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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

### Working Group on Water and Health

#### Fifth meeting

Geneva, 11 and 12 October 2012

## Report of the Working Group on Water and Health on its fifth meeting

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The fifth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health was held on 11 and 12 October 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland.

### **A. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

3. The Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA)/United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication (Institute for Hygiene and Public Health, University of Bonn) were represented.

4. Representatives of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) participated in the meeting.

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, the International Centre for Environmental Research, MAMA-86, the Centre "Cooperation for Sustainable Development", the Eco-TIRAS International Environmental Association for River Keepers and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF).

6. Representatives from the Committee on Questions of Ecological Policy, Environmental Management and Elimination of the Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident and from the water supplier Veolia also attended.

7. In addition, seven members of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) were present during the meeting.

### **B. Organizational matters**

8. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway). The Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

9. The Chair recalled that an important activity for the meeting would be to start the reflection on the future programme of work for 2014–2016 for the Protocol on Water and Health, to be prepared for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its third session in 2013.

## **II. Adoption of the agenda**

10. The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2012/1–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2012/1.

### **III. Progress in the ratification process**

11. The Chair noted that the number of Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health had not changed, and remained 25 countries. The representative of Serbia briefed the Working Group on the progress accomplished in its process towards accession to the Protocol.

### **IV. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol**

12. The Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting informed the Working Group about the activities and progress made by the Task Force and presented the outcome of the fifth Task Force meeting (Bratislava, 10–11 May 2012).

13. At its fifth meeting, the Task Force reviewed the progress in setting targets and target dates made and the specific challenges encountered by Parties, especially in the implementation of targets. In terms of progress, a number of Parties had reported that they had officially adopted their targets and target dates. While sharing national experiences, participants had underlined the importance of the consolidation of targets in line with national priorities, thus calling for a realistic stepwise approach in their elaboration. Furthermore, they had acknowledged a number of challenges in implementing the Protocol, in particular the considerable financial resources needed for upgrading water and sanitation-related infrastructure. Positive developments had also been discussed, such as in the elaboration of water safety plans in the context of implementing measures on the local level. Finally, the Task Force had decided to focus its future work on providing support to Parties in the preparation of their national summary reports within the second cycle of reporting under the Protocol. It would explore modalities for identifying and addressing common challenges countries faced in reporting and ways to promote cross-sectoral cooperation to overcome them.

14. In the ensuing discussion, a representative of Romania affirmed that the country was in the process of finalizing the target-setting process, while a representative of Georgia explained that Georgia had worked on draft targets and hoped that the process for their national adoption would commence soon. The Republic of Moldova reported on the launch of a project on the implementation of targets and target dates that had been set in 2010, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

15. The ECE secretariat provided information on the outcome of the second subregional workshop on water and health, which had focused on countries in Central Europe, held in Bratislava on 8 and 9 May 2012. The workshop had been particularly useful for sharing experiences among countries with similar backgrounds, but having different levels of advancement in the implementation of the Protocol. Hungary and Slovakia, for example, had already set and revised their targets, Romania was working on the elaboration of targets and Slovenia was not yet a Party to the Protocol. The workshop had also provided a good opportunity to discuss common challenges related to ensuring cross-sectoral cooperation and the relationship between the Protocol's provisions and relevant European Union legislation. In addition, it provided a forum to discuss issues such as small-scale water supplies, equitable access to water and sanitation and public participation.

16. The Chair of the Working Group acknowledged the usefulness of such subregional workshops and noted that Norway would host the next workshop for Nordic and Baltic countries in Oslo on 7 and 8 November 2012. The secretariat also reported on two additional workshops — for the Caucasus and Central Asia — which had been scheduled for 2013 and were being organized with financial assistance from Finland.

17. The WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) secretariat briefed the Working Group on developments in the framework of the WHO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), in particular the JMP report launched in March 2012 and the ongoing process to identify possible targets and indicators for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene linked to the post-2015 sustainable development goals. To that end, four working groups focused on water, sanitation, hygiene and equity and non-discrimination had been formed to guide the elaboration of possible post-2015 targets, also discussing ways to include the human right dimension in that context. An online process to collect feedback from United Nations Member States and experts on the draft targets/indicators had been launched and the second consultation was under way. A joint meeting of the four working groups had been scheduled for December 2012 with a view to making available the consolidated proposal for post-2015 monitoring indicators and targets for the discussion at the United Nations General Assembly session in September 2013. Additionally, the secretariat thanked ECE member States that had provided inputs to the elaboration of the second UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) report and encouraged countries to contribute to that global assessment.

