



**Working Group on Water and Health**  
**Thirteenth meeting**  
Geneva, 19 and 20 May 2022

**UNEDITED LIST OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE  
WORKING GROUP ON WATER AND HEALTH**

**Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda**

The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the document  
(ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2022/1-EUChP/2219533/3.1/2022/WGWH/03)

**Item 2 – Progress in the ratification process**

The Working Group:

- a) Welcomed the fact that Italy, Kazakhstan and North Macedonia are considering, or are in the process of ratifying the Protocol and encouraged them to accelerate their efforts;
- b) Called upon other States, in particular Signatories, to ratify or accede to the Protocol as soon as possible;
- c) Took note of the new promotional brochure on the Protocol and encouraged States to make use of it, including when considering accession to the Protocol.

**Item 3 – Improving governance for water and health: support for setting targets and implementing measures**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to Portugal, Romania and Switzerland for their leadership of this programme area and to Switzerland for its continuous financial support;
- b) Welcomed the significant progress made by Georgia, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Uzbekistan on setting or revising their national targets;

- c) Commended the role of the Task Force in advancing the target setting and reporting process under the Protocol;
- d) Reiterated the importance of timely reporting under article 7 of the Protocol, which was emphasized in decision V/1 on General issues of compliance;
- e) Entrusted the secretariat with the finalization of the regional report on the implementation of the Protocol, for submission to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- f) Took note of the relevant developments regarding global water and health processes, including the preparations for 2023 UN Water Conference and encouraged participants to actively promote the Protocol in the preparatory process;
- g) Commended countries for participating in the SDG 6 global monitoring programmes and encouraged them to use these data for WASH policy making, and in particular in target setting and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health;
- h) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

#### **Item 4 – Increasing resilience to climate change**

The Working Group:

- a) Recognized that climate change causes significant additional pressures on water, sanitation and health and the need for urgent action in addressing the effects of climate change;
- b) Encouraged countries to use the Protocol's framework and the tools developed under the Protocol to increase resilience of water and sanitation systems to climate change, including through the target setting mechanism under article 6 and establishing effective early warning, surveillance and response systems as stipulated under article 8 of the Protocol;
- c) Expressed appreciation to Italy for its leadership of this programme area;
- d) Welcomed the Background paper on increasing resilience to climate change through the Protocol on Water and Health and requested the secretariat to finalize the document for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- e) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

## **Item 5 – Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to Norway and Belarus for their leadership in advancing the work under this programme area, and to Norway for its continuous financial support;
- b) Acknowledged the country activities to strengthen risk-based surveillance of drinking-water quality and water-related disease surveillance and outbreak response systems in accordance with Article 8 of the Protocol;
- c) Welcomed the recent developments in the environmental surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater and encouraged countries to make use of the WHO guidance in improving the work in this area;
- d) Took note of the draft training modules on (i) water-related disease surveillance and outbreak management and (ii) risk-based water quality surveillance, invited the Working Group to provide feedback on the draft training materials by 10 June 2022, and requested the secretariat to finalize the materials for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- e) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025

## **Item 6 – Institutional water, sanitation and hygiene**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to Hungary, Georgia and Republic of Moldova for their leadership in advancing the work under this programme area, and to Hungary for its continuous financial support;
- b) Took note of the draft publications: (i) the regional report on water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities and (ii) the Survey tool on water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities, invited the Working Group to provide feedback on the draft publications by 10 June 2022, and requested the secretariat to finalize the documents for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- c) Took note of the sub-regional capacity building events on water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and encouraged countries to follow-up on the recommendations in accordance with the guidance documents developed under the Protocol;
- d) Commended the actions taken by countries in undertaking situational analyses and improving water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities and schools in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health;
- e) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

### **Item 7 – Small-scale water supplies and sanitation**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to Germany and Serbia for their leadership in advancing the work under this programme area and for their continuous in-kind and direct support;
- b) Took note of the draft publication *Water safety plan field guide for small community water supplies* and the report on *Small-scale water supply and sanitation systems*, invited the Working Group to provide feedback on the draft publications by 10 June 2022, and requested the secretariat to finalize the documents for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- c) Commended Germany, Netherlands and Serbia for initiating the work on integrated water and sanitation safety planning in small-scale systems;
- d) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

