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**Economic Commission for Europe****World Health Organization  
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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****Third meeting**

Geneva, 26 May 2010

**Report of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism on its  
third meeting****I. Introduction**

1. The third meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism was held on 26 May 2010 in Geneva.

**A. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Montenegro, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

3. A representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) country offices in Montenegro and Tajikistan, were also present at the meeting.

4. In addition, representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated in the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE) and MAMA-86.

## **B. Organizational matters**

5. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Carola Bjørklund (Norway), who opened the meeting.
6. The Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/AC.1/2010/1–EUR/10/56335/XII.

## **II. Progress in the recruitment of the Facilitator**

7. A representative of the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO–EURO) informed participants that 150 applicants had registered their interest in the position of Facilitator. A shortlist of five candidates had been established, and interviews would be conducted soon. The selected candidate was expected to take up the position before the second session of the 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, which was to be held in Bucharest, Romania, from 23–25 November 2010.

## **III. Progress in ongoing cooperation programmes**

8. The Chair made a general introduction on the projects currently ongoing in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, recalling that both projects were based on the draft guidelines on setting targets, evaluating progress and reporting.

9. A proposal submitted by Armenia at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism was under consideration by Finland, while Norway was considering intensifying its cooperation in Kyrgyzstan once the political situation in the country allowed for the resumption of activities.

10. Ukraine presented progress on its ongoing project to set targets and target dates, which was being funded by Norway under the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. By the time of the meeting, the project had resulted in the formulation of draft targets which were to be consulted with the public and thereafter consolidated by the responsible authorities and formally adopted through the appropriate legal and administrative procedures.

11. Similarly, the Republic of Moldova presented the progress on its ongoing project to set targets and target dates, funded by Switzerland and implemented with assistance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) under the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. Draft targets had already been elaborated. During the course of summer 2010 public consultations would be held on the drafts so as to finalize them and to prepare the necessary administrative procedures for their formal adoption by the end of the year, when the project was supposed to end. Switzerland expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the project, at the same time stressing that further efforts to improve cooperation between the responsible national authorities, in particular the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment, were needed. A broader cooperation with non-governmental organizations was also desirable. By increasing the visibility of the project there was a clear potential for it to become the hub for future actions in the areas of water and health, as well as for the coordination of future planning and of the work of other agencies. Switzerland underscored the importance that the project not be seen as a one-off exercise, but rather a long-term process.

12. In the ensuing discussion on lessons learned from the two projects, the following aspects were underlined:

(a) In future similar projects, and in general when setting targets and target dates under the Protocol, more attention should be given to the financing of the programme of measures to achieve targets;

(b) The coordination structure of the project should continue beyond the project and be responsible for the implementation of the programmes of measures; it was considered important to mobilize means to be able to continue funding such a process;

(c) Assistance from donors was important not only in terms of financial resources, but also for the technical assistance and for building capacity in the countries to understand the methodology for setting targets;

(d) There was a great potential to enhance coordination between projects on setting targets and target dates under the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism and the activities of other donors or international organizations active in the countries. In future projects that aspect should become more prominent.

13. The UNECE coordinator for the implementation of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) pillar on integrated water resources management in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, presented progress achieved in the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs), and the links with the Protocol on Water and Health and with projects under the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. The synergies between the projects of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism and the National Policy Dialogues were considered a very strong asset that should continue to be exploited also for future projects.

## **IV. Discussion of new proposals**

### **Tajikistan**

14. At the request of N. F. Salimov, the Minister of Health of Tajikistan, a representative from the WHO Office in Dushanbe presented a project proposal aimed at the development of a realistic baseline assessment of access to water and sanitation, performance of water and sanitation services, the burden of water-related diseases and the applicability of indicators developed by the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting in Tajikistan. The project would form the basis for the national process of target setting and progress monitoring in line with the guidance under the Protocol on Water and Health, and would hence facilitate ratification of the Protocol by Tajikistan.

15. Norway expressed interest in the proposal, provided support would also be forthcoming from WHO. Negotiations between the three parties would be initiated after the third session of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, 27–28 May 2010), and the outcome reported to the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

### **Georgia**

16. A representative of the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia presented a proposal for the introduction of ecological management of water protection zones as a first step to the introduction of water safety plans in small-scale water supply systems in the Dusheti and Marneuli Districts in Georgia.

17. Germany expressed interest in supporting the proposal. A positive expert technical opinion had been received from the Federal Environment Agency. A revised proposal answering the observations by Germany would be prepared by the Georgian authorities, with the support of WHO as appropriate.

## Montenegro

18. Rajko Strahinja, Deputy Minister of Health of Montenegro, supported by the Head of the WHO Country Office in Podgorica, presented a study assessing the conditions and needs of healthcare institutions in Montenegro with regard to the water quality of recreational (pools and spas), aimed at health protection.

19. The proposal recognized that tourism was one of the main economic growth areas of the country, but that only 5 per cent of the swimming pools were submitted to regular sanitary inspection. The proposal therefore aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health of Montenegro in creating an appropriate monitoring programme for the sanitary quality of recreational waters, bearing in mind the WHO Guidelines for Safe Recreational Water Environments, and to set targets for the extension of the control programme to cover all recreational waters, thereby offering safe recreational water environments to residents and tourists alike.

20. Most participants underlined that the project was very well prepared and documented; that the issue was of clear relevance to Montenegro; and the project was within the scope of the Protocol. However, the representative of the UNECE secretariat recalled that the criteria adopted by the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism at its first meeting (ECE/MP.WH/AC.1/2008/2/Add.1-EUR/08/5086361/9) suggested that project proposals should as a first step aim to support Parties and non-Parties in setting targets and target dates in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol and therefore be broader in scope.

21. The Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism considered that the proposal deserved attention and invited the representatives of Montenegro to revise it in line with the comments received, particularly by adding clear goals for target setting and monitoring of progress.

## V. The Water Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

22. The Chair related the efforts of Norway, supported by Finland, to create a special Water Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

23. The aim of the Fund was to finance projects and/or programmes in the water sector of certain of the Bank's recipient countries which were identified on the "List of Recipients of Official Development Assistance" of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as eligible for official development assistance.

24. Projects and/or programmes in the water sector, funded with resources of the Fund, would be focused predominantly on providing assistance and support to the Governments of the recipient countries in carrying out regulatory work and reforms, using the guidance of the UNECE/WHO Protocol on Water and Health and the European Union Water Directive related to the management, use and preservation of water resources and activities related to the development and sustainable maintenance of safe water and sanitation facilities.

25. It was planned to formally launch the Fund on 16 July 2010.

26. Participants stressed that the creation of the Water Fund offered opportunities for cooperation with the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. In particular, it would be an asset to ensure that activities under the Water Fund were closely related to projects funded by the Mechanism: for instance, the Water Fund could support the implementation of the programmes of measures to achieve targets set under projects financed through the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism.

## **VI. Future programme of work for the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism for 2011–2013**

27. The meeting endorsed a proposal by the Chair to change the name of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism to the Project Facilitation Mechanism.

28. Uzbekistan provided information concerning its ongoing efforts to ratify the Protocol, and its willingness to submit a project proposal in the future. It would, however, welcome support in the formulation of such project proposals.

29. The Chair also informed the meeting about ongoing bilateral activities between Norway and the Russian Federation in the region of Komi, Archangelsk and Murmansk in the context of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region Cooperation. Those bilateral activities between two Parties to the Protocol were in line with the guidance provided through the Protocol.

## **VII. Date and venue of the fourth meeting**

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

## **VIII. Closure of the meeting**

31. The Chair formally closed the third meeting of the Working Group at 5 p.m. on 26 May 2010.

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