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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

Third session

Oslo, 25–27 November 2013

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its third session

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I. Introduction

1. The third 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 Oslo from 25 to 27 November 2013, at the invitation of the Government of Norway.

A. Attendance

2. The third session was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Protocol: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, 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: Armenia, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Slovenia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

4. Representatives of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication took part in the meeting.

5. Representatives of the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, the ECE Water Convention, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Protocol's Compliance Committee and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia were present.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions were present: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment; the Central Asian Alliance for Water; the Centre for Environmental Solutions (Belarus); Earthjustice; Eurasian National University; "Ecoproject Partnership" (Belarus); European ECO Forum-Ukraine; the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition; Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe; HEAL (Sweden); the International Environmental Association of River Keepers (Eco-TIRAS); the International Water Association (IWA); Journalists for Children's and Women's Rights and the Protection of the Environment; the Kyrgyz Alliance for Water and Sanitation; MAMA-86; the National Water Partnership of Georgia; the National Water Partnership of Kyrgyzstan; Norwegian University of Life Sciences; Oxfam GB; the Social-Eco Fund (Kazakhstan); Union for Defence of the Aral Sea and Amudarya; University of Rhode Island; and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF). Representatives of the Norwegian Institute of Public Health were also present. A representative of Pure CSR Consulting attended the meeting.

7. A representative of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) attended the meeting in order to draft an informal report of the special session on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation, with a view to subsequently making it available on the IISD website (see para. 16 and footnote 2 below).

B. Opening ceremony

8. The Meeting was opened by Bent Hoie, Minister of Health and Care Services of Norway. Lars Andreas Lunde, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment of Norway, also welcomed participants. The Director of the ECE Environment Division made opening remarks on behalf of the ECE Executive Secretary. The Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases, Health Security and Environment of the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) also made opening remarks.

II. Organizational matters, status of ratification and side events

9. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/10–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/03.

10. The Protocol's secretariat, provided by ECE and WHO/Europe, reported on the status of ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. Twenty-six countries from the ECE region were Parties to the Protocol at the time of the meeting. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia since its previous session.

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

12. The following six side events were organized during the lunch breaks:¹

(a) Policy and practice for safe drinking water, by IWA;

(b) Sharing experiences towards improving small-scale water supply systems, by WHO/Europe, the German Federal Environment Agency, the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan, the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia, WECF and the Earth Forever Foundation;

(c) Youth and the Protocol on Water and Health: True partnership for mutual benefit, by the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition;

(d) The water projects of EBRD — Implementing projects under the extreme affordability constraints: experience and lessons learned, by EBRD;

(e) Relevance and impact of the informal procedure of the Protocol's Compliance Committee, by Earthjustice and WECF;

(f) Implementation of the Protocol in the Republic of Moldova, by the Republic of Moldova, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation office in Moldova and Eco-TIRAS.

13. During the side 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.

¹ The programmes of the six events, as well as other documentation and information concerning the meeting, are available on the Protocol website from http://www.unece.org/env/water/3rd_mop_protocol_water_and_health_2013.html.

III. Election of officers for the third session

14. On behalf of the current Bureau, the Chair, Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway), proposed the election of Mr. Pierre Studer (Switzerland) as the new Chair for the period until the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties. In addition, the Chair informed the Meeting that the current Bureau, following consultations, had developed a proposal for the composition of the new Bureau. The Chair and two Vice-Chairs were elected on the first day of the session, the remaining members of the Bureau on the second day.

15. The Meeting of the Parties elected Mr. Studer (Switzerland) as Chair and Mr. Tveitan (Norway) and Ms. Marta Vargha (Hungary) as Vice-Chairs. The other members of the Bureau elected were: Ms. Ana Drapa (Romania); Ms. Alena Drazdova (Belarus); Mr. Yannick Pavageau (France); Mr. Jarkko Rapala (Finland); Ms. Bettina Rickert (Germany); and Mr. Luis Simas (Portugal). The Meeting of the Parties thanked Mr. Tveitan for his stewardship of the Bureau and the Working Group on Water and Health over the previous three years, and thanked Norway for its vital support to the implementation of the Protocol.

