



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 July 2010

Original: English

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**

Working Group on Water and Health

Third meeting
Geneva, 27 and 28 May 2010

Report of the Working Group on Water and Health on its third meeting

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1	3
A. Attendance.....	2–4	3
B. Organizational matters.....	5–10	3
II. Progress in the ratification process.....	11	4
III. Surveillance and early-warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities	12–21	4
IV. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol.....	22–34	5
V. Water supply and sanitation in short-term critical situations and adaptation to climate change.....	35–36	7
VI. Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism.....	37–43	8
VII. Compliance procedure.....	44–46	8
VIII. Public awareness, education, training and research.....	47–48	9
IX. Equitable access to water.....	49–54	9
X. Small-scale water supplies.....	55–63	10
XI. Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.....	64–66	11

XII.	Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference	67–68	11
XIII.	Promotion of the Protocol	69–71	12
XIV.	Ongoing programme of work	72–73	12
XV.	Programme of work for 2011–2013	74–89	12
XVI.	Financial arrangements to support implementation of the Protocol	90–97	14
XVII.	Preparations for the second session of the meeting of the Parties	98–99	15
XVIII.	Date and venue of the fourth meeting of the Working Group	100	16
XIX.	Closure of the meeting	101	16

I. Introduction

1. The third meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health was held on 27 and 28 May 2010 in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following international organizations were also present at the meeting: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication (Institute for Hygiene and Public Health, University of Bonn).

4. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE), MAMA-86, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) and the Youth Network of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE).

B. Organizational matters

5. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway) and co-chaired by Mr. Thomas Kistemann (Germany), the Vice-Chair.

6. The Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

7. The participants of the Working Group were also welcomed by Mr. Marco Keiner, Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Division on Environment, Housing and Land Management. In his opening remarks, Mr. Keiner underlined the progress made in the implementation of the Protocol, as well as the growing number of Parties. He praised the Protocol's Parties and the subsidiary bodies established under the Protocol for the work undertaken and progress made regarding implementation. However, many challenges remained in the area of water and health and the activities scheduled in the draft programme for 2011–2013 would be essential to continue support progress in the region. For its part, over the next three years UNECE was committed to maintaining the current level of support to the Protocol from its regular budget. However, during the past three years the secretariat had performed beyond its capacity and additional extrabudgetary Professional staff would be required to maintain the same level of secretariat support in the coming period. Without additional resources, UNECE would not be able to carry out its functions properly. Until the funds were available in the UNECE trust fund to finance human resources in the secretariat, UNECE would not embark on any new activity, including implementation of the Working Group's 2011–2013 work programme.

8. Mr. Roger Aertgeerts addressed the participants on behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe (WHO–EURO). He stressed the growth of the Protocol and pointed out that the Protocol now serviced a population bigger than the whole European Union (EU). The Protocol provided an excellent platform to carry out work corresponding to the needs of both Parties and WHO country offices. He also echoed the concerns expressed regarding financing for the programme of work for 2011–2013 and

called for a rationalized approach when deciding on the final work, as well as the development of a stable, predictable, adequate and sustainable financing mechanism.

9. The Chair informed the meeting about two additional issues and documents that would be introduced under item 16, on the 2011–13 programme of work, by a representative of the WHO Collaborative Centre in Bonn and a representative of the CEHAPE Youth Network.

10. The Working Group then adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/1–EUR/10/56335/I.

II. Progress in the ratification process

11. The Chair informed the meeting about progress made with respect to the ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. Since the second meeting, Spain had acceded to the Protocol, on 24 September 2009, bringing the number of Parties to 24.¹

III. Surveillance and early-warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities

12. The Chair of the Task Force on Surveillance reported on the progress made in this area of work and presented the main activities carried out under the auspices of the Task Force. Moreover, the Chair presented the results of work and products elaborated by the Task Force, namely: the draft policy guidance on water-related disease surveillance (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.1–EUR/10/56335/IX), the draft technical guidance for setting up, implementing and assessing surveillance systems of water-related disease (information paper 1) and the assessment of the status of water-related disease surveillance in the UNECE/WHO-Euro region (Information paper 3).²

13. The Working Group found the documents presented to be well elaborated and comprehensive. The guidance material would be a very useful source of reference and information, in particular, for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Minor comments were provided during the meeting; however, considering the specificity and technical nature of the guidance material, some participants said that they would need to provide written comments after consultations with relevant experts at the national level.

