

Annex 1. Minutes of the Third Steering Committee Meeting

National Policy Dialogue in Integrated Water Resources Management in Armenia

December 10, 2009

Yerevan, Armenia

The third meeting will be chaired by Mr. Narimanyan, Deputy Head of Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia.

The list of participants of the meeting is provided in attachment.

Chairman of the Steering Committee, representatives of UN ECE and OECD made opening remarks in the first session.

During the first session of the meeting follow up to the policy packages drawn up under the NPD process in Armenia was discussed. Mr. Narimanyan explained the process of development of draft project proposal on "Action plan on improving health in Armenia through target setting to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe water and adequate sanitation". This was followed by a presentation of the representative of the Ministry of Health, Ms. Nune Bakuntz, who provided feedback on the outcomes of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanisms under the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 1 July 2009) and follow up activities by the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Ministry of Health to implement the policy package.

Ms. Emma Anakhasyan presented the role of the NGO "Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment" in preparation of the project proposal and implementation of the policy package.

Mr. Rainer Enderlein from the UN ECE presented the recent developments for the implementation of the policy package, and mentioned that some countries, including Finland might be interested in financing the project proposal submitted by Armenia. However, in order to secure financing, first, it would be needed to approve the prepared project proposal by the Steering Committee.

In the second part of Session I the participants of the meeting discussed the application of Water Framework Directive's principles in different pilot river basins of Armenia, including Marmarik River basin. Mr. Narimanyan provided overview of the achievements of the policy dialogue in 2007-2008 and the status of activities in Marmarik River basin. Afterwards, the representatives of "Geocom" Ltd. and "GeoInfo" Ltd. were invited to make presentations on development of river basin

management plans correspondingly in Aghstev and Debed Transboundary River basins of Armenia under the framework of EU funded "Trans-Boundary River Management Phase II for the Kura River – Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan" project.

During the discussions some of the participants of the meeting stressed the importance on preparation of a policy overview document on all donor efforts (UNDP, USAID, EU, GTZ and others) on river basin planning and management conducted in Armenia, which will include analysis of the experience from other pilot river basins as well (Meghriget, Debed, Aghstev). Following that, Mr. Enderlein and Ms. Gulnara Roll mentioned that the proposed ideas can be the possible follow up activities in 2010 under the UN ECE support.

The third session of the meeting was devoted to exploring innovative mechanisms for financing water management. Ms. Tatiana Efimova from EAP Task Force of OECD presented possible OECD support in Armenia for analyzing the financial dimension of water resources management in the Marmarik River basin. The Steering Committee member agreed with the proposed OECD support idea, taking into consideration that funding of water sector management, and particularly funding of basic water management needs has been an issue in Armenia since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and no study was conducted to explore the possible funding sources, including the alternative options.

The last session of the Steering Committee meeting was devoted to discussing the upcoming activities in Armenia under the National Policy Dialogue and the role and activities of the Steering Committee in that regards. First, Mr. Enderlein presented some implications on the Steering Committee's work of the decisions of the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention (Geneva, 10-12 November 2009) and the work plan under the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative adopted at the 13th meeting of the Working Group (Bucharest, 24-25 November 2009). Mr. Narimanyan summarized the proposals on upcoming activities in Armenia under the National policy Dialogue in 2010 to which the participants of the meeting concurred.

The Steering Committee, thus, decided:

- To express gratitude to UN ECE, stressing the importance of the works implemented within the National Policy Dialogue in Armenia in 2007-2008 and effectiveness of the works implemented up to date,
- To thank the Government of Finland for their initial interest to finance the project proposal on “Action plan on improving health in Armenia through target setting to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe water and adequate sanitation”,
- To express gratitude to OECD and concur with the proposed work on analyzing the financial dimension of water resources management in the Marmarik River basin,
- To express gratitude to UN ECE and concur with the proposed work on development of policy brief, to be completed by May 2010.

In addition, taking into consideration the need to continue the legal and institutional reforms in water sector of Armenia, the Steering Committee agreed to apply to UN ECE, OECD, and all other donors active in Armenia to explore some options to assist Armenia in providing advisory assistance in the following aspects:

- Methodology for setting minimum ecological flow,
- Contemporary methodology for recovering interrupted hydrological series,
- Development of computerized system to support decision-making process in water management,
- Development of strategy for financial recovery of the sector,
- Methodology for conservation of unexploited groundwater wells.