IV. Special session on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation

16. A special session on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation, entitled “Fair and Smart Ways to Reach Universal Access”, was held on the first day of the meeting.² The moderator for the session, Mr. Harsha Ratnaweera of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, introduced the session and its objectives, which were:

- (a) To discuss the progress made in the pan-European region in advancing universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation;
- (b) To assess to what extent those advances had been equitable;
- (c) To review what needed to be done to ensure that the common goal of universal access was achieved in a fair and smart way;
- (d) To call upon Parties, other States, financial institutions and development agencies for actions and commitments to eliminate disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

17. Mr. Benoit Vallet, General Director for Health at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of France, provided introductory remarks on behalf of the Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Ms. Marisol Touraine. Mr. Graham Alabaster, UN-Habitat, and Mr. Manuel Thurnhofer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, made keynote speeches on the challenges and way forward.

18. High-level representatives of countries made statements on topics related to the theme of the special session, as follows:

- (a) On the importance of international cooperation to secure equitable access to water globally, statements were made by Ms. Carola Bjorklund, Ambassador to the Council of Europe Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway; Mr. Chyngysbek Uzakbaev, Minister of Agriculture and Melioration of Kyrgyzstan; and Ms. Ermina

² The informal report of the special session is available from <http://www.iisd.ca/water/unece/whp/mop3/>.

Salkicevic-Dizdarevic, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(b) On challenges and success stories in advancing equitable access to water and sanitation, addresses were made by Ms. Svetlana Cotelea, Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova and Mr. Milan Simurdic, Ambassador of Serbia to Norway;

(c) On successful participatory approaches for relevant decisions and sustainable measures to achieve universal access, statements were made by Mr. Ionut-Ciprian Iuga, State Secretary of the Department for Waters, Forests and Fisheries at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Romania.

19. The keynote speakers provided comments on the statements made. A panel discussion was then organized with the following panellists:

(a) Mr. Paulo Lemos, Secretary of State for Environment of Portugal, who spoke on introducing the human right dimension into policy processes;

(b) Ms. Zsuzsanna Steindl-Kerekes, of the Ministry of Rural Development of Hungary, who gave a talk on creating smart targets to ensure universal access and the outcomes of the Budapest Water Summit;

(c) Ms. Anna Tsvietkova, representing European ECO Forum and MAMA-86, who presented how to progress towards equitable access through projects on the ground;³

(d) Mr. Tom Williams, of IWA, who outlined the practical implications of achieving universal access for service providers and regulators.

20. The moderator summarized the statements and discussions of the session, which had confirmed the agreement of Parties that equitable access to drinking water and sanitation was a priority. Participants highlighted the need for collaboration among Parties, international organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders to reach that objective.

21. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to the moderator, keynote speakers and panellists of the special session.

V. Status of implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health

22. Representatives of Parties, Signatories and other States delivered short general statements on their implementation of the Protocol, including the main achievements, challenges and priorities for future work until 2016 and beyond. The outcome of the discussions was taken into account in the deliberations later in the session. Major developments included that:

(a) Armenia was in the process ratifying the Protocol;

(b) Kazakhstan was working at the expert level on its possible accession to the Protocol;

(c) Belarus had adopted national targets earlier in November 2013.

23. In accordance with article 16, paragraph 3 (c), of the Protocol, the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention informed participants of the progress made in the implementation of the Water Convention, the decisions taken at the sixth session of

³ Ms. Tsvietkova read a statement coordinated by the NGOs representatives present at the session.

the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Rome, 28–30 November 2012), especially regarding the globalization of the Convention, the implementation of the programme of work for the Convention and the opportunities for joint action by the two governing bodies. With regard to the final point he highlighted:

(a) The European Union (EU) Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on Integrated Water Resources Management and on Water Supply and Sanitation;

(b) Pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, with consideration of health aspects in the pilot projects and a global platform on the topic;

(c) The planned thematic assessment of the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins;

(d) Possibilities for the joint promotion of the Water Convention and the Protocol, for example during discussions on possible sustainable development goals and at the next World Water Forum.

24. The Meeting of the Parties noted the information provided by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention.

25. The Deputy Director of the ECE Environment Division informed the Meeting of the Parties about the Memorandum of Understanding between ECE and WHO/Europe on their work-sharing arrangements, which had been concluded in June 2013 in accordance with article 17, paragraph 2 (a), of the Protocol. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

26. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed information provided by a representative of Romania — which chaired the NPDs in the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia — on activities in support of the Protocol implemented under the NPDs in the subregion.

27. The WHO/Europe Coordinator of Environment and Health presented the work undertaken with regard to the “Health 2020” European policy framework for health and well-being, the European Environment and Health Process and under the biennial cooperation agreements concluded between WHO/Europe and countries of the WHO European Region, as well as the activities of other WHO programmes relevant to the Protocol. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Noted the information provided by the WHO/Europe secretariat on the relevance to the Protocol of Health 2020 and the European Environment and Health Process;

(b) Welcomed the work carried out under the WHO biennial cooperation agreements and WHO technical programmes in support of the Protocol;

(c) Stressed the particular role of the Protocol in achieving the European Regional Priority Goal 1 on water and sanitation adopted by European States through the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health.

