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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE**

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH  
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION  
AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY  
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL  
LAKES

Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism

Second meeting  
Geneva, 1 July 2009

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC PROJECT FACILITATION MECHANISM  
ON ITS SECOND MEETING**

**I. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

1. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Belarus, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
2. Representatives of the following international organizations were present at the meeting: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Water and Health (DHI) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).
3. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE) and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF).

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4. Ms. Carola Bjorklund (Norway), Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

5. The Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism (hereinafter, the Mechanism) adopted its agenda as set out in the document ECE/MP.WH/AC.1/2009/1 - EUR/09/5086361/3.

## **II. REITERATION OF PRINCIPLES**

6. The Chairperson recalled the criteria for eligibility for projects and referred attendees to the Mechanism's website for full details. She emphasized that countries applying for assistance under the Mechanism needed to show a strong commitment to the Protocol on Water and Health and to cooperation with NGOs. She informed participants about progress and results achieved by the Protocol's task forces, in particular the advanced draft of the target-setting guidelines (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2009/4 EUR/08/5086340/9). This document already served as point of reference for countries submitting projects proposal to the Mechanism. The Chairperson also emphasized that the Protocol, which addressed a wide variety of water- and health-related issues, was still being developed, and that one of the main remaining challenges was cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination of activities between the stakeholders involved in implementation.

## **III. PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE THE FIRST MEETING: PROJECTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE**

### **A. Republic of Moldova**

7. At the Mechanism's first meeting, Switzerland agreed to assist the Republic of Moldova in establishing national and/or local targets for standards and levels of performance to be achieved or maintained for a high level of protection of human health and for sustainable management of water resources. The present meeting noted information from Switzerland on the progress achieved and the specific approach taken by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat to assist the Republic of Moldova with setting targets and target dates. Activities would be conducted at three different levels: (a) addressing water supply and sanitation issues in settlements in rural areas; (b) increasing administrative capacity so plans could be made for a whole district; and (c) establishing a platform for policy dialogue that promoted coherence, harmonization and integration between different sectors and stakeholders, e.g. government, NGOs, the scientific community, the private sector and the general public. Participants recognized the fact that the Republic of Moldova had many examples of good practice in water management, supply and sanitation that needed to be improved further and used in the correct ways.

8. An invited expert from the Republic of Moldova reported that the country had recognized access to water and sanitation as a priority and had managed to finalize and secure funding to provide safe water and adequate sanitation to many towns and villages thanks to funding from the European Commission. The meeting acknowledged Switzerland's help and emphasized that the experience in political dialogue under the European Union (EU) Water

Initiative, with UNECE as a key strategic partner, had been very positive. The project thus would be a catalyst for helping other countries to identify indicators, best practices and management tools to implement the Protocol.

9. Participants concluded that there was a need to involve all competent ministries and agencies relevant to the obligations of article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, as well as NGOs, the scientific community, the private sector and the general public. The need was also stressed for agreement, before submitting projects, on co-financing by the Government and, as appropriate, by other donors.

10. Finally, the meeting agreed a revised timetable for the project, with the following major outputs:

(a) By July 2010: A draft Governmental Order on the implementation of the Protocol, consisting of two main parts: (a) target and target dates under article 6; and (b) the responsibility of Moldovan entities vis-à-vis reporting under article 7 on compliance with these targets and target dates, including the concrete measures needed to achieve the targets;

(b) In the course of the project: technical reports related to the baseline analysis (e.g. legal, institutional and managerial frameworks as well as analysis of the environmental and health situations) and other substantive activities related to the targets to be established;

(c) In the course of the project: an established platform for a policy dialogue that promotes coherence, harmonization and integration between different sectors and stakeholders, e.g. government, NGOs, the scientific community, the private sector and the general public;

(d) By October 2010: a publication (in English, Moldovan and Russian) and at least one leaflet on the project activities, for wide distribution.

## **B. Ukraine**

11. The meeting took note of the information provided by a representative of Norway, specifically that: (a) an agreement on the implementation of the target-setting project would be signed between Ukraine and Norway on 15 July 2009; (b) Israel had agreed to co-finance the project; (c) the Norwegian Institute of Water Research would provide technical advice; and (d) the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine would be the focal point for the project.

12. A representative of Ukraine reported that the first set of indicators would be ready at the end of summer 2009.

13. In terms of the specific timetable and results of the project, the meeting noted (or agreed) the following:

(a) In April 2009 the project had been launched and Ukraine had agreed to provide access to data and secure contribution from relevant stakeholders. Norway had agreed to provide finance and assistance in developing targets and to facilitate applications to EBRD for the

financing of projects. Israel had agreed to finance and avail the Ukrainian experts to Israeli expertise in water and sanitation systems;

(b) Ukraine intended to adopt the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive in parallel with those of the Protocol;

(c) The project would consist of two phases: (a) May–July 2010 – mobilization of steering and stakeholders group; (b) August 2009–December 2010 – target-setting;

(d) The identification of key stakeholders and a baseline analysis had been completed. The process of identification of priorities would begin soon. A comprehensive data collection process was complete: data had been obtained from national organizations, published literature and local projects. The baseline documentation was based on the draft guidelines for setting targets and reporting. A workshop for stakeholders was planned for 15 July 2009, where data verification and ownership would be undertaken. Norway was assisting with gap analysis and competence transfer.

14. Participants noted that the health agencies and environment agencies shared a collective responsibility, and complemented Ukraine on its commitment to the project. They stressed that only targets that were reasonable and achievable in each country should be set.

#### **IV. NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS: STATUS OF PROGRESS IN ARMENIA AND KYRGYZSTAN**

15. Since its first meeting, two project proposals have been drawn up – one by Kyrgyzstan and one by Armenia – and submitted for the Mechanism’s consideration at the present meeting. Both related to setting targets and target dates under the Protocol’s article 6.

16. Work on the first of the two proposed projects, “Target and target dates to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation according to the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan”, had been initiated in 2008 in the framework of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on integrated water resources management under the EU Water Initiative. The proposal had been further developed with the assistance of UNECE and the Mechanism’s Facilitator from WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO-EURO). It had been approved at the meeting of the Kyrgyz Steering Committee for the NPD in June 2009, and would be led by the Water Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Processing Industries of Kyrgyzstan. Other major stakeholders included the Ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Justice, the State Agencies for Geology and Mineral Resources and for Environment Protection and Forestry, the Agency for Local Governments, the enterprise “Bishkekvodokanal”, the National Academy of Sciences and NGOs. The full proposal could be found online at: [http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents\\_AHPFM.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_AHPFM.htm).

17. Participants also took note of the project proposal by Armenia on “Improving health in Armenia through target-setting to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe water and adequate sanitation”. As with the Kyrgyz project, it had been developed in the framework of the EU Water Initiative’s NPD on integrated water resources management. The project in Armenia

would be jointly led by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Nature Protection. The full proposal could be found at: [http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents\\_AHPFM.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_AHPFM.htm).

18. Participants noted the willingness of UNDP to cooperate with both Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, as UNDP runs projects in both countries that could support the target-setting work and there were a number of areas for cross-fertilization between UNDP projects and the projects submitted under the Protocol. The work of the WHO country officer in drawing up both proposals had been key, and there was a potential for the further involvement of the network of country offices in future proposals from other countries. The meeting underlined the importance of involving NGOs in early development and implementation stages to establish a fair and transparent framework for public involvement in decision-making with respect to the targets and target dates. The importance of involving the NPD Steering Committees in drawing up project proposals was also stressed, as this was a prerequisite for enlisting all relevant stakeholders from the outset as well as for supervising the implementation process.

19. A representative of the WHO-EURO secretariat noted that health aspects had been covered more explicitly than in the previous project proposals submitted in 2008 for the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Some participants pointed out that proposals should focus more on local sanitation issues and should include hygiene education.

#### **V. COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AND ITS WATER FUND**

20. The Chairperson informed the participants about the new Water Fund to be created within EBRD. Norway had been in dialogue with EBRD to ensure that the Water Fund complemented and supported projects submitted under the Mechanism. The Water Fund could be a useful tool for achieving the targets set under the Protocol, as it could facilitate access to resources needed for the investment to achieve such targets. At the same time, the Water Fund would support implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and increase donor coordination. There was a high level of accountability in EBRD investments, and EBRD already had proven experience in working with donor-supported projects.

21. The representative of EBRD outlined the main criteria for the Water Fund: Official Development Assistance (ODA) countries would be eligible and there would be a yearly event to report on the project. The Fund should allow for technical assistance and investment grants, and would be complementary with other funds. EBRD was in discussion with many donors. The Fund's design was under discussion, and the anticipated launching event was foreseen for the second half of 2009.

22. There was general consensus that the EBRD Water Fund would make a considerable difference for the Protocol. It would not fund the target-setting process, however, although EBRD would be willing participate in that process. Rather, EBRD would consider funding follow-up projects, although not those related to education or hospitals. The cooperative approach would allow municipalities to take loans from EBRD and donors might give investment grants to boost the loans. There was still a need for donor investment and for the compilation of a list of sources for target-setting projects.

## **VI. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN FUTURE WORK**

23. A representative of Norway informed the meeting of its intention to explore the possibility of funding the project in Kyrgyzstan. It was announced that Finland would consider the possibility of funding the project in Armenia.

24. The representative of Georgia reported on the efforts being undertaken in that country to implement the Protocol and its intention to develop a project proposal for consideration by the Mechanism at its next meeting. The Government of Georgia had begun to bring together all the organizations working on water in the country. It was noted that some consulting funds from the NPD could be used to assist Georgia in preparing the proposal for the Mechanism, which could be ready in mid-2010.

25. The Chairperson discussed the need for an overview of the current projects being carried out in different countries. The challenge was to get more donor countries involved in the Mechanism. There was a need for countries to highlight the Protocol to bilateral donors and to avoid competing with regard to funds, e.g. the WHO network should be coordinated with the UNDP network.

26. Financial opportunities for the project proposals presented by Kyrgyzstan and Armenia were discussed. Suggestions included: (a) applying to EuropeAid<sup>1</sup>; (b) identifying the donor countries working in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan and then approaching them; and (c) that UNDP would approach the country offices in these countries and investigate the possibility of incorporating the projects into existing funded projects. In addition, the Mechanism's Facilitator should explore the possibilities existing in the EU programme, RELEX.

## **VII. DATE OF THE THIRD MEETING**

27. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism is tentatively scheduled to be held on 26 May 2010, back-to-back with the third meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (27–28 May 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> The EuropeAid Co-operation Office, a Directorate-General of the European Commission.