14. The Chair of the Working Group invited delegations to provide any additional comments to the policy and technical guidance documents by 30 June 2010. Considering the late translation and availability of technical guidance document in Russian, comments by Russian-speaking countries to the technical guidance could be provided by 15 July 2010.

15. The Working Group entrusted the Chair of the Task Force, with the assistance of the Bureau and joint secretariat as appropriate, to finalize the two guidance documents, taking into consideration the comments provided, and to submit them as official documents to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties for possible adoption.

¹ http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-5-a&chapter=27&lang=en.

² All official documents and information documents for the meeting as well as presentations delivered during the meeting are available at http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGWH.htm.

16. The Chair of the Task Force informed the Working Group about the proposed activities for the programme of work for 2011-2013. He explained that the proposals were elaborated on the basis of previous meetings of the Task Force, a questionnaire on the assessment of the status of water-related disease surveillance in the UNECE/WHO-EURO region, and the outcome of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Parma, Italy, 10–12 March 2010).

17. Participants provided generally positive feedback, although concerns were expressed with regard to possible overlapping with activities of other WHO programmes and of other agencies.

18. Further clarifications should be made on how the Task Force would help countries to implement the developed guidance material and whether that would be done in a bilateral or multilateral manner. The expected outcomes of the different activities should be spelled out more clearly in the programme of work for 2011–2013.

19. The representative of WHO-EURO reassured the Working Group that appropriate steps to avoid overlapping would be undertaken. Within the framework of the guidance, the issue would be dealt with through a careful revision of the bibliography and technical references, so that work of all WHO programmes would be clearly identified and the resulting products would be easily accessible to the readers. A meeting with the WHO Collaborative Centres would be scheduled to discuss proposed future activities and to identify ways of cooperation. Recalling Decision I/1 of the first Meeting of the Parties concerning mainstreaming of the activities of the Protocol in the work of WHO-EURO, efforts would be made to integrate the different activities in the work of the appropriate departments of WHO-EURO; in particular, links to the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 would be strengthened.

20. The Chair of the Working Group noted that four main areas of future work had been identified by the members of the Task Force on Surveillance: epidemiological surveillance; capacity-building; chemical contamination; and areas in addition to drinking-water quality, particularly recreational waters. He expressed some concerns about the extent of the proposed future workplan and its financial implications. Moreover, he felt it would be difficult to handle all those activities within a three-year time period; consequently some priorities should be set.

21. The activities in the programme of work for 2011–2013 should also reflect some common issues addressed by countries in the pilot reporting cycle, the Task Force Chair noted. Priority setting for water-related diseases was given as an example. The pilot reporting would help to identify the diseases on which this Task Force should work in the future. In addition, on the basis of information provided by countries in their reports, a common need could be chosen and work (e.g., assistance programmes, an additional guidance document) could be focused on that issue.

IV. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol

22. The Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting informed the Working Group about the activities and progress made by that Task Force in the area of water and health. He recalled the outcomes of three Task Force meetings, as well as two workshops held under the auspices of the Task Force — on target setting (10–11 February 2009) and on reporting under the Protocol (16–17 February 2010). Both workshops aimed to support Parties and non-Parties in setting targets and preparing their national reports under the pilot reporting exercise.

23. The Chair then presented the draft guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2009/4–EUR/09/5086340/9). He underlined that that version of the document had already been presented and discussed at the third Task Force meeting and had received positive feedback at the second meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (2–3 July 2009). Written comments had been received from the Czech Republic and Eco-Tiras (International Environmental Association of River Keepers). Those comments had been presented to the Working Group in a separate document (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/5–EUR/10/56335/V) and the Working Group had agreed on their inclusion.

24. The Czech Republic said it would provide some additional comments clarifying the placement of the provided case studies. The Republic of Moldova reported that it had tested the guidelines, applying it in practice, and had found the document very useful in setting targets.

25. The Working Group agreed to submit to the secretariat and to the Chair of the Task Force any additional comments to the draft guidelines by 30 June 2010 and requested the Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, with the assistance of the Bureau, as appropriate, to finalize the guidelines on setting targets, evaluation of progress and reporting, taking into consideration the comments provided.

26. Since the draft guidelines had been available for comments for over a year and had already been the subject of several consultations in order to increase their user-friendliness, the Working Group agreed to submit the guidelines, incorporating the comments to be received by the Czech Republic, to the Meeting of the Parties as a printed publication and not as an official document. That would also facilitate and accelerate their implementation, and speed up the process of setting targets in Parties and non-Parties. The Working Group recognized that that approach meant that the Meeting of the Parties would have to refrain from additional changes when adopting the guidelines.

27. The Working Group entrusted the joint secretariat with the layout, design and printing of the publication in time for the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, where it would be made available in English and Russian. The French version would be produced after the session.

28. The Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting presented the draft guidelines and template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol on Water and Health, as prepared by the Task Force (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.2–EUR/10/56335/X) and informed participants about how the Task Force had supported the first pilot reporting exercise under the Protocol.

29. A representative of the UNECE secretariat presented the preliminary results of the pilot reporting exercise. By the time of the Working Group meeting the joint secretariat had received summary reports from 20 countries, of which 17 were submitted by Parties and 3 by non-Parties. It was pointed out that only half of the submitted reports had met the required deadline (31 March 2010). Many of the reports followed the format/guidelines; however, some failed to answer certain parts and questions, without providing any explanation. According to the information received, only four Parties had set targets in accordance with the approach of the Protocol, three Parties indicated having targets in a draft format and in several Parties the process of target setting was ongoing. Many countries had problems with providing data on common indicators and some of the reports provided only numerical figures without providing clear background information on how those figures were calculated. Those were just preliminary results, however, and at this stage it was too early to make an assessment on the overall progress on all aspects of reporting. The secretariat was preparing a regional summary based on the national reports for submission to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

30. Following the presentation, a number of participants made comments on part II of the template, on common indicators. Some pleaded for more detailed reporting and suggested including gender or age-based information, split by geographic characteristics (urban/rural), along with references to and/or copies of national legislative and regulatory standards. Furthermore, in order to make the reported information more meaningful, the percentage of non-compliance of samples needed to be accompanied by information on the number of samples taken. However, other participants stated that that it was difficult for them to obtain data even on the indicators which were already included in the template.

31. The Working Group agreed that the instructions concerning some of the common indicators should be further clarified.

33. The Working Group entrusted the Chair of Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, with the assistance of a small group of experts from: Armenia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, WECF and the joint secretariat, to finalize the template for reporting, taking into account the comments received during the Work Group meeting and the outcomes of the pilot reporting cycle. The draft guidelines and template for reporting could subsequently be submitted as an official document to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties for adoption.

34. On the basis of information by the Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, the Working Group discussed the main objectives and activities in that area in the future programme of works for 2011–2013 under the Protocol (see ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.3–EUR/10/56335/XI). It was agreed that there was a need to better define the links between the work of this Task Force and the work in the other workplan elements for 2011–2013.

V. Water supply and sanitation in short-term critical situations and adaptation to climate change

35. A representative of Italy, the lead country for water supply and sanitation in short-term situations and adaptation to climate change, reported on the progress achieved in that area and presented the main activities carried out under the auspices of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events, in particular:

(a) The outcome of the second meeting of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events (Geneva, 27–28 October 2009);

(b) The contribution to the workshop on water supply and sanitation in adaptation policies, organized in Bucharest on 25 November 2009 back-to-back with the meeting of the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Working Group of the EU Water Initiative; and to the European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services (EUREAU) expert meeting on climate change, held in London on 28 January 2010;

(c) The draft guidance on water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events (information paper 7).

36. The Working Group commented on the draft guidance on water supply and sanitation in extreme weather events and agreed to provide any additional comment by 30 June 2010. Considering the late translation and availability of the guidance document in Russian, comments by Russian-speaking countries to the guidance could be provided by 15 July 2010. The Working Group entrusted the Chair of the Task Force, with the assistance of the Bureau and the joint secretariat as appropriate, to finalize the guidance document, taking into consideration the comments provided, and to submit it as official documents to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties for possible adoption.

VI. Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism

37. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism reported on the progress achieved. She briefed the Working Group about the two projects currently ongoing in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, pointing out that although different approaches were being applied in their implementation, both projects were based on the draft guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting.

38. The Working Group was informed that the proposal related to setting targets and target dates in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol submitted by Armenia at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Facilitation Mechanism would be supported by Finland. In addition, Norway was considering financing the proposal submitted by Kyrgyzstan.

39. At the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism, new project proposals were submitted by Tajikistan, Georgia and Montenegro. The proposal by Tajikistan aimed at general support for national target setting and reporting, while the proposal by Georgia aimed at improving environmental management to ensure improved quality of small-scale water supply. Germany had expressed interest in supporting the Georgian proposal.

40. The Deputy Minister of Health of Montenegro had informed the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism about the importance of tourism in the national development policy. The intended development of tourism had, however, been seriously compromised by the lack of a national capacity to assess and consistently monitor recreational water quality. As the country had 100 per cent access to safe water and 96 per cent access to sanitation, it wished to focus on Art 6 (2) (j) of the Protocol, specifically on waters intended for bathing.

41. Uzbekistan had also provided information about its ongoing efforts to ratify the Protocol. Uzbekistan had expressed its willingness to submit a project proposal in the future, and requested some assistance with the elaboration of the project proposal.

42. The Working Group was further informed about ongoing bilateral activities between Norway and the Russian Federation, in the region of Komi, Archangelsk and Murmansk (Russian Federation), in the context of the Barents cooperation in line with the aims of the Protocol.

43. The Working Group took note of the information provided and supported the proposal to change the name of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism to the Project Facilitation Mechanism.

VII. Compliance procedure

44. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities, in particular on the outcome of its fourth meeting and the planned input from the Committee to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

45. In accordance with the Decision 1/2, the Committee was preparing a report to the Meeting of the Parties on its activities. Moreover, the Committee was responsible for monitoring compliance with the reporting requirements of the Protocol and an analysis of compliance would also be included in its report to the Meeting of the Parties. The Chair of the Compliance Committee underlined that the national summary reports submitted by the Protocol's Parties were considered by the Committee as a valuable source of information, for both identifying problems with compliance as well as understanding better the context in which such problems appeared. At present, all Committee members were involved in the analysis of the summary reports. Their findings would be reflected in the Committee's

report. Factors considered by the Committee included: timeliness of submission, completeness and quality of information, transparency and the process of preparation.

46. In addition, the Chair provided information on the work done and steps foreseen for the future to stimulate compliance among the Protocol's Parties and reported on the ongoing cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque.

VIII. Public awareness, education, training and research

47. A UNECE representative of the joint secretariat informed the delegates about an upcoming workshop on information and public participation in water and health-related issues, to be held in Bucharest on 15 and 16 June 2010, focusing on the workshop's rationale, objectives and expected outcomes. The workshop was being jointly organized with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Health of Romania, WECF and Global Water Partnership Romania and co-funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany and the German Environment Agency.

48. The Working Group entrusted Romania, lead party for that activity, together with the other partners in the organization of the workshop and with the assistance of the Bureau and the joint secretariat, to prepare a proposal for future work on "Public awareness, education, training, research and development, and information" to be included in the draft programme of work for 2011–2013, based on the outcomes of the workshop.

IX. Equitable access to water

49. A representative of France, the lead Party for equitable access to water, informed the Working Group about the progress and the proposed future work in that area under the Protocol's programme of work for 2011–2013. A questionnaire had recently been disseminated on the implementation of solidarity for drinking water supply and sanitation, which was intended to facilitate exchange of experience, and asked participants to identify and briefly describe measures taken to promote equitable access to drinking water supply and sanitation among UNECE member States. The initial deadline (end of May) had been extended until the end of July.

50. The Working Group took note of the information provided and welcomed the decision to extend the deadline for replying. Some participants noted that a questionnaire with a similar focus and areas of interest had recently been disseminated by the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and asked whether those two initiatives were somehow related.

51. The UNECE secretariat provided information on the ongoing cooperation with the Independent Expert and reassured participants that it would discuss the results of both surveys with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to make the best use of the information provided.

52. The French delegate informed the meeting of the intended workplan for the publication of a Best Practice Guide.

53. A representative of WHO-EURO recalled past WHO activities such as the 2003 WHO publication *The Right to Water*, and ongoing programmes on socio-economic inequities in housing, including financial hindrances to access to safe water and adequate

sanitation. He reminded participants that Ministers responsible for Environment and Health had recognized socio-economic [and gender] inequalities as key environment and health challenges of their times during the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. WHO-EURO therefore offered to support the current data gathering exercise by distributing the questionnaire through its network of technical focal points, and expressed its interest in contributing to the Best Practice Guide.

54. The Working Group entrusted France to lead the next steps with regard to “equitable access”, and invited other countries to join this effort or to mark their interest in doing so at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

X. Small-scale water supplies

55. A representative of Germany, lead Party for small-scale water supplies, presented progress made in that area, as well as a draft of an awareness-raising document relating to small-scale water supplies developed on the basis of the workshop on water safety in small-scale water supplies organized by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Drinking Water Hygiene at the German Federal Environment Agency (Bad Elster, Germany, 26–27 November 2008).

56. Work on the awareness-raising document was still ongoing and the document presented was a preliminary draft, the speaker noted. The intention was to have a rather short document (maximum 20 pages) for policymakers.

57. The participants of the Working Group were invited to provide their comments on the draft to Germany by 30 June 2010 with a copy to the joint secretariat. The document would also go through a peer review. The Working Group entrusted Germany, with the assistance of the Bureau and of the joint secretariat, as appropriate, to finalize the awareness-raising document taking into consideration the comments provided and to submit it as a brochure in English and in Russian to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

58. The representative of Germany together with a representative of WECF presented a proposal on future activities related to small-scale water supplies and sanitation.

59. The Working Group welcomed the proposal with great interest and supported the joint approach on small-scale water supplies and sanitation. A number of countries expressed their interest in taking part in the activities scheduled under this area of work.

60. Some participants suggested other possible elements which could be included in the proposed document, e.g., links to extreme weather events or education and general hygiene in rural areas. It was pointed out that, although all the additional proposals were relevant, the existing list of proposals was rather extensive and there was a need for prioritization of activities.

61. The theme small-scale water supplies and sanitation was a cross-sectoral issue with clear links with the future activities proposed by Task Force on Surveillance and the Task Force on Target Setting under the Protocol.

62. The representative of WHO-EURO recalled the work of the International Small Community Water Supply Network. The latter had been formed to promote the achievement of substantive and sustainable improvements to the safety of small community water supplies, particularly in rural areas. At its latest meeting in the European region (Edinburgh, 8–11 October 2007) the network had identified the following priorities: development of a management framework for small community supply; development of surveillance, verification and training tools; provision of guidance on public reporting, risk

communication and source protection; and development of advocacy material for the improvement of small-scale water supplies at all levels. Hitherto, the network had been active mainly outside the European region, so that transfer of guidance materials would have to be done on a selective basis.

63. The UNECE secretariat provided additional information on how the activities could be organized. To avoid duplication of work, it was proposed that the experts working on small water supplies and sanitation would be working in close collaboration with the Chairs of the Task Forces.

XI. Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

64. The representative of WHO-EURO presented the Working Group with the contributions from the Protocol to the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The Working Group was informed about the Conference outcomes, in particular on the linkages and possible future areas for cooperation with the Protocol on Water and Health. The speaker conveyed key messages from the Ministerial Declaration, including the Ministerial commitments, and the Youth Declaration. In addition, highlights of the findings from the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) 2010 were presented. The JMP outcomes demonstrated that, whereas some progress had been achieved with regard to access to water, no progress had been made in relation to access to sanitation since 1990. Moreover, the Commonwealth of Independent States region was the only region where access to house connection had proceeded slower than access to water in general. Many areas of work under the Protocol were linked to the Commitment to Act contained in the Ministerial Declaration and to the issues highlighted by the JMP report. Among them were: the development of integrated water resource management; the provision of clean water and safe sanitation to all children in the European region; and the prevention of disease from chemical, biological, and physical environments.

65. The Protocol could and should serve as a practical tool assisting the Ministers to fulfil the commitments made in Parma and that possible use of the Protocol as an implementation tool for the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health should be brought to the attention of the Ministers, especially during discussion of the draft 2011-2013 work programme.

66. The Protocol also has the potential to change the trends reflected in the JMP report, particularly by setting preferential targets to increase house connections over connections outside the house and by increasing priority for access to safe sanitation.

XII. Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

67. The Working Group was informed on the preparations for the Seventh Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference scheduled to be held from 21 to 23 September 2010 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, which served as the convening body for the preparatory process of the EfE Ministerial Conferences, had agreed that the two main themes for the Astana Ministerial Conference would be sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems and greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

68. Water and, more specifically, the quality of water, would be one of the main Conference themes. Thus, the Ministerial event would provide a platform for increasing the visibility and implementation of the Protocol and dissemination of information on it to a broader audience. The participants of the Working Group were asked to discuss and

coordinate the possible input from the Protocol to the Astana Conference with their colleagues following the EfE process.

XIII. Promotion of the Protocol

69. The Working Group took note of the Guide for focal points for promoting the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and the Protocol on Water and Health, jointly prepared by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13).

70. The Guide had already been submitted and endorsed by the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention at its fifth session (Geneva, 10–12 November 2009). The Working Group discussed the possibility to further enrich the Guide for focal points with recommendations and examples related to the Protocol on Water and Health, and the Chair invited delegations to provide additional inputs by 30 June 2010.

71. The Working Group entrusted the joint secretariat to revise the documents, taking into accounts the comments received, if relevant, and submit it as an official document to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

XIV. Ongoing programme of work

72. On the basis of the discussion under previous agenda items, the UNECE secretariat briefly informed the Working Group about the progress made with regard to the implementation of the Protocol's programme of work (ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.5–EUR/06/5069385/1/Add.5). It was reported that that most of the activities were implemented, despite the fact that due to the lack of resources the implementation started almost a year later than expected.

73. The Working Group entrusted the Bureau with the assistance of the joint secretariat to prepare a full report on the implementation of the programme of work 2007–2010 as an official document for the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

XV. Programme of work for 2011–2013

74. The Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health introduced the draft programme of work for 2011–2013, which had been prepared by the joint secretariat in close cooperation with the Bureau on the basis of proposals made at meetings conducted within the framework of the Protocol and of the outcome of the fourth meeting of the Bureau.

75. The Chair explained the structure of the future programme of work and the distinction between core and reinforcing activities. The core activities were directly linked to the most fundamental obligations under the Protocol, and were essential to ensure the implementation of the work under the Protocol at both national and international levels. They included the functioning of the joint secretariat and the operation of the managerial components of the Protocol, such as the Meeting of the Parties, the meetings of the Bureau, the Compliance Committee and key subsidiary bodies. It was noted that funding needs for the proposed core activities under the draft 2011–2013 work programme were higher than comparable budget components in the 2007–2010 workplan, and significantly exceeded the resources allocated by the two organizations hosting the joint secretariat. It was therefore imperative that additional resources were identified without delay.