VI. Review of past activities and discussion of future activities in the different areas of work

28. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed past activities on the basis of a report, prepared by the Bureau with the assistance of the joint secretariat, on the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013, including an overview of contributions and expenditures (ECE/MP.WH/2013/1–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/07). At the same

time the Meeting of the Parties began its discussion of the draft programme of work for 2014–2016 (ECE/MP.WH/2013/L.1–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/08).

29. The Chair reminded the participants that the implementation of planned activities was subject to the availability of resources and that countries should express their priorities on the areas of work set out in the draft programme of work for 2014–2016.

A. Target setting and reporting

30. The Chair, who had also been the Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting in the intersessional period, reported on the activities carried out by the Task Force, including the outcomes of subregional workshops, and referred to the lessons learned and future work on target setting and reporting (ECE/MP.WH/2013/2–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/09). The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report, expressed its appreciation for the work undertaken by the Task Force, led by Switzerland, and thanked Finland for its financial support for subregional workshops and generally for that area of work.

31. With reference to article 6, paragraph 3, of the Protocol, the Chair invited those Parties that had yet to establish and publish targets to report on progress achieved in the setting of targets. Representatives of Norway and Romania reported that the process of setting targets in their countries had considerably advanced. Three States not party to the Protocol — Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan — also informed the meeting about their progress in setting targets. In Kyrgyzstan, the national targets had been officially adopted in June 2013, whereas in Georgia and Tajikistan the draft targets had been finalized in 2011 and in May 2013, respectively. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan the process had been supported by Norway and in all three countries it had been coordinated by ECE through NPDs. In addition, the Chair invited all Parties that had set targets or recently reviewed them to send them to the secretariat for publication on the Protocol's website.

32. The Chair invited participants to comment on the progress made in setting and implementing targets, the challenges, solutions and lessons learned. He also invited them to consider the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting*.⁴ Generally, the Guidelines were considered adequate. Nonetheless, the Meeting of the Parties decided to mandate the Task Force to study the need to update the Guidelines in the light of practice and lessons learned and, as appropriate, to publish an updated version of the document for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

33. As Chair of the Task Force, the Chair then presented future planned activities in that area of work and invited the Meeting of the Parties to consider the proposal and provide comments particularly on the substance. The Meeting of the Parties was satisfied with the proposal for a new programme area 1 on improving governance for water and health: support for setting targets and implementing measures, and did not make any amendments at that stage.

34. A representative of the ECE secretariat reviewed the implementation of the Protocol on the basis of the national summary reports submitted by Parties during the second reporting exercise and the regional report on the status of implementation of the Protocol (ECE/MP.WH/2013/3–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/10) prepared by the joint secretariat. Of the 26 Parties to the Protocol, 23 had reported, as well as 3 States that were not party to the treaty. Key findings included:

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.E.12. Available from <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html>.

(a) A significant improvement in the quality of reports as compared with the first reporting exercise;

(b) A significant increase in the use of the guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.5–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/7, as adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session (see ECE/MP.WH/4–EUDHP1003944/4.2/1/06));

(c) A general improvement in the level of public participation in reporting, though further improvements were still necessary;

(d) The improved use of intersectoral coordination mechanisms for reporting;

(e) A mismatch between claims to have set targets and the reality of targets not having been adopted or only included in national legislation. Targets also needed to be submitted to the secretariat;

(f) An improving trend in access to services, reduced occurrence and outbreaks of water-related diseases, drinking water quality and surface water quality, though wastewater treatment remained a challenge.

35. The Chair invited participants to discuss the main trends, challenges and solutions emerging from the reporting exercise of 2012–2013, especially in comparison with the pilot exercise conducted in 2009–2010.

36. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the regional report on the status of implementation of the Protocol, took note of reports submitted by Parties to the Protocol and welcomed reports submitted by Signatories and other States not party to the Protocol.

37. The Chair then invited the Meeting to discuss the experience of reporting in the present cycle and whether there should be changes to the guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol on Water and Health. Among other issues discussed was that the guidelines and template for reporting should clarify whether maintaining the level of an achieved target could be considered as a valid target for the purposes of the Protocol. In addition, the need to revise the common indicators part of the reporting template was discussed. Consequently, the Meeting of the Parties decided to mandate the Task Force to revise the guidelines and template for summary reports.

