



Third Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

Paris, France, 11-12 May 2015

Information Note

I. Background

One of the main objectives of the UNECE¹-WHO/Europe² Protocol on Water and Health is the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to everyone. In particular, the Protocol includes several provisions on non-discrimination and equity aspects. For instance, article 5 requires that “equitable access to water, adequate in terms both of quantity and of quality, should be provided for all members of the population, especially those who suffer a disadvantage or social exclusion”.

The publication *No One Left Behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region*³ was launched in 2012. It presents good practices and lessons learnt from throughout the pan-European region on the policies and measures to be enacted to provide equitable access to water and sanitation by addressing three main types of inequities: geographical disparities, specific barriers faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups and affordability concerns. One of the main messages of the publication *No One Left Behind* is that current governance frameworks are often “equity blind”. Ensuring equitable access requires a results-oriented action plan, building on country situation analysis and context specific indicators.

An analytic tool, the *Equitable Access Score-card*⁴, was developed and launched in 2013 to support Governments and other stakeholders to establish a baseline measure of the equity of access, discuss further actions to be taken and evaluate progress in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation through a process of self-assessment.

The *Equitable Access Score-card* was piloted in France (Greater Paris Urban Area), Portugal and Ukraine and that work is useful for the development of action plans to address the identified equity gaps. The *Equitable Access Score-card* is currently being applied in the Republic of Moldova and Hungary to develop national situational analyses. New countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have recently expressed interest to apply the *Equitable Access Score-card* at the national level to self-assess the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation.

Different countries are therefore at different steps towards assessing and ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation and translating the human right to water and sanitation into practice. The workshop will provide the opportunity for countries/regions that have already carried out a self-assessment to exchange

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

² Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization:

³ Available at : www.unece.org/env/water/publications/ece_mp.wh_6.html

⁴ The publication *The Equitable Access Score-card: supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation* is available at: www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032

their experiences in developing situational analyses and action plans to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation with countries/ municipalities that want to carry out the self-assessment.

Other initiatives carried out by other international organizations and partners can also be source of inspiration for future work on addressing the equity gaps identified. The workshop will also invite partners to present new guidance documents developed and progresses in global initiatives related to equitable access to water and sanitation.

II. Objectives of the workshop

The objectives of this workshop are to:

- Exchange experiences in carrying out self-assessments of the equity of access to water and sanitation using *the Equitable Access Score-card* at different scales;
- Inform the development of priority action plans to address inequities in access to water and sanitation, building on partners' initiatives.

The workshop will also aim to present on-going progress in the development of the post-2015 water agenda, with a specific focus on equity.

III. Targeted participants

The Expert Group meeting aims to gather about 30 participants. Participants will include primarily country representatives from the pan-European region working in the areas of health and environment, which have been involved in the equitable access self-assessment exercise or have expressed interest to engage in such exercise. It will also include experts from NGOs with experience in facilitating the self-assessment of equitable access or have expressed interest in supporting upcoming exercises. Representatives from international organizations will also be invited.

IV. Organization of the work

The meeting will start at 09.30 am on Monday, 11 May 2015 and end at 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 12 May 2015. Presentations, panel discussions and interactive group work will allow for the exchange of experiences on issues related to the improvement of equitable access to water and sanitation. All participants will be encouraged to contribute actively to the discussions.

V. Venue and partners

The workshop will take place on 11-12 May 2015 in Paris, France, in the premises of the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights, 14, Duquesne Avenue, Paris (Room 3275R).

The Ministry of Health is located near the Ecole Militaire station (metro line 8) and Saint-Francois-Xavier station (metro line 13). Further information can be found in the following website:

<http://www.ratp.info/informer/anglais/index.php>.



The Expert Workshop is organized by UNECE under the leadership of France and Hungary and is hosted by the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights. Funding for the Expert group meeting is provided by the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights.

VI. Practical information

The working language will be English and Russian. English / Russian simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

Lunches will be provided. A self-paid group dinner will be organized for the dinner on Monday, 11 May 2015. You will be asked to present your ID to enter the Ministry.

Registration

Participants are requested to confirm their attendance at their earliest convenience and by 20 April 2015 at the latest. Please register on line using the following link: <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=Ne6tLV>

Participants eligible for **financial support** should register and send their request for financial support **by 1 April 2015** to Nathalie.halm@unece.org. Requests received after this deadline will not be processed.

Visas

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a Schengen visa is 20 working days. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting and indicate that they need a visa invitation letter when registering on line.

Webpage of the workshop

More information, including background documents, is available at: www.unece.org/index.php?id=39002#/

Contact information

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