18. The ECE secretariat outlined the modalities for the second reporting exercise under the Protocol in view of the third session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2013. In particular, the secretariat recalled that the national summary reports had to be submitted in accordance with the Guidelines and template for summary reports<sup>1</sup> adopted at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, and informed delegates of the timeline for the reporting exercise. In accordance with the Guidelines, the deadline for submission of summary reports was 29 April 2013. In order to assist Parties with the elaboration of the summary reports, a workshop on reporting would be organized back to back with the sixth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting in February 2013.

19. The Working Group entrusted the joint secretariat with the official communication to Parties and non-Parties regarding the second reporting exercise under the Protocol.

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

20. The WHO/Europe secretariat informed the Working Group of an offer made by the Russian Federation to host a meeting of the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance (Task Force on Surveillance), highlighting, however, that additional resources would need to be mobilized to cover the costs related to the travel of participants from eligible countries, and seeking guidance from the Working Group on possible ways forward. The Working Group and the secretariat thanked the Russian Federation for its willingness to host the meeting of the Task Force in Moscow. The Chair recalled the importance of the meeting and encouraged countries to consider supporting the organization of the Task Force meeting, in particular by providing travel funds or hosting the meeting.

21. The Working Group entrusted the Bureau to make the necessary arrangements for the organization of the Task Force meeting with the assistance of the WHO/Europe secretariat.

22. The WHO/Europe secretariat briefed participants on an ongoing project to support the development and management of complex monitoring systems in different domains, as

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<sup>1</sup> See ECE/MP.WH/2010/L.5–EUDHP/1003944/4.2/1/7.

specified in article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol. The objective of the project was to capture currently available data on water supply and sanitation, to combine them with the current reporting system on water-related diseases and to update the design of the Atlas of Water and Health for the WHO European Region. The secretariat noted that the Atlas needed to be further maintained and enhanced, building on the post-2015 monitoring indicators, and emphasized that monitoring of water supply and sanitation could be a possible cross-cutting area of work under the Protocol. The representative of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication at the University of Bonn presented proposed revisions to the scope and design of the Atlas and the next steps to be taken in its development, and strongly encouraged countries to provide further input to the further development of the Atlas.

23. The WHO/Europe secretariat informed participants of the outcome of a technical meeting for the reduction of helminth infections held in Bonn, Germany, on 12 and 13 September 2012, on a plan to conduct country assessments on soil-transmitted helminths (STH) and on the initial steps taken towards the development of a strategic action plan for control and prevention of STH infections in preschool- and school-aged children in the European region. The Chair of the Task Force on Surveillance noted that there were specific needs in different countries. The Chair recalled that integration of water, sanitation and hygiene in control and prevention of STH infections was one of the focus areas of the Protocol and emphasized that anthelmintic treatment was not effective without sustainable and safe water and sanitation.

24. The Working Group acknowledged the relevance of the Atlas and of helminth control and prevention measures, as well as the possible synergies with the work under the Protocol, in particular in relation to setting targets and reporting. It recommended considering those areas in the formulation of the Protocol's next programme of work.

## **VI. Cross-cutting issues: small-scale water supplies and sanitation**

25. The representative of Germany, one of the lead countries on small-scale water supplies and sanitation along with the Czech Republic and the NGO WECF, informed the Working Group about the work carried out since the second session of the Meeting of the Parties and the future plans in that programme area. He introduced the questionnaire on small-scale water supplies and sanitation, which had been distributed in June 2012 through WHO country offices, and invited countries that had not yet done so to submit their inputs by 31 October 2012. The analysis of the questionnaire, to be completed by mid-2013, would serve as an important input to the development of a policy guidance document on small-scale water supply and sanitation. The policy guidance would focus on existing regulations in countries, financial mechanisms to support small-scale operators, water supply and sanitation safety planning and promoting target setting in the thematic area. Countries were invited to submit case studies for the policy guidance document.

