

**Statement of the Republic of Serbia on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation at the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties**

You're Excellencies, respective delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Please, allow me to begin this statement, by expressing my great pleasure that the delegation of Serbia is for the first time participating at the High level Meeting of the Parties, as a Party to the Protocol on Water and Health.

In the Republic of Serbia, an overall, 99 percent of urban and 98 percent of rural population have access to improved source of drinking water. Nearly 100 percent of the population of Serbia is living in households using improved sanitation facilities.

One of our priorities is to increase the access to potable water for disadvantaged groups. The Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for Improvement Status of Roma Population in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2012-2014, has foreseen the measures for improving living conditions in the Roma community, by providing safe drinking water supply and adequate disposal of waste. In the Plan of Action for the environment and health of children in Serbia, adopted in 2009, the first priority regional goal refers to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

Recognizing the importance of effective promotion of the Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health for further better implementation, responsible Ministries of the Serbian Government, presented the Protocol on National and local level, in Aarhus centers, Municipalities and Nature Protected areas in order to raise awareness of the Protocols provisions and benefits, to support cooperation between authorities and different stakeholders's and motivate local government representatives, emphasizing that protecting of drinking water supplies is a local priority.

In pursuance of the provisions of the Protocol the Government is ready to ensure its implementation and to support joint sector group headed by the Ministry of Health.

The Government is also devoted to respond to the obligation to establish and publish targets and target dates as referred in article 6 of the Protocol.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Please, allow me to take this opportunity, once again, to express my great pleasure to be here today as the Chief of the Serbian delegation and to highlight our strong willingness and commitment to cooperate with all of you on our goal to eliminate disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation.