



## INFORMATION NOTE

### Strategic workshop on future priorities under the Protocol on Water and Health

(Geneva, 7-8 (morning) March 2016)

#### Background

1. At the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Bern, 14–16 November 2016), a new intersessional programme of work for 2017–2019 will be adopted. A broad and inclusive consultation process is essential to identify the key building blocks of the future programme of work which should:
  - Be relevant in policy and practice for all Parties, as well as other States and stakeholders that cooperate under the Protocol;
  - Effectively support Parties in setting and implementing their national targets and complying with the Protocol provisions; and
  - Align with the scope of ambition and support implementation of long-term regional and global policy commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2010 Parma Declaration on Environment and Health, future regional priorities to be identified under the European Environment and Health Process and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.
2. At the eight meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, 21–22 October 2015), Parties, other States and stakeholders cooperating under the Protocol were invited to reflect upon the strategic objectives and possible priorities for the programme of work for 2017–2019. They specifically discussed experiences and lessons learnt from the implementation of the programme of work for 2014–2016, confirmed that current thematic areas and activities remain relevant and thus should be carried forward to the future programme of work, as well as identified thematic gaps that require policy attention and action under the Protocol.
3. The Working Group confirmed the continued relevance of all programme areas covered by the programme of work for 2014–2016. It further noted that the objectives of the Protocol and current programme areas – including safe management of water and sanitation services, equitable access to water and sanitation, small-scale water and sanitation systems in rural areas, water-related disease surveillance, risk-based water quality surveillance and water, sanitation and hygiene in schools – already, to a large extent, address and align with regional and global policy priorities stipulated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2010 Parma Declaration.

4. To further strengthen this alignment and take stock of the prevailing challenges and needs in the water, sanitation and health domains in the pan-European Region, the Working Group identified a range of additional thematic areas to be considered in further discussions towards identifying priorities for the future programme of work for 2017–2019. Specifically, the Working Group called for more attention to, inter alia:
  - The entire sanitation chain, including quality of wastewater discharges and reuse of wastewater in agriculture;
  - Climate change related issues, including disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response planning to extreme weather conditions;
  - Water resource management and protection; and
  - Water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities.

### **Objectives and expected outcomes**

5. The objective of the workshop is to identify priorities and inform future work under the Protocol, and specifically to:
  - Discuss and confirm the rationale for and relevance of the aforementioned thematic areas and other possible areas of work for the pan-European Region, including interlinkages and synergies with relevant regional and global policy frameworks;
  - Discuss and identify the scope of priority activities to be included in the programme of work for 2017–2019 that would add value to the regional agenda;
  - Identify possible partnerships for the implementation of the programme of work for 2017–2019.
6. The expected outcome of the workshop is to have clear recommendations on the strategic objectives and priorities in the water, sanitation and health domain in the pan-European Region that would inform and substantiate the development of the programme of work for 2017–2019.

### **Target audience**

7. The workshop addresses government representatives of Parties and other States from environment, health and water sectors.
8. Furthermore, the following stakeholders working and sharing interest in the water, sanitation and health domain in the pan-European Region are invited:
  - International organizations;
  - Development agencies and international financing institutions; and
  - Non-governmental organizations, including professional associations and academia.

### **Organization of work**

9. The Strategic workshop will be held on 7-8 (morning) March 2016 in Geneva, back-to-back with the Workshop on collecting good practices on target setting and reporting (8 (afternoon) – 9 March 2016).
10. A provisional programme for the workshop will be shared in the end of January 2016.

## Practical information

11. The workshop will start on Monday, 7 March 2016 at 10:00 a.m. and will close at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday 8 March 2016. It will be held in conference room V of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The workshop will be organized back-to-back with the Workshop on collecting good practices on target setting and reporting (8 (afternoon -9 March 2016).
  12. The working languages will be English, French and Russian. All relevant documentation for the workshop will be made available in due course at [http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41693#/.](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41693#/)
  13. In accordance with the United Nations accreditation procedures, participants should register online at [https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=\\_BosrG](https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=_BosrG) as soon as possible but not later than **20 February 2016**.
  14. Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat ([protocol.water\\_health@unece.org](mailto:protocol.water_health@unece.org)) **as soon as possible, but no later than 15 January 2016**, using the financial support request form available on the meeting website. No application will be accepted after this deadline due to visa and travel arrangement regulations.
  15. Participants requiring an entry visa should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. Due to the entry of Switzerland in the Schengen Zone, visa procedures have become more complicated. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is 15 working days. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and to initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.
  16. On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the ECE website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1606.
  17. Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html>.
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