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

38. The WHO/Europe secretariat reported on the work carried out and the challenges encountered in the implementation of the activities on surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities. Two publications had been produced, *Policy guidance on water-related disease surveillance*⁵ and *Technical guidance on water-related disease surveillance*.⁶ The secretariat also highlighted the outcomes of the expert group meeting on advancing approaches towards effective prevention and reduction of water-related diseases (Bonn, Germany, 5–6 September 2013).

⁵ WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2011. Available from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-publish/abstracts/policy-guidance-on-water-related-disease-surveillance>.

⁶ WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2011. Available from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/technical-guidance-on-water-related-disease-surveillance>.

39. The WHO/Europe secretariat reiterated the importance of the programme area for supporting Parties in complying with the provisions of article 8 of the Protocol. The Chair understood that there was a common view that the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance had completed its mandate and that a more flexible, theme-oriented and cost-effective approach should be adopted for the forthcoming intersessional period.

40. The WHO/Europe secretariat reported on its efforts to support activities under the Task Force through enhanced mainstreaming with the work of WHO technical programmes, particularly on surveillance of infectious diseases and the control and prevention of soil-transmitted helminth infections.

41. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication reported on the activities to update the Atlas on Water and Health⁷ to serve as a one-stop information source on access to improved drinking water supply and sanitation, as well as the magnitude of water-related diseases. The representative of the WHO Collaborating Centre suggested that the Atlas be included in the new programme area 1 on improving governance for water and health, as it provided information and thereby supported baseline analysis and target setting under the core provisions of the Protocol.

42. The WHO/Europe secretariat presented future planned activities on surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities, and suggested that that area of work be covered by a new programme area 2 on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases. The Meeting of the Parties was satisfied with the proposal and did not make any amendments at that stage.

43. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report on the activities of the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the work undertaken by the Task Force, led by Italy, and terminated it upon the completion of its mandate;

(c) Welcomed the decision to adopt a more flexible, theme-oriented and cost-effective approach for the new programme area 2 on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases;

(d) Also welcomed the integration of the Atlas on Water and Health into the new programme area 1.

C. Cross-cutting issues: small-scale water supplies and sanitation, as well as water supply and sanitation under extreme weather events and the impact of climate change

44. A representative of Germany together with a representative of WECF reported on the activities carried out under the thematic area on small-scale water supplies and sanitation, which they had led together with the Czech Republic. In particular, they informed the meeting about the questionnaire on the assessment of small-scale water supplies in the pan-European region, the outcomes of the various field demonstration projects realized and the progress in the development of a policy guidance document. They also drew participants' attention to a publication issued since the previous session: *Small-*

⁷ Available from <http://131.220.23.155/atlas/online/index.php>.

*scale water supplies in the pan-European region: Background — Challenges — Improvements.*⁸

45. The Chair requested Parties to send their written comments on the outline of the policy guidance document by 20 December 2013 to the representative of Germany.

46. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the information provided on the activities carried out under the thematic area on small-scale water supplies and sanitation;

(b) Thanked Germany, the Czech Republic and WECF for their leadership and welcomed the activities undertaken in that area of work;

(c) Requested the leads for that area of work to complete the policy guidance document and to publish it in paper and electronic forms in English and Russian.

47. The representatives of Germany and WECF then presented future planned activities, which were proposed to continue in the new programme of work as programme area 3 on small-scale water supplies and sanitation. The Meeting of the Parties was satisfied with the proposal and did not make any amendments at that stage.

48. The WHO/Europe secretariat drew attention to the publication issued since the previous session: *Guidance on water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events.*⁹ The secretariat informed the Meeting of the Parties that due to lack of funding no further activities were undertaken under the thematic area on water supply and sanitation under extreme weather events and the impact of climate change. However, the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention considered that, given the importance and cross-cutting nature of those topics, they should continue to be addressed in the new programme of work. He suggested that synergies should be sought with other processes including that being led by the Task Force on Water and Climate Change under the Water Convention. The topics could also be integrated into relevant programme areas in the new programme of work.

49. The Meeting of the Parties concurred and decided to seek synergies with other relevant bodies, including under the Water Convention, on the topics of extreme weather events and the impact of climate change, and to take those topics into account across the programme of work.

D. Project Facilitation Mechanism

50. The Chair of the Project Facilitation Mechanism presented the progress achieved since the second session, and noted that recipient countries had acknowledged the assistance provided by the donor countries, as well as the usefulness of technical knowledge transfer. The Chair also highlighted the strengthened links with EBRD, which supported countries in achieving the targets.

