

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNECE-WHO/EUROPE  
PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH**

**Third session, Oslo, 25-27 November 2013**

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**STATEMENT BY MR PIERRE STUDER (SWITZERLAND),  
NEWLY-ELECTED CHAIR OF THE BUREAU**

**Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to accept this nomination and I would like to thank you all Distinguished delegates for your trust. I am sincerely honoured by your vote of confidence.

The immediate future will be very important for the Protocol. Indeed, after 6 years of implementation, a lot of guidance has been developed and several workshops have been organised with the objective of helping us to better define the way we want to work together under the Protocol. For the coming years, we should present in a more consistent manner, the significant results of the implementation of our Protocol. We already have some very good examples from pioneer countries, which met their

objectives on time and in an exemplary manner. We will work with all Parties to the Protocol and building on the examples from these pioneer countries, we will strive to ensure that more countries will be able to show improvements in the access to drinking water and sanitation in future.

The Protocol is flexible and can be tailored, depending on the reality of each country from the European Region. It is important to ensure that the main issues are properly identified and that we strive to find the most appropriate solutions. And hopefully, these solutions will ideally be in line with the future Sustainable Development Goals.

An important strength of the Protocol is the holistic approach which brings together a lot of expertise from different fields. This community, from various backgrounds, can provide very valuable tools to our national governments, and thereby enable us to set the right priorities which will lead to substantial improvement in the field of water and health.

It has been mentioned on several occasions that the beauty of the Protocol is the fact that experts in health and environment can propose instruments which identify the right challenges. This information is also of utmost importance for the international organisations which are ready to support the implementation of adequate solutions throughout the European Region (for example the cooperation and development agencies, development banks, NGOs, etc.).

Today, I would like to share with you my personal wish – Indeed, I hope that by 2016 we will have some proof to show that the actions undertaken under the Protocol have contributed to real improvements in the most remote areas of the countries from the European Region. In 2016, I would like to imagine reading news that a small village that is lost in a rural area now has access to drinking water through optimal devices and that improved sanitation is also in place...thanks to the implementation of the Protocol.

Ladies and gentlemen, I sincerely hope that we will be able to hear such good news with the next reporting exercise.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Norway for hosting this Meeting of the Parties and for its important leadership role in supporting the activities of the Protocol. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chairperson and my dear friend Mr Kjetil Tveiten for his leadership and guidance and for having chaired the Bureau in such an outstanding manner.

I look forward to working with the other members of the Bureau, the Secretariat and with all of you Dear Delegates in striving to achieve the goals of the Protocol.

Thank you for your attention.