



Minutes of the meeting

EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on IWRM Core Group meeting

Date: 6 May 2011, UNECE, GENEVA

Time and place: 09.30 to 17.30 at UNECE, Room XII, Geneva

The meeting was opened by *Gheorghe Constantin, Romanian Chair of the EUWI EECCA* who warmly welcomed the participants.

Andrey Vasilyev, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary said that meeting supports building a bridge between UN and EU Water Initiative in EECCA, provides cooperation on a broad scale, gives an opportunity to exchange experience and practice, set regional and national standards, and provides support for implementation. Mr. Vasilyev brought into focus very efficient and fruitful cooperation with OECD, importance of long term prospective and of support from different donors. Despite of the funding situation being a subject of concern it is important to support NPD program at least till 2015 to bring a good harvest for all countries and organizations and contribute to development.

Gheorghe Constantin, Romanian Chair of the EUWI EECCA Component pointed main tasks of the meeting: to assess what was done and the level of satisfactory with what has been done so far and to establish plans for the future. Water Initiative is an opportunity for participating countries to reshape their policies, create instruments for proper implementation planning and bring to discussion connection of the EUWI and Protocol on Water and Health.

Pierre Borgoltz, the European Commission shortly described the process of WFD implementation in EU pointing that it is a long-term process requiring a coherent approach. Cooperation in water related issues, sharing experience with eastern neighbors is a corner pill for EU at legal and administrative levels.

Jenniver Sehring, Political Adviser to the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Council of the European Union, said that complex approach is needed to work on all levels. NPDs allow addressing countries specific issues; create opportunities for regional cooperation, strengthening national capacities in cooperation.

Gulnara Roll, UNECE EUWI Coordinator said that it is important to concentrate on the objectives of the meeting under preparation of Astana and Bucharest meetings. The major issues are legislations according to WFD and WC, issues of drinking water policy, national policies on transboundary management, adaptation of the water sector to climate change, economics of IWRM, private sector participation in RF and etc. The main questions for the meeting are what the advantages of NPDs are; what are the major difficulties and the role of Steering Committees; what kind of technical expertise is required; what are lessons and good practices learned.

Xavier Leflaive, OECD pointed that competition for water uses in context of climate change is one of issues nowadays. Particular angle is an economical and financial dimension to ensure that plans are financially realistic and not too ambitious and difficult to finance.

09.45 – 10.15 Objectives of the meeting and an overview of the EUWI NPDs

implementation and proposals for the future – *Gulnara Roll, UNECE; Xavier Leflaive, OECD*

Topic 1 (within Session 1). General reflections concerning the NPDs/IWRM. Preparation of national water laws and strategies in accordance with IWRM principles, including adaptation to climate change of the water sector

Representative of *COWI AIS* asked the participants to try to answer several questions during their presentations, such as: if the work should be focused not only on WFD, but also on other EU conventions; if it is time not to have further strategic partners, but to make sure that existing ones are involved in the process of IWRM; if it is time to have also regional policy dialogs including more than one country; if it is time to move further to climate change policies and etc.

Armenia had initiated the work consisting of 3 phases. First phase was implemented in 2007 in Marmarik river basin. Second phase in 2008 included analysis and measures to achieve desired quality of water supply. Third phase is ongoing and includes payment for ecosystem services schemes in Hrazdan river basin. Armenia is launching the second generation reforms in water sector and is looking for continued support for NPDs.

In *Ukraine* NPDs brought a lot of discussion. Lack of finance and political attention were the main problems. In 4 years of NPDs Ukraine had produced a document on concepts of adaptation water resources management to climate change. Continuation is planned with the support of IWAC.

Moldova is working mainly on urban wastewater treatment, developing new regulations and adopting river basin councils. Contents of NPDs is bringing the water law in line with WFD (not adopted yet),



town wastewater discharges (Urban Directive), initiation of IWRM discussion on national level, formation of river basin approach, council regulations and basin agencies, initiation of implementation of Water and Health Protocol (targeting process). For Moldova it is important to select right local experts, establish cooperation with leading think-tanks, NGOs, research institutions and parallel projects. In *Georgia* NDPs were initiated in 2010 and are supported by Ministry of Environment and other stakeholders. Two meetings were carried out. On the first meeting the members of future Steering Committee were elected. Second meeting in cooperation with UNECE detected three priority areas: preparation of the national water law based on IWRM, setting targets for implementation of Protocol on Water and Health and transboundary cooperation with Azerbaijan. Still there are some challenges like lack of clear cross-sectoral coordination between stakeholders; NPDs process in connection with the restructuring of the government and redistribution of functions.

Azerbaijan pays a lot of attention to international cooperation and is looking for bilateral agreements. Implementation is ongoing in large and small cities. Azerbaijan needs a continued financing. There are development plans till 2013. New drinking water project is established to ensure that rural population is provided with high quality water. Establishment of small water purification plants is bringing in line with WFD. A number of legislations, laws and rules were implemented to address IWRM, getting in line with EU legislations.

Kyrgyzstan river basin management, basin plans, basin councils, water management committee are established. The main work is going in the Chu-Talas river basin. A river basin management plan which should be applied everywhere is being worked out.

In *Kazakhstan* there are eight different basin secretariats functioning with basin councils.

Topic 2. The economics of IWRM

OECD: Lessons learned on the economics of IWRM based on a review of the economics and financing of IWRM in member countries: the use of economic instruments in IWRM, financing IWRM - *Xavier Leflaive, Tatiana Efimova, OECD*

Xavier Leflaive pointed out that financing is important because of unrecognized benefits and rising costs. There is a demand to reform water related subsidies. Inventorying them and checking their effectiveness creates huge opportunities to decrease costs. In the Netherlands there is a principle "interest – pay-say" meaning "pay for use, but take part in policy making". Planning takes time, but then finally saves time.

Armenia had set a two-phase project in Marmarik river basin with the focus on analysis of financial aspects of WRM and development scenario in following sectors: irrigation, drinking, industry, hydropower, fisheries and recreation. Shift to a larger basin is planned (Debed River). This experience is a very good illustration of NPD's transformation into implementation approach and a good example of UNECE and OECD cooperation which is to be continued.

Ukraine carries on its water policy based on hydrology, water quality assessment, flood protection programs, but unfortunately not all of them started operation. Basin management was established for 9 major basins; a work on setting more is ongoing. Unfortunately, funding remains the major problem.

Discussion on planning the Astana Side Event

Chairman – The idea is to get ministers attending the meeting and to get an intervention from all countries on WSS and NPD/ IWRM.

Tatiana Efimova – It is important to discuss communication materials preparation, for e.g. monitoring reports. The first draft should be prepared by midsummer.

Roll – Monitoring reports should be very colorful with pictures, photos of water bodies, chairman and etc. Giving a picture of how the work is going on and what is being done, should be maximally visual. It also has to contain approaches existing in the countries.

Tatiana Efimova – It should include quantitative information supplemented with information about public participation, publications, and indicators of the progress.

Chairman – Information on situation before and after NPD/IWRM in the countries and the result are what is needed to be presented.

Roll – Countries should be prepared to discussions because the time is limited.

Tatiana Efimova – Survey of 15 countries in OECD region can be useful for the countries in preparation to the meeting in Astana.

CWI AIS – Make a policy brief for each NPD. Two pages only saying what is the purpose, major outputs, activities, members of the SC and who to contact and then some photos.

Tatiana Efimova – It is important to use capacities which are already at hand. Would be very important to know who is coming to the meeting in advance.



Topic 3. NPDs on Water Supply and Sanitation and UNECE/WHO Europe Protocol on Water and Health projects

UNECE – WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health and National Policy Dialogues – the status, lessons learned and plans for the future – *Francesca Bernardini, UNECE Water Convention Secretariat*

Francesca Bernardini talking about the Protocol on Water and Health said that environmental and health questions have to be integrated. It is a complex problem and it needs an intersectional approach and a cyclical approach. It is of an importance to all countries, the protocol shows at which steps the public should be included. There have been a number of experience exchange projects, e.g. in Ukraine and Moldova. To set up targets countries need to identify stakeholders, problems, stage of the country, develop the priorities. Advantages of working on the basis of the protocol and linking it to the NPD: both require political commitment, they are a powerful framework to generate it, ensure long term perspective and form basis for improved regulatory environment, design a support for continuous progress under the situation in the country, has measurable targets, reporting to public and to MOP. *Moldova* considers the project as really important for the country; it showed how to work, provided with mechanisms how to deal and how to cooperate thanks to UNECE. Targets were set in 20 areas. It is planned to decrease percentage of population consuming low quality water.

Topic 4. Synergies between regional/transboundary projects and NPDs

GIZ Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme – *Maria Koenig, GIZ Programme representative*

Maria Koenig told about the program on transboundary water management initiated by German Federal Foreign Office which is an integral component of EU-Central Asia initiative. The program has 3 components: regional institution cooperation, strengthening transboundary river basin management, and implementing pilot projects in all Central Asian states.

Aral Sea Basin Program – III and synergies with the NPDs/IWRM. Talas-Chu Cooperation – *Demesin Nurmagambetov, EC IFAS, Kazakhstan*

Demesin Nurmagambetov said that a UNECE-GIZ project on “regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management” has been launched. It focuses on improving the organizational structure, improving the legal framework, development of ASBP-3. ASBP consists of 4 clusters of the project with duration for the 2011-2015. Four directions: IWRM, environmental protection, and socio-economic development, as well as improving institutional and legal instruments. The work is based on European experience, the conventions and directives, but with addition of regional factors.

Session 2. Lessons learned and plans for the future

Lessons learned as formulated in the Policy Brief on Armenian NPD/IWRM – *Vahang Tonoyan, Armenian NPD/IWRM National Expert*

Vahang Tonoyan told that in Armenia two generations of reforms implemented: first started in 2002 with introduction of new Water Code and national water policy (2005) and national water program (2006) with measures; second (2006) includes a lot of methods, including biological methods of analysis, groundwaters and etc. WFD methods and principles are implemented (estimated that it would require just 10% of extra costs). Another project is “Assessment of vulnerability of water resources under the climate change”.

Update by the European Commission, UNECE and OECD on the future NPDs plans and the funding situation

Gulnara Roll said that it is important to have a clear plan of who is doing what, to think of how the Steering Committee will sustain and to set priorities, because it is impossible to achieve everything. *Xavier Leflaive* pointed out that it is important to make widely acknowledged that NPDs work and are an effective process to stimulate and facilitate reforms. NPD is not the process that stops now because it creates the dynamics, it should not be an illusion.

Pierre Borgoltz said that it is important to tackle in a coherent way, to bring a common view how to proceed, to provide the support to move ahead because NPD is a valuable contribution to facilitate the process of concrete reforms. The goal is to promote better quality water on the basis of optimal utilization of water resources. There is a number of challenges, but NPDs provide a methodology of decision making, a history which is now of use for all countries.

In the end the *Chairman* thanked everyone for active participation and concluded that the meeting reached the objectives to see where we are and what we need in the future.