



# CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES AND ITS PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

WORKING GROUP ON WATER AND HEALTH  
Conference on sustainable water management and health  
Moscow, 1 June 2000

## **Sustainable water management and health issues in the region**

### Introduction

Following a decision by the Parties to the Convention at their second meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/5, annex II, work plan 2000-2003, programme area IV), a conference on sustainable water management and health was organized by the Russian Federation with the support of UN/ECE and WHO/EURO on 1 June 2000 as a special event of the fourth International Congress and Trade Fair «Water: Ecology and Technology – ECWATECH-2000» (Moscow, 30 May – 2 June 2000).

More than 80 experts in the field of water management, water supply, sanitation and public health from the following countries and organizations participated: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The Conference was also attended by representatives of UN/ECE, WHO/EURO and the NGO «Médecins sans frontières».

### **Objectives**

The Conference was part of the 2000-2003 work plan in programme area «Water and human health » to assist in human resources development and institutional capacity building to implement water-and-health-related provisions of the Convention and its 1999 Protocol on Water and Health through joint UN/ECE and WHO/EURO workshops on sustainable water management and health which are designed as a all-European forum to share experience among governmental officials, decision makers and planners in environmental, water and health authorities, and representatives of major groups concerned with the institutional, technical, economic, legal and scientific aspects of water management.

More specifically, the Conference was designed to pave the way for signature and ratification by all those UN/ECE and WHO/EURO member States who have not yet done so, and for a comprehensive (ad-interim) implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in countries in transition, and to establish sustainable links between scientific results/findings and practical implementation of existing knowledge.

## **Conference programme**

The Conference considered the following four topics: Water and health – general problems; water and health – regional and sub-regional problems; activities of governmental bodies and other organizations to provide safe drinking water and adequate sanitation; further development of laws and regulations to protect populations against water-related diseases.

The detailed programme was jointly prepared by representatives of the Russian Federation, the chairman of the Working Group on Water and Health established under the Convention and its Protocol, UN/ECE and WHO/EURO.

Abstracts of the contributions have been published in Russian and English by the organizers of ECWATECH-2000, and can be obtained through the focal point of the Russian Federation.

## **Outcome of the Conference**

Conference participants agreed on a draft resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress which was adopted by the Congress on 2 June 2000 (annex).

## **Follow up**

The first meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health (Budapest, 2-4 November 2000) may wish to consider the outcome of the Conference, and propose follow up activities on the basis of programme element 4.2 of the 2000-2003 work plan under the Convention.

## **Closing of the Conference**

A representative of the host country, Russian Federation, closed the meeting. The Conference participants thanked the host country for the excellent arrangements that had been made and for the cordial hospitality extended to them during the meeting.

The representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine expressed their gratitude to Finland for providing travel support through an earmarked contribution to the ECE Trust Fund. The representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan expressed their gratitude to WHO/EURO for providing travel support.

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION OF ECWATECH-2000**

*prepared by the participants of the conference on sustainable  
water management and health*

The Congress took note with appreciation of the outcome of the Conference on sustainable water management and health, which had been organized by the Russian Federation with the support of UN/ECE and WHO/EURO on 1 June 2000 as a special event of ECWATECH-4.

More than 80 experts in water management, water supply, sanitation and public health participated in this Conference, which was designed to pave the way for a comprehensive implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in countries in transition, and to establish durable links between scientific results/findings and the practical application of existing knowledge.

The Congress recognized that the Protocol, adopted at the 1999 London Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, was a unique instrument to prevent, control and reduce water-related diseases in Europe and to overcome the problems related to the provision of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation in Europe. The Congress encouraged all countries that had not yet ratified the Protocol to do so as soon as possible, and in the meantime to act in its spirit when introducing new water legislation and policies.

While noting that the implementation of the Protocol's provisions depended on the development and implementation of appropriate technology in water supply, the treatment of drinking water and sewage as well as in all the other fields of water management, the Congress agreed to support the further sharing of experience between water companies and authorities at national, regional and local levels. Their focus should be on providing safe drinking water to all citizens under the supervision of the ministries responsible for public health.

The Congress recognized the need to strengthen the local and national capacities of the Public Health Services (SANEPID), and to provide resources to those services at an appropriate level.

The Congress noted the high economic value of good health, recognizing the serious impact on economic stability of ill health in major groups of the population.

The Congress invited UN/ECE and WHO/EURO to organize a follow-up conference on the occasion of its 5th meeting in 2002 to review progress in implementing the Protocol's provisions linked to risk communication to the public, safe drinking water supply, and provision of adequate sanitation to all Europeans within a framework of sustainable water management, and to evaluate the outcome of the Convention's project on interstate distribution of water.