⁸ WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2011. Available from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/environment-and-health/water-and-sanitation/publications/2011/small-scale-water-supplies-in-the-pan-european-region.-background.-challenges.-improvements>.

⁹ WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2011. Available from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/environment-and-health/water-and-sanitation/publications/2011/guidance-on-water-supply-and-sanitation-in-extreme-weather-events>.

51. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties observed that the Project Facilitation Mechanism had fulfilled its mandate. The draft programme of work foresaw a new programme area 6 on assistance to support implementation at the national level, which was envisaged to accommodate the tasks previously undertaken by the Project Facilitation Mechanism.

52. A representative of EBRD reported on the developments in establishing links between the EBRD Water Fund and other activities of EBRD with the work under the Protocol. The representative noted that the WHO Water Safety Plan (WSP) approach would complement EBRD infrastructure projects and the Protocol was a good platform to implement WSP.

53. The Meeting of the Parties was satisfied with the proposed new programme area as providing a more flexible, targeted and effective approach in providing assistance to Parties and other States in advancing access to safe water and adequate sanitation. That work should be done in cooperation with international financial institutions, donor organizations and others.

54. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the work undertaken by and the achievements of the Project Facilitation Mechanism, which had fulfilled its mandate and would therefore be discontinued;

(b) Thanked Norway for having led the Project Facilitation Mechanism;

(c) Took note of the work of EBRD in the WHO European Region and welcomed the efforts of EBRD to align its policies with the Protocol;

(d) Welcomed the adoption of a flexible approach in providing assistance to Parties and other States under the new programme area 6 on assistance to support implementation at the national level under the auspices of the Bureau.

E. Compliance procedure

55. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities since the second session of the Meeting of the Parties and, in particular, developments with regard to the Consultation Process established by the Compliance Committee in accordance with decision II/1. He also introduced the Committee's proposed draft decision on general issues of compliance, included in an annex to the report of the Compliance Committee to the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WH/2013/4–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/11), emphasizing the following points therein:

(a) The need to consider and introduce appropriate changes in the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting*, as well as in the guidelines and template for summary reports;

(b) That by failing to establish and publish national and/or local targets and dates for achieving them several Parties were not in compliance with article 6, paragraphs 2 to 5, of the Protocol;

(c) That implementation of the Protocol could not be limited to the transposition of EU legislation — so EU Parties should implement the Protocol beyond EU legislation, for instance by setting targets in areas that were not regulated or addressed in a sufficiently concrete manner by EU legislation;

(d) The request that Parties that had failed to submit their national implementation reports should submit them to the joint secretariat, inter alia, for forwarding to the Committee, by 28 February 2014;

(e) The importance of access to information and public participation for the effective implementation of the Protocol, as well as the widespread difficulties of Parties in complying with the relevant Protocol obligations, in particular related to the participation of the public in setting targets and target dates;

(f) The Committee's decision that it might, based on its assessment of the results of the second reporting exercise under the Protocol or other information available to the Committee, invite a Party or a small group of Parties having identical or almost identical implementation problems to engage in a consultation within the Committee's Consultation Process.

56. The Chair of the Compliance Committee also noted that the Committee would consider offering assistance to Signatory States considering ratification of the Protocol. He asked the Meeting of the Parties for its support on that matter.

57. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties invited the Meeting to consider the oral and written report and then highlighted various aspects of the draft decision to ensure that delegations fully understood its components.

58. The Meeting of the Parties

(a) Took note of the report of the Compliance Committee to the Meeting of the Parties;

(b) Adopted decision III/1 on general issues of compliance.

59. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties explained that five of the nine members of the Compliance Committee were to be elected, as five members had completed one term in the Committee. One Committee member, Ms. M. Bar, had decided to sit only for one term and was not available for re-election. There were five candidates whose nominations had been received by the deadline: Mr. P. Chantrel (France); Mr. O. G. Lindholm (Norway); Mr. V. Ni (Kazakhstan); Mr. I. Trombitsky (Republic of Moldova); and Mr. S. Vykhryst (Ukraine). While the country of origin of the candidates was noted, it was recalled that Committee members had to serve in their personal capacity. Mr. Chantrel, Mr. Lindholm, Mr. Trombitsky and Mr. Vykhryst had all served previously as members of the Committee and were in effect standing for re-election, whereas Mr. Ni would be a completely new member.

60. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Elected Mr. Chantrel, Mr. Lindholm, Mr. Ni, Mr. Trombitsky and Mr. Vykhryst to the Compliance Committee;

(b) Appreciated the work of the Compliance Committee and expressed its gratitude, in particular, to the Committee's outgoing member, Ms. Bar;

(c) Thanked the Committee's Chair, Mr. Koester.

F. Promotion of the Protocol and advocacy

61. The joint secretariat, representatives of Parties, other States and partner organizations reported on efforts made to promote the Protocol and its achievements at high-level meetings in the pan-European region, as well as at international, national and local level meetings, especially in conjunction with the International Year of Water Cooperation, and in particular during:

- (a) The “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011);
- (b) The World Water Forum (Marseilles, France, 2012);
- (c) The International Year of Water Cooperation opening event (Paris, 2013);
- (d) The High-level International Conference on Water Cooperation (Dushanbe, 2013);
- (e) The Budapest Water Summit (Budapest, 2013);
- (f) Stakeholder events organized by NGOs in 2012, as well as other national-level events.

Participants also noted efforts to promote the Protocol through the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

62. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Took note of information provided on a number of high-level events where the Protocol has been promoted, for example, through side events;
- (b) Encouraged focal points to undertake further promotion and advocacy of the Protocol at the national and international levels.

G. Public awareness, access to information and public participation

63. A representative of Romania together with a representative of WECF reported on progress under the programme area on public awareness, access to information and public participation, especially highlighting the elaboration and publication of the *Guide to public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health* (ECE/MP.WH/9).¹⁰

64. The Chair congratulated all those who had contributed their time, energy, knowledge and resources to the development of the publication.

65. The representative of Romania explained that, given the cross-cutting nature of the topic, it was proposed that follow-up activities would be integrated into other programme areas in the new programme of work.

66. The Meeting of the Parties

- (a) Adopted the *Guide to public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health*;
- (b) Thanked Romania and WECF for their leadership, and Norway for its financial support, and welcomed the activities undertaken in that area of work;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the cooperation provided by the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which had been important for the success of activities on public participation under the Protocol;
- (d) Invited all Parties, other States and other stakeholders to translate the Guide into national languages to facilitate the wide dissemination of the document, including to the public;

¹⁰ November 2011; available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34075>.

(e) Also invited all Parties, other States and other stakeholders to make use of the publication to help improve the planning and carrying out of the public participation process in the different stages of the Protocol's implementation.

H. Equitable access

67. The Chair drew participants' attention to two recent publications that had resulted from work under the Protocol on equitable access and that had been published on the basis of decisions taken by the Working Group on Water and Health: *No one left behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region*;¹¹ and *The Equitable Access Score-card: Supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation* (ECE/MP.WH/8).¹²

68. The Chair recalled that there had already been much discussion on that topic in the special session on the first day of the current session of the Meeting of the Parties. A representative of France then reported on progress made under the programme area on equitable access to water and sanitation. In particular, he detailed the elaboration and publication of the collection of good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region — *No one left behind* — and activities to promote the document.

69. The representative of France also informed the Meeting of the Parties about the elaboration of *The Equitable Access Score-card* and the pilot projects in Paris, Portugal and Ukraine to apply and test that self-assessment tool.

70. Representatives of Portugal and MAMA-86 then provided an overview of the pilot projects in Portugal and Ukraine, respectively. The Chair congratulated all those who had contributed to the development of those excellent publications.

71. A representative of the WHO/Europe secretariat reported on progress in the development of its wealth quintile analysis approach and the main findings of a pilot analysis for three European States. The analysis was useful to assess disparities between rich and poor in access to water and sanitation by service level, and the evolution of inequality over time. The wealth quintile analysis was complementary to the score-card approach.

72. The representative of France then presented future activities in the area of equitable access. The Meeting of the Parties was satisfied with the proposed continuation of the programme area.

73. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted *No one left behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region* and *The Equitable Access Score-card: Supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation*;

(b) Thanked France for its leadership and financial support to that area of work and all the experts who had supported the activities;

(c) Invited all Parties, other States and other stakeholders to make use of the score-card as a policy tool to assess the situation of equity of access to water and sanitation in their respective countries and plan necessary measures for improvement of the situation;

(d) Noted that the wealth quintile analysis complemented the score-card approach by providing country-specific data on access to water and sanitation by different groups of population;

¹¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.II.E.5. Available from <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html>.

¹² Available from <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html>.

(e) Invited Parties, other States and other stakeholders to promote and use the publication, *No one left behind*.

