Submitted by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism¹

I. Introduction and proposed action by the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism

1. The present document was prepared to facilitate the discussions by the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism on its future work by providing an overview of the progress since its establishment at the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 17-19 January 2007).
2. The Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism is invited to comment on the information provided and to discuss proposed future strategy for the Mechanism.

¹ The present document has been submitted after the official documentation deadline due to resource constraints.

II. Background

3. Following the Oslo Roundtable on Water and Health (Soria Moria, Norway, 2004) and the deliberations of the preparatory Working Group on Water and Health at its fifth and sixth meetings, Parties to the Protocol at their first session decided to create a mechanism for mainstreaming international support for national action in accordance with Article 14 of the Protocol. The Parties adopted decision I/3 which created an Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism (AHPFM) comprising two elements: the Facilitator and the Ad Hoc Project Clearing House (see document ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.4 - EUR/06/5069385/1/Add.4).

4. The Facilitator is a member of the Joint Secretariat, based at the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe, whose task include inter alia: identifying strategic areas of international assistance related to water and health, and making this information available to the Ad Hoc Project Clearing House; reviewing and analyzing project proposals by countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia ² and South-Eastern European ³ countries and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address their identified priority needs; assisting Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe countries and relevant NGOs in drawing up proposals and helping them to streamline these proposals to meet the requirements of donor countries and organizations; presenting such proposals in a standardized form to the Ad Hoc Project Clearing House.

5. The Ad Hoc Project Clearing House is an open-ended body under the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health with members from Parties and non-Parties (both from donor and recipient countries) and from global and regional financing institutions, relevant international organizations, competent international non-governmental organizations and international foundations with cooperation programmes of recognized importance for water and health.

6. The objective of the Ad Hoc Project Clearing House is to identify priority activities of non-infrastructure intervention for countries in transition in the following areas: health-related aspects of integrated water resources management, safe drinking-water supply and adequate sanitation, reduction of childhood morbidity and mortality, meeting water needs for vulnerable groups, gender issues related to water and sanitation. The Ad Hoc Project Clearing House will assess the relevance of project proposals submitted through the Facilitator and make suggestions for matching donors' assistance with such proposals. The Ad Hoc Project Clearing House will advocate funding of such proposals, but financing will be on a voluntary basis.

III. Preparatory work

7. Following the decision by the Parties to establish the AHPFM, two important preparatory steps were taken: the development of funding criteria and the development of a project proposal application form. Moreover programmes of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the area of water and health were reviewed; this work element has since been absorbed and superseded by the UN-WATER Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) (see below).

² Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

³ Countries of South-Eastern Europe are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia, Republic of Moldova and Montenegro.

Developing criteria

8. Criteria for the consideration of project proposals by the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism were adopted at the first session of the AHPFM (Geneva, Switzerland, 25 June 2008) (see document ECE/MP.WH/AC.1/2008/2/Add.1 - EUR/08/5086361/9). The criteria are as follows:

A. Geographical scope

9. The AHPFM covers the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

B. Eligibility

10. **Applicant countries:** Parties will have first priority. Signatories will have priority over countries that have not signed. Proposals from countries that have not signed will be considered for funding, provided that the submitting country demonstrates a strong commitment to the Protocol and intends to ratify it.

11. **Designated focal points:** Each recipient country should appoint an official focal point for the AHPFM. For each country, only the focal point will be entitled to submit project proposals.

12. **Non-governmental organizations.** Relevant and competent NGOs have an important role to play. For instance, they can be involved in the project proposal preparation or they can be implementing entity of projects. However, project proposals have to be submitted by the official focal point for the AHPFM.

13. **International organizations.** Relevant international organizations, including financial institutions as well as the organizations providing secretariat services to the Protocol, can be involved in the project proposal preparation or they can be the implementing entity of projects. However, project proposals must be submitted by countries' official focal points for the AHPFM.

C. Scope of projects

14. The scope of the projects need to be in line with the two core obligations under the Protocol:

- setting targets and target dates in accordance with Art 6 of the Protocol
- establishing surveillance, early-warning and response systems in accordance with Art 8 of the Protocol.

15. As a first step the AHPFM will consider project proposal aiming to support Parties and non-Parties in setting targets and target dates in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol. The establishment of such targets will represent the roadmap of Parties to implement the Protocol, ensuring that the Protocol's implementation is part of a country's national strategy, thereby ensuring the long-term commitment to and sustainability of efforts and allowing for the assessment of progress. As a second step, once targets and target dates have been set in accordance with article 6, the AHPFM will consider projects that support Parties and non-Parties to achieve their targets.

16. The AHPFM will also consider project proposals aiming to support Parties and non-Parties in establishing surveillance and response systems in accordance with article 8 of the Protocol.

D. Ownership and integration in national development efforts

17. Actions to manage water resources must be a priority of Governments. Local problems, needs and knowledge should be taken into account. A governmental strategy should be prepared and actions should be taken at the lowest possible administrative level. Governments must be committed to a review and assessment process, for example, by allocating funding or in-kind support.

