



**UNITED NATIONS
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**

**Working Group on Water and Health
Sixth meeting**

Geneva, 3 and 4 July 2013

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

INFORMATION PAPER 7

**Regional meeting on control and prevention of soil-transmitted helminths
in the European region
16-17 September 2013, Bonn, Germany**

Soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections are among the most common infections worldwide. More than 1.5 billion people, or 24 % of the world's population, are affected by STH infections worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1.2 million pre-school children and 3 million school children are in need of periodical deworming in the WHO European region. Water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in child intensive settings and public places are important determinants of STH infections and therefore play an important role in advancing prevention and control strategies.

The World Health Assembly resolution 54.19 highlighted the need to strengthen country efforts to prevent and control intestinal helminth infections and to promote access to safe water, sanitation and health education. This is supported by the Parma Declaration and the Protocol on Water and Health which's work program for 2014-2016 puts emphasis on STH prevention and promotion.

The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health has been supporting a range of STH prevention and control activities in various countries since 2012. A WHO regional meeting held in December 2012 reviewed regional and country activities on STH. The main outcomes of the meeting were: (i) an initial outline of a strategic framework on control and prevention of STH in children in Europe which serves as basis for developing further intervention strategies has been formulated; (ii) sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions in child intensive settings has been recognized as an important component for control and prevention of STH; and (iii) countries for STH situation assessment and plans for its implementation were identified.

The upcoming meeting aims to review the progress made since the first meeting and will address the following specific objectives:

- 1) Provide global and regional updates on STH control and prevention and respective efforts in WASH;
- 2) Review progress made by countries, in particular share experience of country pilots in applying a study protocol on STH situation assessments, and review the outcomes of the country assessment missions;
- 3) Introduce and discuss key findings of a questionnaire survey on STH; and
- 4) Review and further elaborate the draft regional framework for control and prevention of STH in children and discuss mechanisms and partnerships towards its implementation.