I. Capacity-building and sharing of experience

74. The WHO/Europe secretariat informed participants about WSP capacity-building initiatives and the publication of related resource materials in Russian and other European languages. Participants considered that capacity-building activities should not in future be concentrated in a dedicated programme area.

75. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Welcomed the information provided and encouraged WHO/Europe to continue its WSP capacity-building initiatives;

(b) Also welcomed the integration of capacity-building across programme areas in the programme of work for 2014–2016.

J. The Protocol on Water and Health and relevant global processes and initiatives

76. A representative of the WHO/Europe secretariat provided information on the status of attainment of the water and sanitation-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the pan-European region based on the latest data from the United Nations Children's Fund/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP):

(a) The European region as a whole had met the MDG target on drinking water, though there were significant differences across the region;

(b) In the European region, there had been progress in access to drinking water in rural areas and a narrowing of the disparities between rural and urban areas, but in Central Asia, for piped water on premises, the rural/urban disparities had been maintained and overall levels of access had declined;

(c) The European region as a whole did not meet the MDG target on sanitation.

77. He also highlighted a number of limitations to JMP:

(a) It did not provide data on quality and safety of the water supplied or the reliability and sustainability of the services;

(b) It did not monitor access to water and sanitation in schools, workplaces and health-care centres;

(c) It did not provide information on accessibility and affordability of services.

78. A representative of the ECE secretariat then provided an update on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference), in terms of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda and the elaboration of a possible water and sanitation-related Sustainable Development Goal(s). The emerging main areas for targets within a possible water SDG were:

(a) Access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH);

(b) Water resources management;

(c) Wastewater treatment and water quality;

(d) Climate change and water-related disaster risk reduction.

79. Following some discussion, including statements by several delegations of their positions on the post-2015 development agenda, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the relevance of the Protocol for progressively realizing regional and global commitments at the national level, including the possible post-2015 SDG(s) related to water and sanitation;

(b) Entrusted the Bureau to explore further opportunities for the promotion and use of the Protocol, including in the framework of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda.

VII. Programme of work for 2014–2016, terms of reference of bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation

80. Representatives of the joint secretariat provided an overview of financial resources that were made available for the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/2013/1–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/07), highlighting specific challenges encountered as a result of lack of funds to cover a number of programme areas, as well as broader challenges and vulnerabilities:

(a) A dependence on a limited number of major donors;

(b) The earmarking of contributions, particularly for projects;

(c) The implementation of core activities was challenged by a lack of unearmarked funds;

(d) The lack of financial resources impacted on the joint secretariat:

(i) The capacity of the joint secretariat did not match the workload of providing core functions, such as the servicing of meetings of Protocol bodies, and supporting activities;

(ii) Secretariat staff spent much of its time fundraising, so had less time for substantive work;

(iii) The variability of contributions, year on year, and their late arrival made it difficult to retain experienced staff;

(e) The lack of resources prevented full implementation of the programme of work, for example:

(i) Activities under the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance had largely stalled;

(ii) Activities on water supply and sanitation under extreme weather events and the impact of climate change were largely suspended,

(iii) It had been a struggle to provide financial support to participants at meetings.

81. The joint secretariat also recalled the decisions on financing taken by the Meeting of the Parties at its first two sessions, including:

(a) That, as per decision I/5, 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 using the United Nations scale of assessments;

(b) To discuss the operation of the financing scheme at its third session.

82. In addition, the previous Chair, Mr. Tveitan, reported on the outgoing Bureau's examination of financing issues.

83. The Chair noted the struggle to finance the previous programme of work and that the implementation of the programme of work for 2014–2016 would require sufficient, stable and predictable financing arrangements. He suggested that the Bureau might be invited to examine the possibility of a sustainable financial mechanism to support implementation of future programmes of work. Participants suggested that a mechanism was not necessarily needed, but sustainable financing was.

84. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Endorsed the report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013 and on contributions and expenditures;

(b) Expressed its gratitude to Parties and other cooperating States, especially to the lead countries and organizations for activities that had provided human and financial resources to implement the programme of work for 2011–2013;

(c) Commended the members of the Working Group on Water and Health, the Bureau, the other subsidiary bodies and the joint secretariat for their work and support for the implementation of the Protocol through guidance documents, reports, projects and publications, and for their assistance in the organization of workshops, conferences, training courses and other meetings.

85. The Meeting of the Parties requested the Bureau to examine the possibilities for sustainable financing to support implementation of future programmes of work, to review decision I/5 on the financial arrangements to support the implementation of the Protocol and to present a new draft decision to the next session of the Meeting of the Parties.