76. The implementation of reinforcing activities would depend on the identification and willingness of lead Parties to fund and carry out the work to be accomplished.

77. The Chair of the Task Force on Surveillance then provided additional information and explanation on the activities scheduled in the programme of work under programme area 2, surveillance and early-warning systems contingency plans and response capacities. The prioritization and clusters of themes had been done at the third meeting of the Task Force (10–12 February, Durres, Albania) and already included activities would be cross-checked against the information on surveillance of water-related diseases provided in the national reports.

78. Programme area 1, target setting and reporting, was introduced by the Chair of the Task Force on Reporting and Indicators, who provided information on planned activities to support Parties and non-Parties in implementing articles 6 (targets and target dates) and 7 (review and assessment of progress), as well as support the Project Facilitation Mechanism in evaluating the submitted project proposals and in carrying out projects.

79. When discussing the area of small water supplies and sanitation under programme area 3, cross-sectoral issues, a representative of the Czech Republic expressed his country's support and willingness to co-lead that activity together with Germany and WECF. Countries speaking in favour of that work programme component included Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Italy, Hungary, Norway, Serbia and Switzerland. The Chairs of the Task Force on Surveillance and the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting both expressed their willingness to support that activity.

80. The representative of Italy highlighted that water supply and sanitation under extreme weather conditions was a very important issue for his country and confirmed Italy's support and interest in providing further guidance and leadership on selected activities in that field. At the same time, Italy asked for more flexibility with regard to cooperation with other bodies established under the Protocol.

81. The call for a flexible approach when implementing the programme of work and in particular the cross-sectoral issues was echoed by other countries. At the same time, countries asked to design the programme of work in such a way that the close linkages among all Task Forces, experts groups and Working Group on Water and Health would be maintained.

82. Application and effectiveness of water safety plans was another cross-sectoral issue discussed. It was suggested that, as the concept of the water safety plans fully reflected the approach and objectives of the Protocol, the water safety plans should be included in the future programme of work. However, many participants suggested that work in that area should not be considered a separate item but included in the area of setting targets, surveillance of water-related diseases and management of small-scale water supply systems.

83. The Chair of the Working Group introduced other core activities, which included the Project Facilitation Mechanism, compliance procedures and promotion of the Protocol.

84. Subsequently the Working Group was presented with the reinforcing activities, and once again the Chair underlined that their implementation would depend on the willingness of Parties and organization to lead and fund or fund-raise for the work to be accomplished.

85. The representative of WHO-EURO secretariat presented the rationale for the involvement and inclusion of representatives of the CEHAPE Youth Network into the framework of the programme of work. The representative of CEHAPE presented the Network's activities aimed at the involvement of young people in decision-making processes. The Network coordinated youth-led activities in different countries and was present in 13 Parties to the Protocol. The main issues addressed by the network included:

access to clean water, basic sanitation, prevention and inequalities with regard to environmental and health issues throughout the European Region. She recalled that, through the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Health, Ministers of Health and Environment had committed to “facilitating youth participation in national as well as international processes across all Member States by providing them with assistance, adequate resources and the training required, and by giving them opportunities for meaningful involvement” (chap. C, para. 5 of the Commitment to Act of the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health (EUR/55934/5.2 Rev.2)). The Working Group was asked to support youth participation in the work of the Meeting of the Parties and the subsidiary Bodies of the Protocol, particularly the Working Group on Water and Health.

86. The Working Group supported that proposal. At the same time, it was noted that available funds were rather scarce, and that in principle the participation was open; however, financial support would be subject to available funds.

87. A Web platform for presenting the results of reporting under the Protocol was proposed by the representative of the WHO Collaborative Centre in Bonn as another element to be included among the core activities of the future programme of work. Web-based geographic information systems, coupled with electronic storage of data, would support compliance with the obligations of articles 7 and 10 of the Protocol by allowing Parties to access data collected and evaluated and the assessment of progress achieved. The development of an online user interface would facilitate data entry for the Parties and serve as a reporting instrument. The representative of Germany informed the Working Group that the WHO Collaborative Centre would provide the relevant software and would cover 50 per cent of the costs related to the running of that system. The proposal was welcomed by the Working Group and received positive feedback.