### **Item 8 – Assistance to support implementation at the national level**

The Working Group:

- a) Appreciated the support provided by the ECE and OECD-led National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation to the implementation of the Protocol at the national level in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia with funding by the European Union;
- b) Also appreciated the support provided to countries through the WHO biennial collaborative agreements and country cooperation strategies to the implementation of the programme of work;
- c) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

### **Item 9 – Safe and efficient management of water supply and sanitation systems**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to the Netherlands and Bosnia and Herzegovina for their leadership in strengthening implementation of this programme area, and to the Netherlands for continuous financial support;
- b) Took note of the draft publication *Sanitation policy brief*, invited the Working Group to provide feedback on the draft publication by 10 June 2022, and requested the secretariat to finalize the documents for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- c) Acknowledged the efforts made by countries in adopting and scaling up application of water safety plan and sanitation safety planning approaches and prioritising actions for safe management of on-site sanitation systems.

d) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025

### **Item 10 – Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation**

The Working Group:

- a) Expressed appreciation to France and Hungary for their leadership of this programme area and for their continuous financial support;
- b) Welcomed the Policy Brief on affordability and encouraged countries to make use of it when developing appropriate policies and measures to ensure the affordability of water and sanitation services;
- c) Acknowledged the efforts made by countries to enhance equitable access to water and sanitation, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- d) Welcomed the intention of Albania, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine to engage in equitable access self-assessment exercises, with the support of the UNECE secretariat;
- e) Endorsed the plans for future work in this programme area for the period of 2023-2025.

### **Item 11 – Compliance procedure**

The Working Group:

- a) Took note of the information provided about the work of the Compliance Committee, including the outcomes of the Committee's twenty-first and twenty-second meetings;
- b) Commended the role of the Committee in supporting implementation of and compliance with the Protocol;
- c) Requested the Compliance Committee to prepare its report to sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- d) Recalled that Parties are invited to nominate candidates for the Compliance Committee until 24 August 2022 for election and/or re-election at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- e) Encouraged Parties to consider gender balanced nominations of Compliance Committee members.

### **Item 12 – Implementation of the programme of work for 2020-2022**

The Working Group:

- a) Welcomed the progress made in implementing the Protocol's programme of work for 2020-2022;

- b) Took note of the report on the contributions and expenditures;
- c) Acknowledged that, due to the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and other reasons certain activities included in the programme of work for 2020-2022 could not be implemented and some of them were therefore shifted to the future programme of work for 2023-2025, based on consultations with respective Lead Parties and countries;
- d) Expressed gratitude to all Parties that have provided financial (earmarked and un-earmarked) and in-kind contributions to support the implementation of the programme of work for 2020-2022;
- e) Expressed concern about the fact that numerous Parties have not yet been able to contribute to the implementation of the programme of work and called upon all Parties to contribute to the UNECE and WHO Protocol trust funds, including by providing financial support for the organization of the upcoming sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- f) Entrusted the secretariat, in consultation with Lead Parties and countries, to prepare a report on the progress achieved for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session.

**Item 13 – Programme of work for 2023-2025, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation**

The Working Group:

- a) Endorsed the draft programme of work, including the relevant institutional structure and associated costs, and invited Parties, other States and relevant stakeholders to provide any additional comments to the draft programme of work for 2023–2025 by 10 June 2022;
- b) Entrusted the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to finalize the draft programme of work for 2023–2025, including the overview of resource requirements for its implementation, for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session;
- c) Called on Parties, other States and donor institutions to actively contribute to the activities contained in the draft programme of work, including through financial and in-kind contributions, to ensure predictable and stable funding allowing for reliable secretariat services and support to the implementation of activities;
- d) Invited Parties, other States and donor institutions to indicate such pledges at the latest at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- e) Welcomed the intention to organize a roundtable discussion on the financing of the Protocol on Water and Health at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- f) Recommended the Meeting of the Parties to entrust the Bureau, in consultation with the Working Group on Water and Health, to prepare a draft decision on strengthening financial sustainability of the work under the Protocol for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

**Item 14 – Preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties**

The Working Group entrusted the Bureau and the secretariat with the finalization of the preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties.