

ANNEX

CONCEPT NOTE

Workshop to share experience between countries of the Caucasus on the implementation of the UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health

Date: 27–28 May 2013

Venue: Tbilisi, Georgia

Background

Article 6 of the Protocol on Water and Health requires Parties to establish national and/or local targets and target dates in different areas in order to achieve or maintain a high level for the protection of human health and well-being and for the sustainable management of water resources. Furthermore, according to article 8, Parties are required to establish and/or strengthen outbreak detection and early warning systems for outbreaks of water-related diseases.

The first reporting cycle conducted under the Protocol in 2009/2010 demonstrated that remarkable progress had been accomplished by Parties, and substantial experience was available. At the same time, several challenges remained, in particular related to difficulties with cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination of activities among different authorities responsible for the management of water resources, water supply, sanitation and health, as well as prioritization of activities, and involvement of the public in the implementation of the Protocol.

To address these challenges, a series of subregional workshops allowing neighbouring countries to share their experience in the implementation of the Protocol, in particular in setting targets and in reporting, has been organized under the programme of work of the Protocol for 2011–2013, as officially adopted at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Bucharest, 23–25 November 2010).

Countries in the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) share similar problems in implementation of the Protocol and have similar legal, environmental and social backgrounds that make the exchange of experience among them particularly relevant.

The subregional workshop for countries of the Caucasus will be organized jointly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia, with support from the Global Water Partnership Georgia and the WHO/Europe secretariat.

The timing of the workshop will also allow discussion of the national summary reports submitted by Parties and other countries in the framework of the second reporting exercise under the Protocol prior to the third session of the Meeting of the Parties (Oslo, 25–27 November 2013). In this regard, participants would be encouraged to study their national summary reports and reflect on them during the deliberations of the workshop.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop will make it possible to:

- Facilitate exchange of countries' experiences on the regulatory, institutional and technical aspects connected with the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health, in particular in relation to the cooperation of the water, health and environment sectors;
- Share information on the process of development and adoption of targets under the Protocol, as well as on the implementation of measures to achieve such targets;
- Present, discuss and identify solutions for the main challenges in the process of setting targets and other issues related to the Protocol's implementation;
- Discuss water and health issues common to all countries of the Caucasus, among others, focusing on:
 - a) Small-scale water supplies and sanitation
 - b) Water Safety Planning
 - c) Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases
 - d) Public participation in issues related to water and health
 - e) Post-2015 development agenda and the possible Sustainable Development Goal on water
 - f) Levels of performance of water supply and sanitation systems, including technical aspects of drinking water and wastewater systems management

Participation

- Around 40 participants, responsible for or involved in the implementation of the Protocol, and in particular in the process of target setting and reporting: governmental representatives, water and health managers, local authorities, national water/sanitation agencies/associations, representatives of academia, research institutes and non-governmental organizations.