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## Economic Commission for Europe

## World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

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

### Second session

Bucharest, 23–25 November 2010

## Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its second session

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For practical reasons the following documents adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session are being issued in addenda to the present report:

- Programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/4/Add.1)
- Decision II/1 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.WH/4/Add.2)

## **I. Introduction**

1. The second session of the 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 (Water Convention) was held in Bucharest from 23 to 25 November 2010, at the invitation of the Government of Romania.

### **A. Attendance**

2. The second session was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Protocol: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Switzerland and Ukraine.

3. Delegations from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States not Parties to the Protocol were also present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

4. Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Romania, the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication and the WHO Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) Youth Network took part in the meeting

5. Representatives of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and the Scientific-Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia also attended.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions were present: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE); the BISMUN Association; CARNet; Eco Counselling Centre Galati; Ecospectrum; Global Water Partnership (GWP) Romania; the International Environmental Association of River Keepers (Eco-TIRAS); the International Fund for Cooperation and Partnership of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea; the International Water Association; the Pollution Prevention Centre (Romania); the Romanian Water Association; Solidarity Water Europe; the International Federation of Private Water Operators (AQUAFED); Tinerii Ecologisti-Natura; MAMA-86; Wise Invest (Romania); and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF).

### **B. Opening ceremony**

7. The Meeting was opened by László Borbély, Minister of Environment and Forests of Romania. Attila Cseke, Minister of Health of Romania, also welcomed participants.

8. In his opening remarks the ECE Deputy Executive Secretary provided a brief overview of activities under the Protocol since 2007 and emphasized the main features of the programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/4/Add.1), which reflected a continuity of work in strengthening the main pillars of the Protocol: setting targets and target dates; surveillance; compliance; mutual assistance; and cross-cutting issues. He strongly underlined the need for resources matching the future work programme to ensure its implementation.

9. The WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) Coordinator for Environment and Health gave an overview of the activities supported by WHO and presented priorities and highlights of the next inter-sessional period. The main challenges to be tackled in the future included the areas of: (a) quality of services of water and sanitation systems; and (b) inequalities in access to water and sanitation, particularly with regard to the price of services at full cost recovery.

## **II. Constitution of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties**

10. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/3–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/1.

11. The Protocol's secretariat, provided by ECE and WHO/Europe, reported on the status of ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. Twenty-four countries from the ECE region were Parties to the Protocol at the time of the meeting.

12. A representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the Meeting of the Parties that his country had completed the national procedures regarding ratification. The delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia provided information on steps taken by that country to ratify the Protocol, and informed the meeting that it would soon ratify the Protocol. Serbia was in the process of ratifying the Protocol, and the country's delegation recognized the Protocol as a good instrument enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation. Serbia was expected to ratify the Protocol at the beginning of 2011. Participants were also informed that several interministerial meetings related to ratification of the Protocol had taken place in Sweden, with the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A representative of Slovenia announced that Slovenia would ratify the Protocol before the end of the 2011.

13. The Meeting of the Parties took note of a report by the officers verifying that the credentials submitted by the Parties to the Protocol were in good order.

14. The following six side events were organized during the lunch breaks:<sup>1</sup>

(a) Promoting best practice to manage drinking water quality effectively, by the Romanian Water Association;

(b) Let's share experience! Youth involvement in Water and Health projects — How can youth contribute to the Protocol on Water and Health 2011–2013?, by CEHAPE;

(c) The role of the National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management in setting targets under the ECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health, by ECE and Romania;

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<sup>1</sup> The programmes of the six events are available on the Protocol website at [http://www.unece.org/env/water/whmop2/side\\_events.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/whmop2/side_events.html).

(d) The science-policy bridge for a changing climate: water, health, disease, by the UNU-INWEH Global Environmental Change and Human Health Project;

(e) Needs and ways of financing public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health — linking with European Union (EU) policy and the Aarhus Convention, by WECF and European ECO Forum;

(f) The toxic sludge disaster in Hungary, by Hungary and WHO/Europe.

Through these events, Parties, other States, international organizations, NGOs and other partners shared experiences, success stories and lessons learned relating to different aspects of the Protocol's implementation.

### **III. Election of officers for the second session**

15. On behalf of the current Bureau, the Chair, Mr. Gheorghe Constantin (Romania), proposed the election of Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway) as the new Chair. In addition, the Chair informed the Meeting that the current Bureau, following consultations, had developed a proposal for the composition of the new Bureau.

16. The Chair explained that additional, interested Parties, in particular candidates from Parties in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, would be very much welcomed to ensure a good geographic representation in the Bureau and were invited to express their interest.

17. The Meeting then elected its new Bureau as follows: Mr. K. Tveitan (Norway), Chair; Mr. O. Schmoll (Germany) and Ms. A. Drapa (Romania), Vice-Chairs; Mr. K. van Den Belt (Belgium); Ms. C. Gatignol (France); Mr. M. Kádár (Hungary); Ms. O. Doronina (Russian Federation); Mr. P. Studer (Switzerland); and a representative from Belarus who was to be nominated in the following weeks.<sup>2</sup>

### **IV. Status of implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health**

#### **A. Statements by Parties, Signatories and other observers**

18. Representatives of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia provided information on activities related to the domestic implementation of the Protocol — such as target setting — identified international support activities and suggested priorities for future work under the Protocol.

#### **B. Reports on activities of relevance under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, including the Water Convention**

19. The Chair of the Water Convention presented the outcome of the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Geneva, 10–12 November 2009) and the decisions of relevance for the Protocol. In particular, activities in the following areas of the

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<sup>2</sup> Ms. A. Drazdova was subsequently nominated by Belarus.

Convention's programme of work for 2010–2012 would entail cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol:

- (a) Preparation of the second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters;
- (b) Climate change;
- (c) National Policy Dialogues;
- (d) Water and industrial accidents.

20. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention also presented the progress in the preparations for the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference, to be held in Astana from 21 to 23 September 2011. In addition, the speaker provided information on a "tool box on water" that could be a tangible outcome of the Astana Conference, and invited countries and organizations to nominate experts to participate in the preparation for the Astana Ministerial Conference.

21. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Stressed the importance of cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, and particularly welcomed the development of joint products and activities. It agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the framework of the future programme of work;
- (b) Recognized the relevance of the Astana Ministerial Conference to the work under the Protocol, and the opportunity it would provide to promote the Protocol and further its implementation in the region;
- (c) Entrusted the Bureau, in coordination with the Bureau of the Water Convention, to overview the inputs from the Protocol to the Ministerial Conference.

### **C. Report on relevant activities of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and mainstreaming Protocol activities and priorities in its work**

22. A representative of the WHO/Europe secretariat informed the Meeting of the Parties about efforts by WHO/Europe to implement decision I/1 on mainstreaming the Protocol in the work of WHO/Europe and, in that connection, recalling the main outcomes of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Parma, Italy, 10–12 March 2010) and underlining the linkages between the commitments made by Ministers in Parma and the current and future work under the Protocol. In particular he highlighted the following commitments made by WHO/Europe:

- (a) To take advantage of the Protocol and to develop integrated policies on water resources management and health with clear targets and objectives;
- (b) To strive to provide each child with access to safe water and sanitation by 2020 and to revitalize hygiene;
- (c) To act on carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxicants, including endocrine disruptors;
- (d) To call for more research on persistent endocrine disrupting and bio-accumulating chemicals and their combinations;
- (e) To develop and strengthen early warning systems for extreme weather events and disease outbreaks;

(f) To ensure that youth participation in national as well as international processes was facilitated across all member States by providing them with assistance, adequate resources and the training required, and by giving them opportunities for meaningful involvement.

23. A representative of the CEHAPE Youth Network highlighted the important role of youth in improving the water and health situation in the region. She also underlined the huge potential of youth in the promotion of the Protocol and awareness-raising campaigns.

24. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Noted with appreciation the effect given to the implementation of decision I/1 concerning the mainstreaming of activities under the Protocol into the policymaking of WHO/Europe;

(b) Called on the WHO Regional Director for Europe — in view of its ambitious work programme in the area of surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities — to further mainstream the work of the Protocol throughout WHO/Europe and in particular in the Division of Communicable Disease, Health Security and Environment, drawing on appropriate technical expertise;

(c) Welcomed the further scientific support of the WHO network of Collaborating Centres;

(d) Recognized the important role that youth could play in the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013, and recalled the commitments taken at the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to facilitate youth participation in the work on environment and health, at both the national and international levels, by providing assistance, resources and the training required for meaningful and sustainable involvement.

## V. Work of the Task Forces

### A. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol

25. The Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting informed the Meeting about the activities in this area of work carried out since the first session of the Meeting of the Parties. He recalled the process of preparation of the draft *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting* (ECE/MP.WH/5–EUDHP1003944/4.2/2/1) developed by the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting. He introduced the guidelines document, underlining the main principles and steps to be undertaken in the process of setting targets in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol. Moreover, the Task Force Chair presented the proposed future activities in this area as they appeared in the draft programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.1–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/3).

26. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for leading this activity and the work accomplished. Delegates, echoing the Task Force Chair, underlined the importance of sharing lessons learned on setting targets and reporting under the Protocol.

27. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report on the activities of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting;

(b) Adopted the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting*;

(c) Invited the Parties to the Protocol to make use of the Guidelines when setting and reviewing targets and target dates, assessing progress and reporting in accordance with the articles 6 and 7 of the Protocol;

(d) Decided to review, at its third session, the experience with the Guidelines' implementation and, if necessary, to update them in the light of practice and lessons learned;

(e) Thanked the Government of Switzerland for its leadership in the development of the Guidelines and the financial support provided;

(f) Commended the Chair of the Task Force, the members of the drafting group, the joint secretariat and all the experts who contributed to the development of the Guidelines for their excellent work;

(g) Recognized that setting targets and reporting were one of the mainstays of the Protocol's implementation and decided that work in that area should be part of the core activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013;

(h) Decided to rename the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting.

## **B. Surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities**

28. The Chair of the Task Force on Surveillance recalled the mandate of the Task Force and reported on activities carried out in this area of work. He presented the draft policy guidance on water-related disease surveillance (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.2–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/4) and the draft technical guidance for setting up, implementing and assessing surveillance systems of water-related disease (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.3–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/5), describing the objectives and contents of the two guidance documents.

29. The Task Force Chair also recalled the activities conducted in Tajikistan within the framework of the Protocol, and provided information on the survey carried out to assess the capacity of systems for water-related disease surveillance. The survey had allowed the identification of the main challenges and gaps in that field and had served as background for the development of the two guidance documents.

30. A representative of the Russian Federation provided information on cooperation with China to establish drinking-water early warning systems, harmonization of approaches and monitoring standards. The Protocol was an important tool in that work and the responsible ministry was working on its implementation, in particular articles 8, 11, 12 and 13.

31. The Task Force Chair also presented proposed future activities, as set out in the draft programme of work for 2011–2013.

32. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report on the activities of the Task Force on Surveillance;

(b) Adopted the Policy Guidance on Water-Related Disease Surveillance and the Technical Guidance for Setting Up, Implementing and Assessing Surveillance Systems of Water-Related Disease and requested the joint secretariat to publish and disseminate the two documents;

(c) Invited the Parties to the Protocol to make use of the two guidance documents for setting up, implementing and assessing surveillance systems of water-related disease, in accordance with article 8 of the Protocol;

(d) Decided to review, at its third session, the experience with the implementation of the two guidance documents and, if necessary, to update them in the light of practice and lessons learned;

(e) Expressed its gratitude to the Government of Italy for its leadership in the development of the guidance documents and the financial support provided;

(f) Commended the Chair of the Task Force, the members of the drafting group, the joint secretariat and all the experts who contributed to the development of the Guidelines for their excellent work;

(g) Recognized that surveillance of water-related disease was one of the mainstays of the Protocol's implementation and decided that work in that area should be part of the core activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013;

(h) Decided to rename the Task Force on Surveillance as the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance.

### **C. Water supply and sanitation in short-term critical situations and adaptation to climate change**

33. The Chair of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events recalled the rationale for the work of the Task Force, in particular the impacts of extreme weather events, the occurrence of which was steadily increasing in the pan-European region and to which the water-supply and sanitation authorities needed to adapt. The consequences of extreme weather events were severe for human health and the damage caused by them cost Governments billions of United States dollars. The Chair of the Task Force reported on the activities carried out and presented the contents and main messages of the draft guidance on water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.4–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/6), stressing the broad cooperation with various organizations and institutions in the preparation of that document.

34. A representative of Germany congratulated the Task Force on the work done and underlined that the guidance was timely for Germany as, together with the *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change*<sup>3</sup> developed under Water Convention and the EU Floods Directive,<sup>4</sup> it provided a good source of references on work related to climate change and international river basins.

35. The Task Force Chair informed the Meeting that the Task Force would be dissolved but that there was a need for follow-up activities and the implementation of the Guidance.

36. Switzerland called for channelling some of those activities into the work of the Task Force on Climate Change under the Water Convention. A representative of Romania recalled that the extreme weather effects were indeed creating major problems in the pan-European region and underlined the importance of those issues. The Netherlands provided information on an EU project, on adaptation of water supply and sanitation systems to cope with climate change (PREPARED), involving 12 mainly European cities;

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. 09.II.E.14.

<sup>4</sup> Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks.

the speaker suggested that there was room for more countries to be involved, in particular those from Eastern Europe.

37. The representative of the United Nations University expressed the willingness of UNU to collaborate on that topic in the follow-up actions.

38. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report on the activities of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events;

(b) Adopted the Guidance on Water Supply and Sanitation in Extreme Weather Events and requested the joint secretariat to publish and disseminate it in its final form;

(c) Invited Parties to the Protocol and other States to implement the Guidance in the framework of their national adaptation efforts, in the management of water supply and sanitation management in emergencies and in the design and construction of new facilities;

(d) Decided to review, at its third session, the experience with the implementation of the Guidance, and, if necessary, to update it in the light of practice and lessons learned;

(e) Expressed its gratitude to the Government of Italy for its leadership in the development of the Guidance and the financial contributions made and to the Government of the Netherlands for its financial support;

(f) Commended the Chair of the Task Force, the members of the drafting group, especially the lead authors and the reviewers, the joint secretariat and all the experts who had contributed to the development of the Guidance for their excellent work;

(g) Requested the Working Group on Water and Health to promote the implementation of the Guidance, including through the development of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, and agreed that work in that area should be part of the core activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013.

## **VI. Procedure and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Protocol**

### **A. National summary reports on implementation**

39. A representative of the ECE secretariat presented the regional report on the status of implementation of the Protocol (ECE/MP.WH/2010/2–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/8), prepared on the basis of the national summary reports submitted to the joint secretariat within the first reporting cycle under the Protocol. Whereas some of the reports had been clearly written, and were comprehensive and informative, others did not follow the agreed template, or failed to address some of the questions, and thus were difficult to interpret. Consequently, while the first reporting exercise gave a clearer picture of the status of implementation of the Protocol, the picture was still not completely clear. The main lessons from the first reporting cycle were:

(a) That the first reporting exercise had been a success, as almost all Parties had submitted their reports;

(b) Some countries seemed to have bypassed the approach of the Protocol and simply complied with existing strategies or law;

(c) There was no correspondence between common indicators and targets set;

- (d) Targets were not set by all Parties and in all areas;
  - (e) There was some misinterpretation of article 6 of the Protocol, which reinforced the usefulness of the Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting;
  - (f) The reports had given indications for future work and confirmed that future work was focused in the right direction;
  - (g) The regional report provided a good point of reference and basis for communication, awareness-raising and policy discussion.
40. A representative of the Czech Republic suggested discussing the lessons learned from the first reporting cycle at the meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting, so that recommendations could be made to improve the quality of national reports and the next regional implementation report.
41. A representative of WECF highlighted the added value of the Protocol which, in comparison to EU directives, was more flexible and allowed country-specific issues to be addressed. At the same time, many Parties had not taken up the opportunity to set targets in areas such as: social aspects; targets for vulnerable groups; and water and sanitation in rural areas, as well as in hospitals and schools.
42. A representative of the Republic of Moldova provided information on targets set in that country, underlining that specific targets and programmes of measures had been adopted to address the problems related to water and sanitation in schools, hospitals and rural areas.
43. The Meeting of the Parties:
- (a) Noted with appreciation the national reports submitted by more than three quarters of the Parties to the Protocol pursuant to the article 7;
  - (b) Also noted with appreciation the reports submitted by Signatories and other States not Party to the Protocol;
  - (c) Welcomed the regional report on the status of implementation of the Protocol prepared by the joint secretariat;
  - (d) Considered that those reports, together, provided an impressive body of information on the status of implementation of the Protocol, as well as on the significant trends, challenges and solutions, that would help to guide future activities.

## **B. Compliance procedure**

44. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities since the first session of the Meeting of the Parties and presented the report of the Compliance Committee to the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WH/2010/3–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/9), including findings and recommendations of the Committee, as well as a draft decision on compliance issues prepared by the Committee for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties.
45. The Committee Chair stated that the national summary reports submitted by the Protocol's Parties had provided a good basis for the preparation of the Committee report and valuable sources of information, both for identifying problems with compliance as well as better understanding the context in which such problems appeared. All Committee members were involved in the analysis of the summary reports and their findings were reflected in the Committee's report. Factors considered by the Committee included:

timeliness of submission; completeness and quality of information; transparency; and the process of preparation.

46. In the draft decision on general issues of compliance, the Committee addressed a number of issues and recommendations with regard to the setting of targets, public participation and reporting under the Protocol. The decision also specified the facilitative role of the Committee, which had decided to enter into consultations with Parties that appeared to have problems in implementing the Protocol.

47. In addition, the Compliance Committee Chair presented future steps to stimulate compliance among the Protocol's Parties, and informed participants of the ongoing cooperation between the Committee and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

48. A representative of WECF congratulated the Committee on the activities it had undertaken and its report and praised the future plans for entering into consultations with Parties having difficulties in implementing the Protocol. The Protocol had been recognized by many as a tool to implement the human right to water.

49. Taking account decision I/2 on the review of compliance, the Chair of the Meeting of Parties invited the meeting to elect four members of the Compliance Committee.

50. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Noted with appreciation the report of the Compliance Committee and emphasized the importance of promoting and facilitating compliance with the Protocol;

(b) Adopted decision II/1 on general issues of compliance contained in the annex to the Committee's report (see ECE/MP.WH/4/Add.2);

(c) Re-elected Ms. I. Drulyte (Lithuania) and Ms. D. Iskrevva (Bulgaria) and elected Ms. Z. Kocsis-Kupper (Hungary) and Mr. V. Koester (Denmark) to serve on the Committee until the fourth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties;

(d) Thanked the Compliance Committee for its work, and in particular the outgoing Chair, Mr. A. Tanzi, and the outgoing member Ms. P. Daskalopoulou-Livada.

### **C. Guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7**

51. The Chair of the renamed Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting presented the draft guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.5–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/7). The Task Force Chair provided background information on the process of preparation of the template for reporting, explained, in detail, the structure and all the parts of the template and invited the Meeting of the Parties to adopt them and use them for the next reporting cycle.

52. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol on Water and Health, as contained in document ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.5–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/7 and its annex, recognizing their strategic importance for assessing progress with the implementation of the Protocol;

(b) Requested Parties to the Protocol and other States to follow the guidelines and template in the next reporting cycle for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties;

(c) Agreed to review, at its third session, experience with the guidelines for summary reports and their usefulness for data collection, evaluation and assessment of the progress in implementation of the Protocol.

#### **D. Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism**

53. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism presented progress achieved since the first session of the Meeting of the Parties. The speaker recalled the criteria for consideration of project proposals by the Mechanism (ECE/MP.WH/AC.1/2008/2/Add.1-EUR/08/5086361/9) and informed the Meeting about the cooperation with EBRD, establishment of the Water Fund and projects finalized, ongoing and to be tackled in the future under the umbrella of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. The Mechanism's Chair noted that ownership and commitments by Governments were necessary prerequisites for targeted and efficient assistance. The Water Fund established at EBRD could be a useful tool for achieving the targets set, as it could facilitate access to resources needed for infrastructure improvements.

54. Representatives of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine presented progress made in setting targets in those countries under the Protocol, within the Mechanism projects supported by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland. Parties congratulated the Governments of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine for their efforts and the successful completion of projects on setting targets under the Protocol and expressed gratitude to the Governments of Switzerland and Norway for supporting those projects.

55. A representative of Georgia provided information on the project proposal presented at the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism (Geneva, 26 May 2010) on small-scale water-supply systems and water safety plans, for which technical and financial support was to be provided by Germany in collaboration with WHO/Europe and the WHO Country Office in Georgia.

56. A representative of Tajikistan informed the Meeting about the situation with regard to water and health in his country and recalled a project proposal also presented at the May 2010 meeting. The project would form the basis for the national process of target setting and monitoring in line with the guidance under the Protocol, and would thus facilitate ratification of the Protocol by Tajikistan. Norway expressed an interest in supporting that project and highlighted the importance of linking it with ongoing WHO activities in Tajikistan.

57. A representative of Kyrgyzstan provided information on the work within a project "Target and target dates to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation according to the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan", initiated in 2008 in the framework of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management under the EU Water Initiative. Norway was considered providing support for the project at a later date.

58. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism, summing up, noted that the Mechanism had been a success and had become a permanent feature of the Protocol and, therefore, invited the Meeting to rename it the "Project Facilitation Mechanism".

59. A representative of AWHHE provided information on a project supported by Finland within the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism and underlined the role of NGOs in contributing to the implementation of the Protocol.

60. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized that the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism was a very effective tool to support implementation of the Protocol and expressed its gratitude to the Government of Norway for its leadership of the Mechanism;

(b) Commended the Governments of Germany, Norway and Switzerland for their support to projects under the Mechanism and invited other Parties to consider funding proposals that were already presented or that would be developed under it;

(c) Decided to change the name of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism to the Project Facilitation Mechanism;

(d) Decided to review, at its third session, the progress made and the effectiveness of the Project Facilitation Mechanism, and to revise, if necessary, its terms of reference on the basis of the experience gained;

(e) Highly welcomed the establishment of the Water Fund in EBRD and emphasized the great potential for cooperation and complementarity of the Water Fund and the Project Facilitation Mechanism. It entrusted the Chair of the Mechanism, EBRD and the joint secretariat to work out arrangements for effective cooperation.

## **VII. Capacity-building and sharing of experience**

### **A. Public awareness, education, training, research and development and information**

61. A representative of Romania, the lead Party for public awareness, education, training, research and development and information, in cooperation with a representative of WECF, presented the work carried out in that area and the proposed activities scheduled in the programme of work for 2011–2013.

62. The representative of WECF introduced a concept note on access to information and public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WH/2010/4-EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/10), prepared jointly by Romania and WECF, pursuant to the decision of the Meeting of the Parties at its first session, to provide assistance to the Parties in the implementation of articles 9 and 10 of the Protocol. The concept note had been developed on the basis of the discussions in and conclusions of the Workshop on Information and Public Participation in Water and Health-related Issues held on 15 and 16 June 2010 in Bucharest. The note provided explanations of legal obligations with regard to public participation and access to information under the Protocol and other international frameworks.

63. The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the Aarhus Convention underlined the linkages between the work done under the Protocol and under the Aarhus Convention and the common areas of interest. He confirmed the readiness of the Task Force on Public Participation to conduct joint activities scheduled in the programme of work for 2011–2013. The speaker underlined that the public had to have access to information about drinking water quality in their communities and that guaranteeing that right was a crucial challenge.

64. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the Workshop on Information and Public Participation in Water and Health-related Issues and welcomed the concept note on access to information and public participation under the Protocol;

(b) Thanked the Government of Romania and WECF for the work done in the area of public awareness, education, training, research and development and information, and for their leadership, and thanked the Government of Germany for the additional financial support provided;

(c) Urged Parties to step up their efforts to ensure access to information and public participation when implementing the Protocol, inter alia, by involving the general public in the process of decision-making, in particular in setting targets and target dates under the Protocol;

(d) Invited NGOs active in the areas of water and health to be instrumental in the implementation of the Protocol by taking advantage of the opportunities that the Protocol offered and at the same time by contributing to the protection of water and human health;

(e) Welcomed the cooperation with the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the Aarhus Convention, and entrusted Romania, WECF and the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making, with the assistance of the joint secretariat of the Protocol and the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention, to further define joint activities.

## **B. Equitable access**

65. A representative of France, the lead Party for equitable access, reported on activities in that area of work, including a workshop on equitable access to water (Paris, 5–6 July 2007), its outcomes and follow-up activities. Among the workshop's outcomes had been a questionnaire on the implementation of solidarity for drinking water supply and sanitation, which was intended to facilitate the exchange of experience survey on equitable access to water. The speaker also provided information on proposed activities under the 2011–2013 programme of work, with a detailed overview of the activities planned and the overall budget.

66. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties emphasized that, with the recent recognition by the United Nations General Assembly and by the Human Rights Council of the human right to drinking water and sanitation, activities in that area had gained even more relevance.

67. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the workshop on equitable access to water and the follow-up activities, and expressed its gratitude to the Government of France for the work done and for its leadership;

(b) Recognized the importance of work in the area of equitable access, in particular in relation to the recent recognition by the United Nations General Assembly and by the Human Rights Council of the human right to drinking water and sanitation.

## **C. Small-scale water supplies**

68. A representative of Germany, the lead Party for small-scale water supplies, reported on the work achieved and challenges related to that area. The speaker also presented to the Meeting of the Parties an advance copy of an awareness-raising publication, *Small-scale water supplies in the pan-European region: Background — Challenges — Improvements* (ECE/MP.WH/6–EUDHP1003944/4.2/2/2), to be published by WHO, developed on the basis of the conclusions and recommendations from the Workshop on Water Safety in

Small Scale Water Supplies in the European Region: Common Challenges and Needs (Bad Elster, Germany, 26–27 November 2008).

69. The presentation was followed by a number of interventions underlining the importance of that area of work. Romania pointed out that small-scale water supplies were located mainly in rural areas, where people were usually poorer. Thus the topic was directly linked to social issues of affordability, and the fact that it was difficult to have full cost recovery. Georgia noted that small-scale water supplies were not monitored and that there were no surveillance or early warning systems for them, while MAMA-86 commented that small supplies were particularly vulnerable to climate change and extreme weather events.

70. A representative of UN-Habitat provided information on the organization of work related to small-scale water supplies carried out through its Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, and stated that small-scale public water supplies clearly represented the greatest needs in the region. UN-Habitat was interested in becoming a main partner for activities on small-scale water supplies under the Protocol.

71. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the workshop on "Water Safety in Small-Scale Water Supplies in the European Region: Common Challenges and Needs" and welcomed the publication *Small-scale water supplies in the pan-European region: Background — Challenges — Improvements*;

(b) Invited Parties and other States to disseminate widely and promote the application of the principles of the publication so to advance the understanding by decision makers of the peculiarities and characteristics of small-scale water supplies.

(c) Expressed its gratitude to the Government of Germany for the work done and for its leadership;

(d) Considered that small-scale water supply and sanitation were crucial to ensure access to water and sanitation for everyone and to protect human health and, therefore, decided that work in that area should be part of the core activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013.

#### **D. Regional and subregional workshops**

72. A representative of Hungary presented the problems and challenges in the area of health, pools and spa operations, and briefed the delegates about the Second International Conference on Health and Water Quality Aspects of the Man-made Recreational Water Environment (Munich, Germany, 14–16 March 2007). A representative of Portugal informed participants about the Fourth International Conference on Swimming Pools and Spas, to be held in Porto, Portugal, from 15 to 18 March 2011, with the aim to create national groups on health protection in recreational water environments, establish dialogue with new partners, develop regulations or standards and promote good practice.

73. A representative of Croatia gave an overview of the workshop on the use of groundwater as a source of drinking water in karst areas (Island Krk, Croatia, 14–15 April 2008). This workshop addressed the health-related risks for drinking-water quality related to karst groundwater contamination, and had provided a platform for sharing information and experience on groundwater management, potential diseases related to drinking water and potential pollution and deterioration of groundwater. The workshop had been a good opportunity to share lessons learned and identify possible solutions for the better management of karstic aquifers.

74. A representative of Romania presented the outcomes of the Capacity for Water Cooperation Workshop on “Water and Health” (Bucharest, 14–16 May 2008), highlighting the capacity-building achieved through the active participation of those attending, which had constituted an important element of the meeting. The workshop allowed experts from the environment, water management and health sectors to exchange experience on national strategies, as well as on challenges related to implementation. The event had been a valuable platform for the international community to share information; a number of international organizations had reported on their activities and areas for possible cooperation under the Protocol.

75. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the regional and subregional workshops presented and expressed its gratitude to the countries that had organized and hosted them;

(b) Recognized the importance of regional workshops in strengthening understanding and implementation of the Protocol’s provisions, testing the usefulness of the Protocol’s products and identifying gaps and needs to be addressed in future work.

### **VIII. Promotion of the Protocol and the role of focal points**

76. A representative of Romania introduced the document “How to better promote the Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health: a guide for focal points” (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13), noting that the guide had already been presented to the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention.

77. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the importance of effectively promoting the Convention and the Protocol in order:

(i) To raise awareness about the importance of transboundary water cooperation and human and health issues;

(ii) To foster a better understanding of the opportunities offered by the two treaties;

(iii) To support their implementation in the region and beyond;

(b) Reaffirmed that the promotion of the Convention and the Protocol was a major responsibility of focal points and urged them to intensify efforts in that area;

(c) Welcomed the guide for focal points (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13) as a valuable advocacy manual and required focal points to use it effectively in their promotional work;

(d) Also noted the support provided by WHO country offices for the implementation of the programme of work for 2007–2010, and invited Parties to take advantage of their support for the promotion of the Protocol and the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013;

(e) Thanked the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol for preparing the guide;

(f) Entrusted the Protocol’s Bureau with overseeing the promotion of the Protocol, and agreed that promotion and advocacy activities should be part of the core activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013.

## **IX. Programme of work for 2011–2013 and resources needed for its implementation**

78. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties presented the programme of work for 2011–2013, explaining the difference between core and reinforcing activities, as well as the bodies to implement the new programme of work and its overall structure. The costs related to the implementation of the proposed programme of work had doubled in comparison with the previous work programme; thus the amount of donations would need to be doubled to accomplish all the scheduled activities. The Chair reassured delegates that the Bureau and joint secretariat would do their best to fundraise and search for resources; however, unless the financial situation of the Protocol changed, the full implementation of the programme of work would not be possible.

79. The concerns related to funding and consequently to the implementation of the programme of work were also raised by the representative of WHO/Europe. There was a large gap between the resources available and the resources needed for the implementation of the proposed programme of work, and scheduled activities could not be conducted unless the basic requirements of the secretariat were met.

80. A representative of the ECE secretariat echoed WHO/Europe's concerns, noting that, in order to implement all the planned activities, there was a need for adequate human and financial resources. Activities for which there would be no funds should be treated as conditional and those responsible for fundraising needed to be identified. The support provided by ECE in terms of meetings facilities and regular budget staff would continue. However, the regular budget staffing was not sufficient, so there was a need for extrabudgetary financial and human resources.

81. A representative of Italy affirmed that Italy would continue making every effort to provide financial and in-kind resources for the continuation of activities on surveillance and extreme weather events. Italy would also support the promotion of the use of guidance through the organization of ad hoc regional workshops.

82. A representative of WECF, speaking on behalf of the Bulgarian NGO Earth Forever, pointed out that NGOs were promoting and raising awareness about the Protocol. However, NGO funds were very limited. Financial support for the involvement of NGOs in the Protocol's activities was a good investment, as it would result in more events and the involvement of additional stakeholders that had not been part of the process to date (e.g., farmers, local authorities).

83. A representative of UN-Habitat said that, although the organization was not in a position to contribute financially to the programme of work, there were synergies that could be exploited between the work of UN-Habitat and that carried out under the Protocol. As host organization for the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, UN-Habitat had been working with water utilities and their associations and sector partners in South-Eastern Europe to create a platform to facilitate Water Operators' Partnerships in that part of the region. In the light of its long experience in helping countries to achieve equitable access to water and sanitation, UN-Habitat expressed interest in being included as a partner in the work programme area on achieving equitable access.

84. The Russian Federation stated that there was a need for further dissemination of information and raising awareness about the Protocol among the countries with economies in transition. In that context, the Russian Federation would look into the possibility of organizing a subregional workshop on surveillance of water-related diseases under the Protocol.

