

Statement of Ukraine
on the 13th meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health under
the Protocol of Water and Health
(19-20 May 2022)

Dear Chair

Dear participants,

Ukraine is a Party to the Protocol on Water and Health and in 2011 fulfilled its obligations on setting the National Targets under the Protocol, which had been revised in 2017-2018. The Draft of the revised National Targets was supported by the Interdepartmental Working Group on coordination of the Protocol implementation in March 2019.

Unfortunately, the process of adoption of the revised National Targets was postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian's escalation of its military activities against Ukraine in February 2022.

It was planned that the National Targets as an Annex to the Draft Water Strategy will be revised and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2022. The war escalation by the RF since 24 February 2022 made this plan on the National Targets revision out of date. The consequences of the Russia's aggression against Ukraine in water sector include destruction and pollution of water resources and rapid and dramatical changes in access to water and sanitation in localities of ongoing active military activities, under occupation and after deoccupation. In addition, the situation with access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is critical for the Internally Entirely Displaced Persons. Western and Central Ukraine became a temporary home for millions of people who have fled besieged areas. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, since the beginning of the russian troops invasion, more than 9 Mlns people have left Ukraine and more than 8 million people are internally displaced.

Many displaced people have taken refuge in collective centers or with host families and face a lack of essential items, from food to other basic necessities, including drinking water and hygiene items. Many different National and International Humanitarian organizations in cooperation with local authorities and NGOs provide Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) humanitarian aid to the Internally Entirely Displaced Persons in collective centers in Ukraine.

According to the UNICEF - WASH Cluster Ukraine Flash Update from the beginning of the Russian's military escalation the main water infrastructures in different cities (Chernihiv, Sumy, Lysychansk, Mariupol, Kherson, Kharkiv and others) have been damaged by military activities and as a result thousands and millions of served people have limited or do not have access to safe drinking water. On 03 March in Chernihiv city, the critical water pumping station had been damaged

by military activities and 60,000 of served people did not have access to safe drinking piped water, but such situation worsened as the city had been under the regular shelling by the Russia during March and April. On 04 March 2022 – in Sumy town, the municipal water company has been de-energized due to the military actions, as a result around 260,000 people had been without water for 2 days till the water facilities were switched to the back-up powerlines on 06 March 2022. Water trucking has been started by many municipalities and the water companies affected by war, but their capacities are limited.

For Donetsk region: since 25 February 2022 Siverskyi-Donets – Donbas channel has stopped its operation, due to the de-energized 3rd lift pumping station and Mariupol city was cut from all critical municipal services like electricity, water and heating supply. Half million people are affected. Donetsk Filter Station still remains non operational. By 9 March 2022, in total in Donetsk oblast, 2.2 million people on both sides of the Line of Contact had received water by schedule, while 650,000 people had no access at all.

For Luhansk region: since 21 February till now around 40,000 people have no water supply, while 350,000 have a water supply once per day, or every two days. Access to infrastructure and limited communications impede an exhaustive tracking/stockpiling. At the same time, water company workers in different locations continue to perform their duties regardless of military risks and limitations, which allow some repairs to take place, and hence continue supplying water to the affected population.

Ongoing war escalation by Russia continues affect access to water and sanitation of millions, especially in war affected territories of Ukraine. All previous activities made by Ukraine as a Party to the Protocol including the revision of the National Targets under Protocol were based on data of pre – war and «frozen» military conflict in the Eastern Ukraine situation.

Now the process of the National Targets has to be restarted based on new analysis of the situation – Baseline analysis and the National Targets adaptation and program of measures to achieve them in the context of the post-war water reconstruction in Ukraine.

Ukraine needs an assistance to re-start assessment of the current situation, revise draft of the National Targets based on self-assessment of the equitable access to WASH of general population and vulnerable groups: children, schools and kindergartens as well as medical institutions: health care facilities, affected by war and provide a basis for development of program of measures to reconstruct the access to safe WASH for all in Ukraine.

Ukraine kindly requests the Joint Secretariat to allocate additional resources for support of activities to revise the National Targets.

Thank you for your attention!