

# **The Protocol on Water and Health: where health, environment, and development policies meet**

**MEASURING PROGRESS AND PREVENTING AND  
REACTING TO HEALTH OUTBREAKS**

**MONICA FRANCESCA BLASI (ISS-ITALY)  
monicafrancesca.blasi@iss.it**



UNEP



World Health  
Organization



# Task Force on WRDs Surveillance Systems

During the First Meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 2007) a Task Force on “*Surveillance and early-warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities*” coordinated by Italy has been established

## Mandate of the Task Force:

- Prepare guidelines on surveillance, outbreak detection and early warning systems, contingency plans and capacity response, taking into account established WHO guidelines for adoption by the Parties at their second meeting
- Support the guidelines’ implementation by providing assistance, upon request, to Parties and non-Parties through in-country missions (up to six missions should be organized in 2008-2009)

# CURRENT TASK FORCE PROGRESS

- Development of a questionnaire to define the state of the art on the current WRDs surveillance systems: *currently 12 replies*
- Guidance materials (technical and policy guidelines): *ready and soon to be published*
- Scientific workshop: *selection of possible topics (Israel February 2009, Second Meeting of TF)*
- Assistance and in-Country support: *1) Outbreak detection and alert systems (BCATajikistan 2008-2009) 2) assistance requests by 7 out of 12 questionnaire respondents*

# IMPORTANCE OF WRDs SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

*“The ongoing and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of health data to describe and monitor a health event” (Klaucke, 1992)*

- To identify WRDs and outbreaks
- To estimate the relative burden
- To plan public health interventions
- To identify communities that require intervention measures
- To target resources toward the areas with the greatest needs
- To check the effectiveness of interventions in reducing WRDs

# WRDs SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM ORGANIZATION

- An Outbreak Management Team (representatives of the water works and sanitation, water department of the regional environmental agency, specialist for hygiene and environmental medicine, political representatives) should be installed at the Local Health Unit, under the headship of a Public Health Officer

## RESPONSIBILITY

- Organizing and improving the Surveillance System (health outcomes, sources of data, reporting efficiency, responsible people, kind of data to collect, particular approaches for critical areas or regions with limited resources)
- Applying the approach to ensure safe waters (WSPs for drinking waters)
- Reporting to political authorities in order to achieve improvements concerning control and prevention (trigger events, acute reactions, normalization)

# QUESTIONNAIRE ON WRDs SURVEILLANCE

- Mandatory WRDs surveillance systems: generally they exist
- The current WRDs surveillance systems are capable of detecting and reporting **priority WRDs** (Cholera, Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli*, Shigellosis, Typhoid fever, viral hepatitis A); **emerging WRDs** (Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidiosis, Giardiasis Legionellosis) are less detected and reported
- **Some countries have specific surveillance systems for locally important WRDs** (Blue baby syndrome, Arsenicosis, Viral infections particularly norovirus, Parasitic disease)
- **Different organizations** involved in reporting WRDs; **coordination body** at national level ever present

# QUESTIONNAIRE ON WRDs SURVEILLANCE

- Lack of information on **vehicle of infection** and **environmental sources** in the standardized surveillance form to collect WRDs data
- Lack of information on **exposure routes** of WRDs, especially for rural areas (unregulated water-systems)
- Lack of information on possible WRDs due to bathing, shell-fish and crops consumption
- Lack of adequate **information** to the general public
- Weakness in the **response capacity** and **epidemic preparedness**
- Scarce use of **database and mapping**
- Request of **training**: how to plan surveillance systems, geographical information system (GIS) use, etc.