88. The Chair asked for additional comments on the draft workplan for 2011–2013 by 21 June 2010.

89. The Working Group entrusted the Bureau, with the assistance of the joint secretariat, to revise the draft programme of work, taking into consideration the comments provided and the decisions under the previous agenda items in order to submit it to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties for adoption, together with an estimate of the costs required for its implementation.

XVI. Financial arrangements to support implementation of the Protocol

90. A representative of the UNECE secretariat reported to the Working Group on the financial status of the UNECE Technical Cooperation Trust Fund. It was noted that the funds available were enough to finalize activities until the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, but that there was no reserve for the Meeting of the Parties itself and for the future programme of work for 2011–2013 (see information paper 13).

91. The Chair asked participants to indicate their possible pledges and contributions to the UNECE and WHO-EURO trust funds.

92. Norway expressed its willingness to contribute to the UNECE Technical Cooperation Trust Fund before the end of the year; at this stage, however, it was too early to indicate the exact amount. Hungary also indicated its interest in providing its annual contribution to the WHO-EURO Voluntary Fund.

93. The representative of the WHO-EURO secretariat presented possible financial options for the Protocol (see information paper 14). Two frequently applied funding mechanisms were compared — one based on the United Nations scale of assessments and

one based on a tiered system itself based on per capita gross national income — against the projected costs for the period 2007–2009. It was shown that the resulting financial contributions to the Protocol were very modest, especially when compared to official development assistance figures. The importance of a variety of non-monetary contributions was also recognized.

94. It was stressed that discussion on options for a stable, predictable, adequate and sustainable financial resources needed to be included as a separate agenda item at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

95. In the ensuing discussion, Switzerland supported the proposal of developing a model for contributions to the Protocol in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessments. Switzerland confirmed that it would continue supporting the Protocol, underlining that that was a responsibility of all the Parties to the Protocol.

96. The Working Group requested the joint secretariat, in cooperation with the Bureau, to prepare a document with the projected costs for the implementation of the activities of the programme of work for 2011–2013 compared against funding in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its second session.

97. The document on funding options for the Protocol on Water and Health would be circulated among the Parties as soon as possible to allow for national consultation on the acceptability of the financial consequences of such a scheme based on the United Nations scale of assessments. Parties were encouraged to inform the joint secretariat of the outcome of the national consultation in the period leading up to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties. They would then be invited at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to consider the proposed financing arrangement as a voluntary scheme, to be adhered to by all as an expression of ethical commitment to the principles of the Protocol.

XVII. Preparations for the second session of the meeting of the Parties

98. A representative of Romania, connected by teleconference, informed the meeting about the state of preparation for the second session of the Meeting of the Parties. He confirmed that Romania was willing to host the meeting from 23 to 25 November in Bucharest and would be able to bear some organizational costs related to the renting and equipment of the venue, interpretation and hospitality. At the same time, he explained that, owing to the difficult financial situation in his country, Romania would not be able to support the participation of eligible experts in the meeting. He invited other Parties to join forces with Romania to cover such costs.

99. The representative of the UNECE secretariat introduced a draft agenda for the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (information document 15). The aim of the preliminary draft was to inform the Working Group on the programme and documents of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties. The agenda and programme of the session would be finalized by the Bureau at its fifth meeting. The secretariat invited delegations to submit ideas for accompanying events (e.g., side events, art exhibitions etc.).

XVIII. Date and venue of the fourth meeting of the Working Group

100. The fourth meeting of the Working Group was tentatively scheduled to be held in Geneva on 1 and 2 November 2011, back-to-back with the Project Facilitation Mechanism (31 October 2011).

XIX. Closure of the meeting

101. The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions, the Vice-Chair for his help in co-chairing the sessions, and the joint secretariat for preparing the meeting documents, and closed the meeting.