18. Commitments must be made to public participation, public awareness, education, training, research and development, and information.

19. Special consideration should be given to people who are particularly vulnerable to water-related disease, including disadvantaged populations in rural areas, women and girls, as well as disadvantaged and socially excluded groups.

E. Financing

20. Financing can be by one or more donors, depending on the project to be financed. In the case of co-funding, bilateral agreements should be developed to specify the obligations and rights between the funding partners and to clarify the role of the joint secretariat.

Application

21. Project proposal application forms were developed and adopted. A copy of a standard application form can be downloaded from http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/ahpfm/application_form_project_proposal.doc..

Water and sanitation in ODA

22. Under the AHPFM a first review was made on ODA programmes in the area covered by the Protocol. The work is currently being continued and institutionalized by GLAAS. In the most recent (2010) review it was found that the total aid for all aspects of water as measured by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) fell from 8% to 5% of ODA between 1997 and 2008. Furthermore, domestic and foreign aid resources for sanitation and drinking-water are not necessarily targeted to where the needs are greatest (e.g. the poorest and unserved populations). In addition, less than half of the funding from external support agencies for water and sanitation goes to low-income countries, and a small proportion of these funds is allocated to the provision of basic services, where it would have the greatest impact on achieving the MDG target.

IV. Past cooperation programmes

Ukraine – Norway

23. An agreement was signed between Norway and Ukraine to comply with the obligations set forth in Art 6 of the Protocol. Norway assists Ukraine in developing targets, target dates and reporting procedures of the Protocol, as well as implementing the EU Water Framework Directive in selected project areas, considering the synergy between the two legal instruments.

24. The project foresees close cooperation with the Steering Group established for the purpose of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management under the EU Water Initiative.

25. Remarkable is that the project was supported by an in-kind contribution by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via the Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV).

26. The envisaged project outputs of the project are:

- (a) development of targets and target dates
- (b) development of mechanisms for information collection and update

- (c) establishment of an information system for registration and reporting
- (d) carrying out a demonstration project implementing the EU Water Framework Directive on a pilot scale, especially demonstrating the synergy between EU Water Framework Directive and the Protocol.
- (e) expose Ukrainian experts to the systems developed regarding standards of water and sanitation and their implementation of the Protocol in Norway and Israel
- (f) initiate the application of investment projects towards financing by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which are being identified during the target setting process.

27. The project started in April 2009 and the final workshop will be held in Ukraine in November to be followed by the reporting of targets and target dates of Ukraine in December 2010.

Switzerland – Republic of Moldova

28. The overall objective of the project *Agreement between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) concerning the protocol “Protocol on Water and Health” in the Republic of Moldova* is to render assistance in the implementation of Art 1 of the Protocol.

29. The specific objectives of the project are to provide assistance towards the implementation of Art 6 and Art 7. The three main project outputs are as follows:

- (a) Draft Governmental Order on the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health consisting of two main parts: (i) target and target dates under Art 6; and (ii) responsibility of Moldovan entities on reporting under Art 7 on compliance with these targets and target dates, including measures that need to be implemented to achieve the targets;
- (b) Technical reports related to the baseline analysis (e.g. legal, institutional and managerial framework; analysis of environmental and health situation) and other substantive activities related to the targets to be established;
- (c) A publication (English/Moldovan and Russian languages) and at least one leaflet on the project activities for wide distribution.

30. The project started in August 2009 and will be completed in October 2010.

Latest proposals from Armenia and Kyrgyzstan

31. Two new proposals were submitted at the second meeting of the AHPFM *Improving health in Armenia through target-setting to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe water and adequate sanitation* and *Targets and target dates to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation according to the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan*. Both were developed in the framework of the EU Water Initiative’s National Policy Dialogue on integrated water management. The proposal from Armenia is currently under evaluation in Finland.

V. The Water Fund

32. Norway has initiated the establishment of The Water Fund under the umbrella of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The Water Fund was formally launched on 13 May 2010 with the aim to:

- (a) finance projects and/or programmes in the water sector of certain of the Bank's recipient countries which are eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) as identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its published "List of Recipients of Official Development Assistance", as may be amended from time to time⁴.
- (b) Projects and/or programmes in the water sector, funded with resources of the Fund, will be focused predominantly on providing assistance and support to the governments of the recipient countries in carrying out regulatory work and reforms, fostering implementation of the UNECE/WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health and using the guidance developed under the framework of the Protocol as well as by the EU Water Framework Directive related to the management, use and preservation of water resources and activities related to the development and sustainable maintenance of safe water and sanitation facilities.

33. In order to assist countries not identified as ODA-countries The Water Fund will endeavour to ensure close co-operation with similar initiatives, in particular with the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership.

34. In order to make this Fund maximum operational there is an ongoing process to advocate for support to The Water Fund, so far the Nordic countries have responded positively.

VI. EU Water Initiative and the National Policy Dialogues

35. The European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) and its component for the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia were launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The main objective of EUWI is to support countries' actions to achieve the water-related Millennium Development Goals on integrated water resource management (IWRM) and on water supply and sanitation. The National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) are the main operational instrument under EUWI and are mainly financed by the European Commission.

36. EUWI is an international political initiative, not a financial mechanism. It takes a partnership approach with national governments, donors, the water industry, NGOs and other stakeholders. Through national policy dialogues it aims to improve coordination and cooperation and deliver more effective development assistance.

37. The NPD process on IWRM strengthens legal, institutional and managerial frameworks in line with the principles of the Convention, the Protocol on Water and

⁴ The 2010 list of official recipients of ODA is available at the following URL: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/40/43540882.pdf>. The following Parties are on the list: Albania, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Belarus, Croatia. The following Signatory is on the list: Georgia. The following other countries of the European region are on the list: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Health, the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive and other UNECE and EU instruments. The dialogue process also builds on UNECE-led water programmes in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

38. Since 2006, UNECE has been carrying out NPDs in four countries: Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In these four countries, the cooperation with the AHPFM has been extremely successful and the National Dialogues have facilitated the preparations of proposals to support implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health submitted to the AHPFM.

39. The Dialogues have attracted the interest of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; the process has started or will start in these countries in 2010. It is desirable that cooperation will continue also in these new countries.

VII. Future work

40. Since the second session of the AHPFM (Geneva, 1 July 2009) new requests for co-operation as well as new proposals for joint and co-ordinated actions have reached the Secretariat.

Bilateral co-operation

41. Three new proposals have been put forward, and are discussed briefly hereunder

Tajikistan

42. A proposal has been received from the Tajik authorities entitled *Setting targets, selecting indicators, monitoring and reporting on water and health* the implementation of which will allow the Tajik authorities to set targets in accordance with the aims of the Protocol and to improve the capacity of the national health system to survey and take action against water-related diseases.

Georgia

43. A proposal has been received from the Georgian authorities entitled *Support to the introduction of ecological management of water protection zones as a first step to the introduction of water safety plans in small scale water supply systems in the Dusheti and Marneuli districts in Georgia*. The project aims to introduce improved resource protection as one of the elements of a water safety plan approach for small scale water supply systems in selected rural areas, thereby reducing contamination and the risk of infectious diseases to vulnerable populations

Montenegro

44. Montenegro is not a Signatory to the Protocol on Water and Health, having become independent only comparatively recently. The country is however an active participant in the implementation of the Children Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE), the first Regional Priority Goal of which is the provision of clean and wholesome water, and adequate sanitation to all children of the European region, and participates actively in the work of the Barcelona Convention regarding capacity building for recreational water quality assessment.

Barents Cooperation

45. The Environment Ministers within *the Barents Cooperation* emphasized at the Ministerial Meeting in Tromsø, Norway, in February 2010 the need for improving the quality of drinking water in the Barents Region and also recognized the relation between clean water and socio-economic factors, as treated under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/World Health Organisation Protocol on Water and Health.

46. The Ministers welcomed the plans for a comprehensive water project in Archangelsk oblast, with the possibility to exchange experience with other parts of the Barents region, and encouraged the project to be developed in the subgroup on Water Issues in close cooperation with the Regional Working Group on Environment, as well as to pursue the possibility of developing the project in the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health

47. The preparatory work for initiating a project with the aim to assist Archangelsk, Komi and Murmansk Regions have been initiated. The composition of this project implies an intensification of work in the north western region of the Russian Federation, and a renewal active participation of Russia in the work under the Protocol on Water and Health.

48. Exploratory contacts are also currently under way to explore possibilities for a detailed cooperation program for cooperation with WHO assisting the Barents Partners in assessing and improvement of drinking-water and sanitation in the Regions in the North West Russia.

Multilateral cooperation

49. Expressions of interest for cooperation have been received from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the framework of the regional initiative for Central Asia, and from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) particularly in the framework of the preparation of the Seventh Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe Conference (Astana, 21 – 23 September 2011), which will have as one of the two main themes sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems.

VIII. Conclusions

50. From its humble beginnings as an experimental approach towards the implementation of international cooperation (Art 11), joint and coordinated international action (Art 12) and international support for national action (Art 14) the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism has matured into an essential component for the implementation of the Protocol and a recognized instrument for bilateral and multilateral co-operation.

51. Indeed, the term “ad hoc” is no longer appropriate and Parties will need to decide on whether to maintain this designation or to drop the designation “ad hoc”.

52. Other changes may have to be made in the operational procedures. For example, the function of dedicated focal points has proven less essential than originally thought, while the importance of technical support in-country may have been under-estimated in the original set-up of the mechanism.

53. But these adjustments should not deter from the recognition that the Project Facilitation Mechanism has proven its worth, and should be continued in the next intersessional period.