26. Noting that the overall progress on small-scale water supplies and sanitation had been slower than expected, the representative of Germany added that the lead Parties would try to step up their joint efforts and organize the next expert group meeting with a view to finalizing the draft policy guidance by the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health, based on the available funding. He underlined that the current work on small-scale water supplies and sanitation was informed by the work under the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting and the ongoing activities on equitable access.

27. He further reported that two field projects in Tajikistan and Georgia in collaboration with WHO/Europe had been completed and a *Water Safety Planning for Small Community*

*Water Supplies* guidance document had been published, with a Russian translation funded by Germany. The representative of WECF updated the Working Group about a field project in Bulgaria and the development of a Water Safety Plan implementation manual and training package on local action for safe water.

28. The representative of Germany also introduced the possible plans for convening a meeting in 2013 for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia under the joint auspices of the WHO International Small Community Water Supply Network and the Protocol on Water and Health. The lead Parties had been looking for options for a possible host for the meeting and countries in the region were invited to consider hosting the meeting.

29. In addition, he welcomed the new opportunities for collaboration with UN-Habitat on water operator partnership, highlighting the need to explore possible collaboration with the European Union and to look into new approaches to disease surveillance in relation to small-scale water supplies and sanitation.

30. The representative of UN-Habitat presented the main features of a UN-Habitat initiative that supported the establishment of partnerships between operators of water supply systems from different countries. UN-Habitat was interested in cooperating with the work under the Protocol in the area of small-scale water supplies and sanitation, possibly by facilitating twinning projects on water safety planning through existing regional platforms.

31. The Working Group thanked UN-Habitat for the interesting presentation, provided positive feedback on the initiative and welcomed it as a possible area for collaboration between the Protocol and UN-Habitat.

32. The Working Group also thanked Germany, the Czech Republic and WECF for their leadership on the work in that programme area and entrusted them, with the support of the secretariat, to arrange for the future work and to submit an advanced draft of the policy guidance for consideration at the Working Group's next meeting, in advance of its submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

## **VII. Compliance procedure**

33. The Chair of the Compliance Committee recalled the modality and objectives of the consultation process established by the Committee in 2011, and recalled his letter sent to Protocol focal points in January 2012 inviting Parties to use that opportunity to obtain assistance in implementing the Protocol. So far, no request for assistance had been received by the Committee, although challenges with implementation seemed widespread. Parties had furthermore been invited to take advantage of an offer to have a private consultation with the Compliance Committee members during the afternoon of 11 October 2012; however, none of the attending Parties had done so.

34. The Chair of the Compliance Committee informed the Working Group of some additional steps being considered by the Committee to encourage Parties to take advantage of the consultation process. In particular, the Chair had requested NGOs throughout the region to work at the national level to motivate their respective Governments to make use of the consultation process. He recalled that, while the consultation process was designed to be initiated at the request of a Party, under some circumstances the Committee could decide to officially invite a Party to engage in a consultation, even if there was no advance guarantee that the Party in question would respond favourably to the invitation.

35. The Chair of the Compliance Committee also recalled the report of the Committee to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties and highlighted some concerns and recommendations that had been raised in it. Finally, he outlined the main aspects that would

be included in the forthcoming report of the Committee to the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, noting that an important part of the report would be dedicated to the review of the second reporting exercise under the Protocol.

## **VIII. Project Facilitation Mechanism**

36. The Chair of the Project Facilitation Mechanism provided an overview of the achievements and lessons learned since the mechanism's establishment. Five countries had been supported through the mechanism and approximately US\$ 1 million had been allocated to the recipient countries. There had been a successful facilitation of matching the interest of proposing countries with the priorities and requirements of requesting countries. Recipient countries had acknowledged the importance of the assistance from donors, not only in terms of financial resources but also in terms of technical assistance in building national capacity for setting targets and addressing priority issues in small-scale water supply systems. It was important to maintain a close link with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and countries that had completed the work on setting targets could now present projects — mainly for infrastructure development — to EBRD and request financial support under the Water Fund. The Chair concluded that the Project Facilitation Mechanism had accomplished its mandate and new ways of providing international assistance under the Protocol now needed to be discussed and explored.

37. The WHO/Europe secretariat added that the future assistance work should take into account cost-effectiveness and be open to considering new modalities. EBRD could not be the only actor supporting the implementation of the targets, as targets were not only linked to infrastructure measures and therefore some kind of an assistance mechanism, allowing implementation of article 14 of the Protocol, needed to be designed, possibly linked to the overall financing of the Protocol.

38. The Working Group agreed that the Project Facilitation Mechanism had fulfilled its mandate and that new ways forward to further support countries needed to be explored. It recognized the importance of maintaining a flexible means for ensuring mutual assistance under the Protocol and recommended that the discussion should be continued in the framework of the future programme of work and be linked to the overall framework of the Protocol.

## **IX. Thematic discussion session: the Protocol on Water and Health and a green economy**

39. A thematic discussion session focused on identifying linkages between the Protocol and a green economy in the light of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference). The session was divided into three parts: an introduction to the concept of green economy, setting out some of the entry points for its consideration within the framework of the Protocol; an exploration of the perspective of the private sector in that area; and a panel discussion on how targets under the Protocol could contribute to greening the economy.

40. The representative of OECD introduced the OECD Green Growth strategy, noting that water was one of its priority issues. While OECD countries had managed to decouple their economic growth from water use in the past two decades, globally, the demand for water was projected to increase by 55 per cent by 2050 as compared with demand in 2000. Possible links between the work under the OECD green growth strategy and the Protocol included the importance of focusing on the well-being of humans and ecosystems, and at the same time embracing cost-effective and financially feasible approaches to investments



in water supply and sanitation infrastructure that would ensure protection from extreme weather events and promote innovative and green solutions.

41. A representative of the ECE secretariat introduced the links between provisions of the Protocol and green economy, noting that consideration of green economy could enrich the process of target setting under the Protocol and contribute to implementation of sustainable development policies in member States. That could at the same time increase the visibility of the work under the Protocol and possibly also raise resources for its implementation. As the process of target setting was at the core of the Protocol's mechanism, he further listed some possible areas of target setting where green economy aspects could be considered and whose implementation could contribute to achieving green economy. Parties should take advantage of opportunities to share best practices in linking the Protocol to green economy, and relevant regional and global developments in that regard should be closely monitored, in particular in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, including in relation to the elaboration of a possible sustainable development goal on water.

42. The representative of Veolia introduced the perspective of the private sector by showcasing a water supply project in India that had resulted in a significant reduction of water losses, an increase in coverage of the population and the sustainability of supply. Some ideas for adopting more sustainable water management practices were also outlined, including consideration of heavy metal pollution, introduction of sustainable water use indicators and optimization of local resources. One innovative solution was to consider the possibility of recovering energy from sewage sludge.

43. The session continued with a panel discussion chaired by the Chair of the Working Group and composed of delegates from Germany, Hungary and the Republic of Moldova.

44. In the Republic of Moldova linkage to green economy was achieved by implementing official targets set under the Protocol. For example, the modernization of water treatment plants had improved the quality of drinking water supplies and increased the energy efficiency of the process, while the introduction of decentralized approaches to sanitation, such as Eco-San toilets and constructed wetlands, had improved sanitation practices in rural areas. Another area that could contribute to greening the economy was the improvement of water resources management. The representative of Hungary noted that reform in the water utility sector in Hungary was expected to produce a positive economic effect and safeguard genuine service profiles while ensuring the sustainable development of the sector. The reform was connected to the establishment of green economy because it allowed for energy savings by adopting more economical service provision techniques, the reduction of water losses and the consideration of social benefits with a more flexible tariff system. A representative of Germany mentioned the ongoing efforts in the country to increase the efficiency of wastewater treatment plants, which currently accounted for about 20 per cent of municipal electricity consumption in Germany. Different methods of saving energy as well as energy and nutrient recovery had been tested in demonstration projects throughout the country as part of the environmental innovation programme. On the policy level, such innovative techniques were codified in a non-mandatory technical rule on energy analysis of wastewater treatment plants as a part of the National Water Ordinance.

45. The panellists concluded that the work under the Protocol on Water and Health in many countries had already involved many aspects of the green economy. Thus, it was imperative to identify good practices and translate them into the context of target setting and wider implementation of the Protocol. From a green economy perspective, additional consideration could be given to the health dimension of the Protocol, whereby the health improvement achieved through implementation of targets under the Protocol could be quantified and considered as an input to the sustainable development of Parties. The Working Group decided to further explore the ways to include green economy

considerations in the work under the Protocol, in the context of the elaboration of the Protocol's programme of work for 2014–2016.

## **X. Public awareness, access to information and public participation**

46. The representative of Romania reported on the outcomes of the event, "Public participation in environmental decision making: Focus on water and health" (Geneva, 6–8 June 2012), which had been jointly organized under the auspices of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and the Protocol on Water and Health. In that connection, two complementary guidelines were being prepared in parallel: the Aarhus Convention's draft recommendations on public participation in decision-making and the guidelines for involving the public in consultations and decision-making processes under the Protocol on Water and Health. Country representatives were invited to join the open drafting group that had been created to prepare those guidelines. The organization of the next drafting group meeting would depend on the availability of funds. She thanked the NGO WECF for its cooperation in that activity.

47. The representative of WECF outlined the progress achieved in the development of the draft guidelines, resulting from the discussion during the first drafting group meeting (8 June 2012), rounds of contributions by Parties and non-Parties, and the second drafting group meeting (10 October 2012). WECF briefed the Working Group on: (a) the objective of the guidelines; (b) the target audience; (c) the structure of the document; and (d) the challenges for its finalization.

48. The Working Group invited Parties and non-Parties to comment on the draft guidelines and to provide specific case studies to be included by 20 November 2012. The Working Group entrusted Romania and WECF, with the support of the secretariat, to arrange for the future work in the area of public participation under the Protocol and to submit an advanced draft of the guidelines on public participation for its consideration at its next meeting, before submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

49. MAMA-86 informed the Working Group about the ongoing project, "Raising awareness about the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health and strengthening the role of the civil society organizations in their promotion and implementation", implemented by a network of NGOs, which included the organization of subregional awareness-raising meetings and the preparation of a regular newsletter on events related to the Convention and the Protocol, as well as more general water issues, in the pan-European region.

## **XI. Promotion of the Protocol and advocacy**

50. The Working Group was informed about the efforts made to promote the Protocol and its products, in particular during the Sixth World Water Forum held in Marseille, France, in March 2012.

51. The Working Group was invited to consider the opportunities offered by the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation and the second reporting exercise under the Protocol in 2013 to promote the Protocol and share successful experiences in the countries.

52. The Working Group was further informed about the activities carried out by WHO to mainstream the Protocol on Water and Health into its different activities. The

WHO/Europe representative mentioned that specific reference to the Protocol had been included in World Health Assembly resolution 64/24 on drinking-water, sanitation and health, and that the Protocol was being advocated as an instrument of reference for safe water management and the protection of human health. In the report to the WHO Executive Board on the implementation of the resolution, the WHO/Europe secretariat proposed greater synergy between JMP and GLAAS. The WHO/Europe secretariat also highlighted that the Protocol had been identified as the policy platform to achieve the Regional Priority Goal related to water and sanitation adopted by member States through the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health.

53. The Chair highlighted the importance of the promotion of the Protocol in different forums and at different levels to strengthen the work in its framework.

## **XII. Equitable access**

54. A representative of France, the lead Party for the work on equitable access, informed the Working Group about the finalization of the publication *No one left behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region*,<sup>2</sup> which was launched in March 2012 at the World Water Forum in Marseille. The publication was also subsequently presented as the focus for debate at a side event to the joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 3 and 4 July 2012). Another achievement had been the establishment of an ad hoc expert group on the development of a scorecard on equitable access to water and sanitation, which was a self-evaluation tool to monitor progress. The group had held its first meeting in Paris on 27 and 28 September 2012.

55. With regard to upcoming activities in equitable access, the representative of France informed the Working Group about pilot projects in France, Portugal and Ukraine to apply and test the scorecard at different scales and in different socio-economic contexts, with national multi-stakeholder meetings planned in February 2013, and noted that the next meeting of the ad hoc expert group would be held in May 2013 to fine tune the scorecard. The Working Group was also invited to test the scorecard in other national contexts and to provide further recommendations for its revision.

56. The representative of France underlined the synergies between the work on the scorecard and the ongoing work on the elaboration of post-2015 development goals, in particular the reflection on the future Sustainable Development Goals, as well as with the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

57. The Chair encouraged the Working Group to promote and use the publication *No one left behind* at the national and local levels.

58. The Working Group was also informed about the future activities in the framework of the project, "Equity in economic access to safe water and adequate sanitation in the European region", funded by France and implemented by WHO. The project would contribute to the expansion of the JMP analysis on access to safe water and adequate sanitation by income levels, disaggregating data for 60 countries including Hungary, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia in the European region. The project's aims were: (a) to make JMP wealth quintile analysis more robust and strengthen the synergies with the Protocol; (b) to further disseminate the publication *No one left behind*; (c) to contribute to

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.II.E.5.

the development of the scorecard; and (d) to develop cooperation between the work under the Protocol and the WHO Healthy Cities Network.

59. The Working Group thanked France for its leadership on equitable access and for the progress achieved. It called on Parties and non-Parties to provide comments to the draft scorecard by 30 October 2012 and entrusted France, with the assistance of the secretariat, and in close cooperation with the countries testing the scorecard, to implement the future work on equitable access to water and sanitation. The Working Group requested France, with the assistance of the secretariat, to prepare an advanced version of the scorecard, including preliminary findings of the pilot testing, for consideration at its sixth meeting. It entrusted the WHO/Europe secretariat and WHO headquarters to prepare the quintile analysis report, to present the results of the analysis at its next meeting and to link that activity with the implementation of the scorecard pilot projects.

### **XIII. Strengthening synergies between the different activities under the Protocol**

60. The Chair informed the Working Group on the progress achieved so far in the discussion within the Bureau on the strengthening of synergies between different areas of work under the Protocol, underlining that such efforts were especially important in the light of the elaboration of the new programme of work and the existing challenges with funding Protocol activities.

61. He also briefed the Working Group on the outcomes of the meeting of chairs of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, convened upon the initiative of the Chair of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, to discuss possible synergies between the agreements. Parties were invited to consider further synergies with the Water Convention. One possible area of cooperation could include the use of data obtained in the framework of the *Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* (ECE/MP.WAT/34) in the process of setting targets under the Protocol. That, however, could prove challenging as no Party had set targets with regard to transboundary waters. Additional areas of cooperation could be linked to the work on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in the Convention's programme of work for 2013–2015.

62. The Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting recalled the efforts to link activities on target setting with other ongoing Protocol activities, e.g., on equitable access, and stressed that activities need to be coordinated to avoid duplication of efforts. That was mostly being done by including specific sessions on other such relevant activities in the Task Force meetings. There were also a number of areas within WHO, such as disease surveillance and monitoring of water supply and sanitation, that could be linked to the Protocol's work. They needed to explore with the WHO/Europe secretariat how other technical programmes and activities of WHO could contribute to the Protocol's work.

63. The Working Group entrusted the Bureau to intensify its work on the identification of synergies between different areas of work under the Protocol, especially during the process of preparation of the draft programme of work for 2014–2016, which was to be submitted to the Working Group for consideration at its next session.

#### **XIV. Financial arrangements to support the implementation of the Protocol**

64. The joint secretariat presented an overview of the current status of the financial resources for the Protocol available under the ECE Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and the WHO/Europe Voluntary Fund, based on the contributions received, expenditures incurred and the existing funding gap for the implementation of the programme of work. It was noted that, in addition to the general deficit of funds, the fact that most of the contributions were earmarked for specific activities, in particular field projects, created an additional challenge for the implementation of the core activities under the Protocol. For the WHO/Europe Voluntary Fund, the amount of funds earmarked for the core Protocol activities was less than 10 per cent of the total contributions. To address that, the WHO/Europe secretariat noted its efforts to mainstream the Protocol activities within its different technical programmes. For the ECE Trust Fund, the funds that were not earmarked for specific areas of work under the Protocol were also very limited, which left such important areas of work as public awareness, access to information and public participation totally unfinanced. It was further noted by the joint secretariat that there was a major mismatch between the funds needed to fully implement the current programme of work and the contributions received, amounting to over \$US 1 million, and that there was a need to continue working towards identifying sustainable and predictable means to fund the Protocol's programme of work.

65. The Chair thanked the joint secretariat for the fundraising efforts and for updating the template for financial reporting.

66. The Working Group underlined the importance of providing both direct and in-kind support to the activities under the Protocol, expressing appreciation to major donor countries as well as Parties that had supported the implementation of the programme of work through hosting meetings, contributions to cover secretariat costs, etc.

67. The representative of Norway announced that his Government had recently contributed US\$ 30,000 and US\$ 10,000 to the ECE and WHO/Europe trust funds, respectively.

68. The representative of Switzerland confirmed that the country would continue to support the work of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting by making an additional contribution by the end of 2012.

69. The Chair briefed participants on the efforts undertaken by the Bureau towards fundraising, in particular exploring possibilities to match potential donors with the different areas of work under the Protocol. Working Group members suggested exploring ways to approach the European Commission to request funding. The representative of UN-Habitat noted that his agency could co-fund some of the potential pilot activities, to be matched either by the Protocol funds or through external fundraising within possible future collaboration of the Protocol with the GWOPA programme.

70. The Working Group requested the Bureau to continue its efforts on fundraising.

#### **XV. Implementation and prospects for the programme of work for 2011–2013 and future work under the Protocol beyond 2013**

71. The joint secretariat provided an overview of the progress achieved in implementation of the current programme of work under the Protocol. The representative of

ECE noted that, in line with the funding and resources available, implementation had not been even across the different areas of work. While in some areas, like equitable access, the progress exceeded expectations, work in others, such as public participation, had been lagging behind. The WHO/Europe secretariat noted that amid difficulties in the operation of the Task Force on Surveillance, future work on control and prevention of helminth infections and rotavirus vaccination might present an opportunity to refocus the activities of the Task Force towards addressing water-related diseases. She also noted that, while the Russian version of the guidance document on extreme weather events had been published and distributed, due to the lack of funding no other activities had been carried out on the cross-cutting issue of water supply and sanitation under extreme weather events and the impact of climate change.

72. In the ensuing discussion, delegates shared their ideas and views on the priority areas for the next programme of work for 2014–2016, noting the importance of consolidating resources around the activities most demanded by member States and the need for maintaining the most successful areas of work.

73. Coming back to the discussion on the future work under the Task Force on Surveillance, the Working Group highlighted the mutual complementarity of the two task forces under the Protocol, noting that the achievement of targets under the Protocol could not happen without the assistance of the health sector, where monitoring and surveillance had an increasing role. Among suggestions for possible future areas of work under the Task Force were the elaboration of guidelines on contingency planning, guiding principles for detecting water-related disease outbreaks, guidelines for laboratory procedures and identification of key parameters for monitoring of drinking water quality, especially in rural areas.

74. The Working Group acknowledged that the main reason for the inadequate implementation in some areas of the programme of work was the lack of funding allocated to those areas. Taking stock of that experience, the Working Group underlined that the next programme of work for 2014–2016 should be achievable and realistic, aiming to reinforce the implementation of the Protocol in the region. Taking that into account, the Working Group underscored the importance of identifying further synergies and forging new partnerships, and the need to consider sources of funding before embarking on new activities. It was further noted that, given the diverse work of the different relevant technical units of WHO/Europe, there was a need to identify synergies with their activities.

75. On the basis of the discussion, the Working Group entrusted the Bureau, with the assistance of the lead Parties and organizations and the joint secretariat, to prepare a draft of the future programme of work for 2014–2016 for discussion at its next meeting.

## **XVI. Date and venue of the sixth meeting**

76. The Working Group noted that its next meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held in Geneva on 4 and 5 July 2013. The Working Group was also informed that the next meeting of the drafting group on public participation, which had initially been planned to be held in February 2013, had been cancelled due to a lack of funding and might be rescheduled to the beginning of April 2013 depending on the availability of funds. The Working Group was also updated about the plans for the next meeting of the Compliance Committee, initially scheduled in June 2013, but which had been moved to 2 and 3 July 2013, so that it would now be held back to back with the next meeting of the Working Group.

77. The Working Group was invited to regularly check the status of planning of the different meetings on the Protocol webpage.

## **XVII. Closure of the meeting**

78. The Chair thanked all the participants for their contributions and thanked the joint secretariat for the preparation of documents and servicing of the meeting, before officially closing the fifth meeting of the Working Group.

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