86. The ECE secretariat provided information on:

(a) United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/283, approving the adoption by the United Nations of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);

(b) The implementation by the United Nations Secretariat and WHO of IPSAS Standard 23 on Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions (Taxes and Transfers).

87. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided by the secretariat on IPSAS.

88. The Meeting of the Parties also took note that funds contributed to the two funds established by the Meeting of the Parties to receive voluntary contributions from Parties, Signatories, other States, regional economic integration organizations and other partners to support the promotion and effective implementation of the Protocol had to be categorized as either conditional (specified) or non-conditional (unspecified) in the meaning of IPSAS.

89. The Meeting of the Parties decided that all contributions made to the relevant trust funds, unless otherwise agreed by the donor and the recipient, would be directed exclusively to support the work of Protocol in accordance with its programme of work. Such contributions would be considered by default non-conditional and their future economic benefit was not required to be returned to the donor, with the understanding that it would be used for carrying out activities to support the work of the Protocol.

90. The Chair presented how the programme of work had been drafted and its overarching objectives. The joint secretariat then briefly presented each of the new programme areas in the new programme of work. For each area, the Chair sought identification of the responsible body and — if not already clear — the lead countries or organizations, financial and in-kind contributions from countries and organizations and endorsement of the area of work. He also reiterated that the implementation of activities

was subject to the availability of resources and that countries should express their priorities on the areas of work.

91. The results of the discussion were largely reflected in the revised programme of work. In addition, the following were among the commitments made to support the implementation of the new programme of work:

- (a) Switzerland pledged approximately CHF 50,000 per annum in support of programme area 1 on improving governance for water and health;
- (b) Hungary pledged the hosting of a workshop and the printing of a publication under programme area 2 on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases;
- (c) Norway indicated that it, too, would prioritize its support for programme area 2;
- (d) Germany had reserved funds for an expert group meeting and a networking meeting under programme area 3 on small-scale water supplies and sanitation;
- (e) Germany also pledged the translation into Russian of a policy guidance document on small-scale water supplies and sanitation and the organization of a regional workshop on WSPs under programme area 4 on safe and efficient management of water supply and sanitation systems,
- (f) Hungary pledged the hosting of a workshop in 2014 under programme area 5 on equitable access to water and sanitation;
- (g) France indicated that it would continue its support for programme area 5.

92. Recognizing that the pledges made were far from sufficient to secure implementation of the whole programme of work, the Meeting of the Parties mandated the Bureau to prioritize activities according to the financial resources available and requested it to inform the Working Group on Water and Health accordingly.

93. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Thanked the Parties, other States and organizations that had provided leadership and support to the activities that had laid the basis for the current draft programme of work for 2014–2016;
- (b) Conveyed its appreciation to the Parties, other States and organizations that had already expressed their readiness to take the lead in or contribute to the implementation of the programme of work for 2014–2016, through the provision of in-kind resources or financial contributions to the Protocol's trust funds;
- (c) Adopted the programme of work for 2014–2016 and its budget, as amended at the meeting, and entrusted the Bureau and the secretariat to estimate costs for those activities that needed further definition;
- (d) Called on Parties, other States and relevant organizations to actively contribute to the activities contained in the programme of work for 2014–2016, including through financial and in-kind contributions allowing predictable and stable funding of and support to the implementation of activities

VIII. Date and venue of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

94. The Meeting of the Parties was to hold its next session within three years, according to article 16 of the Protocol. The Meeting took note of information provided by the joint

secretariat that pan-European Ministerial Conferences on Environment and on Environment and Health were tentatively planned for 2016, so some flexibility on the exact dates of the next session would be appropriate. The Chair offered to host the next session in Switzerland.

95. The Meeting of the Parties decided to hold its fourth ordinary session in 2016 in Switzerland.

IX. Other business

96. In response to information provided by the ECE secretariat, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of a conference planned for May 2014 on a possible International Specialist Centre on Water and Wastewater Public-Private Partnerships;

(b) Delegated the Bureau to provide the mandate for official publications, provided that such decisions appeared in a publicly available report of a Bureau meeting;

(c) Requested the joint secretariat to reprint the Protocol in the current four languages (English, French, German and Russian).

97. There was also a request that the secretariat ensure that the year of issue should be clear in its publications.

X. Presentation of the main decisions and closing of the session

98. The secretariat 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 the preparation of the report of the session.

99. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its thanks to the Government of Norway for hosting the session. The Chair closed the session at 5:10 p.m. on 27 November 2013.
