



**Working Group on Water and Health
Twelfth meeting**

Geneva, 14 and 15 April 2021

UNEDITED LIST OF DECISIONS

ADOPTED BY THE WORKING GROUP ON WATER AND HEALTH

Items 1, 2 and 3: Opening of the meeting and election of officers; Adoption of the agenda; Progress in the ratification process

1. The Working Group:
 - (a) Elected Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway) as Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health under the Protocol for the triennium 2020-2022;
 - (b) Elected Ms. Helena Costa (Portugal) and Mr. Gheorghe Constantin (Romania) as Vice-Chairs.
2. The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in document (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2021/1-EUPCR/1814149/1.2/2021/WGWH/03)
3. The Working Group:
 - (a) Welcomed the fact that Italy was in the process of ratifying the Protocol and encouraged the country to accelerate its efforts;
 - (b) Called upon other States, in particular Signatories, to ratify or accede to the Protocol as soon as possible;
 - (c) Requested the joint secretariat, in cooperation with the Bureau, to finalize the new promotional brochure on the Protocol, to translate it into French and Russian and to print it in English, French and Russian.

Item 4: Special session on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

4. The Working Group:
 - (a) Acknowledged the synergies and complementarities between the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and the work on equitable access under the Protocol on Water and Health;
 - (b) Encouraged further strengthening of cooperation with the Special Rapporteur in order to support progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, and invited the Special Rapporteur to promote the Protocol and the use of its tools, as appropriate.

Item 5: Protocol on Water and Health and implementation of its programme of work for 2020–2022 in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

5. The Working Group:
 - (a) Acknowledged efforts made by Parties and other States in advancing WASH related actions for preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring that no one is left behind and encouraged them to continue and further strengthen such efforts through the Protocol on Water and Health;
 - (b) Noted timeliness and usefulness of the document Protocol on Water and Health and the COVID-19 pandemic: relevance, perspectives and lessons learned, invited participants and other stakeholders to send comments and possible case studies by 31 May 2021 and entrusted the joint secretariat with support of the Bureau to finalize the document;

- (c) Expressed its appreciation to all lead countries for their leadership, the achievements made and continued support in implementing the activities under the respective programme areas;
- (d) Commended the Task Force on Target-Setting and Reporting as well as the Compliance Committee for their role in advancing target setting and reporting processes under the Protocol and welcomed Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia and Portugal on setting or revising their targets under the Protocol. It also welcomed the significant progress made by Germany and the Republic of Moldova in revising their targets;
- e) Endorsed the proposal for an online reporting system presented by the secretariat and entrusted the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau to work on the establishment of such a system;
- (e) Welcomed the progress in implementation of the Protocol at the national level within the National Policy Dialogues in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, expressed appreciation for the support provided by the European Union, and encouraged the European Union and other donors to continue supporting financially the work of the National Policy Dialogues in those regions;
- (f) Appreciated the continuous support provided through the WHO biennial collaborative agreements to the implementation of the programme of work and assistance to countries;
- (g) Called upon countries to maintain and intensify WASH related measures of the WHA resolution 73.1 on COVID-19 response and WHO/UNICEF global initiative for hand hygiene for all;
- (h) Noted that environmental surveillance of wastewater for SARS-CoV-2 and other disease agents is an emerging area of work under the Protocol in relation to its article 8;
- (i) Recognized that integrating water and sanitation in climate adaptation policies is crucial for strengthening the resilience of our economies and societies, health and well-being;
- (j) Welcomed the conclusions of the global workshop on increasing resilience to climate change through improved water management at national and transboundary levels (Geneva and online, 29-31 March 2021) and requested the joint secretariat to transmit these conclusions to UNFCCC and the United Kingdom with a view to presenting them at COP26;
- (k) Endorsed the proposed plans for future work on different programme areas for period 2021-2022.

Item 6: Special session on financing of water and sanitation

6. The Working Group:

- (a) Acknowledged challenges and gaps in WASH financing that require attention in the future programmes of work under the Protocol on Water and Health;
- (b) Called upon countries to take concrete measures, including systematic assessments of financing of the WASH sector and developing and implementing strategies and innovative approaches to strengthen WASH financing;
- (c) Called upon donors to increase their financial support to the water sector in the pan-European region, considering the huge financial gap to achieve the SDG6 and in line with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework;
- (d) Encouraged countries to use tools and guidance documents developed under the Protocol on Water and Health, in particular the guide on Costing and financing of small-scale water supply and sanitation services and other tools made available by relevant partners.

Item 7: Financial resources needed to implement the programme of work for 2020–2022

7. The Working Group:

- (a) Took note of the reports on the contributions, expenditures and the resources required to implement the programme of work for 2020-2022;

- (b) Expressed its gratitude to Parties and other States that have provided financial, direct and in-kind contributions to implement the programme of work;
- (c) Expressed regret that the request for additional United Nations regular budget resources had not been approved;
- (d) Called upon all Parties, other States and relevant organizations, to close the gaps in funding and financially contribute to the implementation of the activities of the programme of work for 2020-2022 and ensure stable and reliable funding for the staff costs of the joint secretariat.