85. A representative of IWAC noted possibilities for IWAC to support the Protocol, in particular by organizing a workshop on the reduction of pollutants and health impacts or health risks from chemicals in drinking water.

86. A representative of UNESCO also expressed support for the proposed activities and expressed the willingness of UNESCO to cooperate in the areas of surveillance of water-related diseases and small-scale water supplies.

87. A representative of WHO presented the document on the financing options for the Protocol (ECE/MP.WH/2010/5–EUDHP/1003944/4.2/1/11) prepared by the joint secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau. The document had been prepared following decision I/5 of the Meeting of the Parties, which recognized that “in the longer term, consideration should be given to establishing stable and predictable financial arrangements for the core elements of the programme of work, for example by using the United Nations scale of assessments or other appropriate scales”. The document called for an establishment of a voluntary scheme of contributions aimed at covering the costs of the work programme for 2011–2013, based on the United Nations scale of assessments.

88. The WHO representative suggested that the experience gained over the previous three years showed that the lack of stable and predictable funding under the Protocol had led to difficulties in the implementation of activities, caused by the lack of continuity of staff and in particular the inability to retain staff. All Parties should be committed and contribute to the Protocol’s trust funds as all benefitted, in different ways, from the activities conducted within the programme of work. Even the smallest contribution would be an important sign of commitment and ownership and would provide an example to other Parties.

89. The call for an adequate, predictable and equitable contribution mechanism was echoed by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties. There was not a clear reply with regard to, or consensus on, the establishment of a voluntary scheme of contributions based on the United Nations scale of assessments. A representative of Belgium, on behalf of the EU, called for more time and flexibility with regard to financial and in-kind contributions.

90. A representative of IWAC reassured the Meeting of the Parties that Slovakia would continue to support the Protocol through its support to the Centre.

91. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the programme of work and the relevant cost estimate as amended at the session (ECE/MP.WH/4/Add.1);

(b) Recognized that the implementation of the programme of work would depend on the resources made available by Parties, and decided that proper attention should be given to meeting the essential human resource requirements needed by the joint secretariat to implement the core activities of the adopted work programme;

(c) Requested the Bureau, in close cooperation with the joint secretariat, to monitor the financial situation and to make decisions on the implementation of the programme of work accordingly;

(d) Expressed its appreciation to Parties, other States and organizations which had agreed to take the lead in or contribute to the implementation of the programme of work through the provision of in-kind resources or contributions to the Protocol’s trust funds;

(e) Called on Parties, other States and relevant organizations to participate actively in the activities in the programme of work.

92. Furthermore, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Committed itself to the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013, just adopted, and was determined to ensure that the necessary resources were available for its implementation;

(b) Recognized that voluntary contributions should amount to at least US\$ 4,021,000, the amount needed to cover the costs of activities under the programme of work;

(c) Urged all Parties to explore actively all possibilities to contribute to the costs of the work programme. Such contributions might be in cash, in kind or in the form of suitably qualified human resources, and might be earmarked for particular activities;

(d) Encouraged Parties that have historically contributed generously to continue their support;

(e) Invited all Signatories, other interested States and organizations to contribute, in cash and in kind, towards covering the costs of the programme of work;

(f) Encouraged Parties, all Signatories, other interested States and organizations to look into other funding possibilities and to facilitate contact with alternative donors;

(g) Requested the joint secretariat to prepare annual financial reports for the Bureau and Working Group meetings, which would form the basis for the adjustment of the work programme of the following year;

(h) Agreed to discuss the operation of the financing scheme at its third session.

## **X. Partners in cooperation: links with other organizations and programmes**

93. A panel was established comprising representatives of the Youth CEHAPE Network, the Office of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation in the Republic of Moldova, EBRD, UN-Habitat and WECF. The panellists discussed the linkages between their organizations and the Protocol, areas for cooperation and possible joint actions in the future.

94. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Acknowledged that cooperation with partners was a great strength of the work under the Protocol and that it enhanced the quality of products and the impact of actions at the local, national and international levels, as well as multiplying the effectiveness of activities. Therefore it decided that joint work should continue;

(b) Thanked partners in cooperation for their support to date and invited them to continue cooperating actively in the work under the Protocol;

(c) Decided to seek new partners relevant to the activities under the 2011–2013 programme of work.

## **XI. Date and venue of the third session of the Meeting of the Parties**

95. The Meeting welcomed with appreciation the offer of the Government of Norway to organize and fully support the organization of the next session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2013. It invited Norway to decide on the most appropriate venue and timing.

## **XII. Presentation of the main decisions**

96. The Chair presented the main decisions taken by the Meeting of the Parties. The Meeting of the Parties entrusted the joint secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with finalizing the report of its second session.

## **XIII. Closing of the session**

97. The Chair and a representative of the host country made final statements. The Chair then officially closed the second session of the Meeting of the Parties at 5 p.m. on 25 November 2010.

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