

**Workshop on Information and Public Participation in Water  
and Health Related Issues,**

**15-16 June 2010, Bucharest, Romania**

# **The Protocol on Water and Health, as a tool for access to information and public participation in water and health related issues**

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# The Protocol on Water and Health

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE



*The world's first legal treaty designed to reduce water-related deaths and diseases through improved water management.*

# Status of ratification

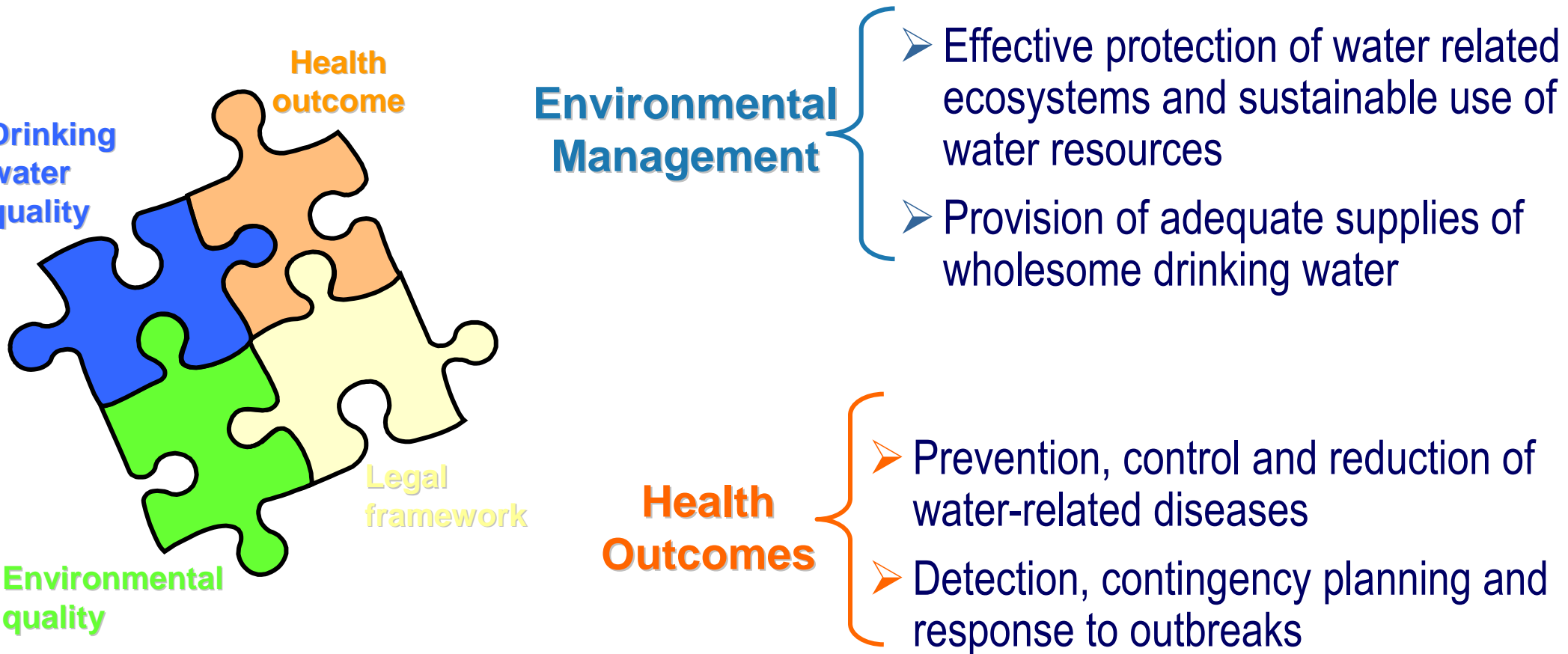
Adopted in  
1999 by 36  
countries

Entered into  
force in 2005

Currently  
ratified by 24  
countries



# Goal: Protect human health and well being by better management of water resources



# Art. 6 & 7 – the main Protocol's requirements and back bone for implementation

## ESTABLISH TARGETS

- Water supply and sanitation
- Water management
- Health protection

## SET DATES

Within 2 years of becoming a Party, each country sets and publishes targets, and dates for achieving them

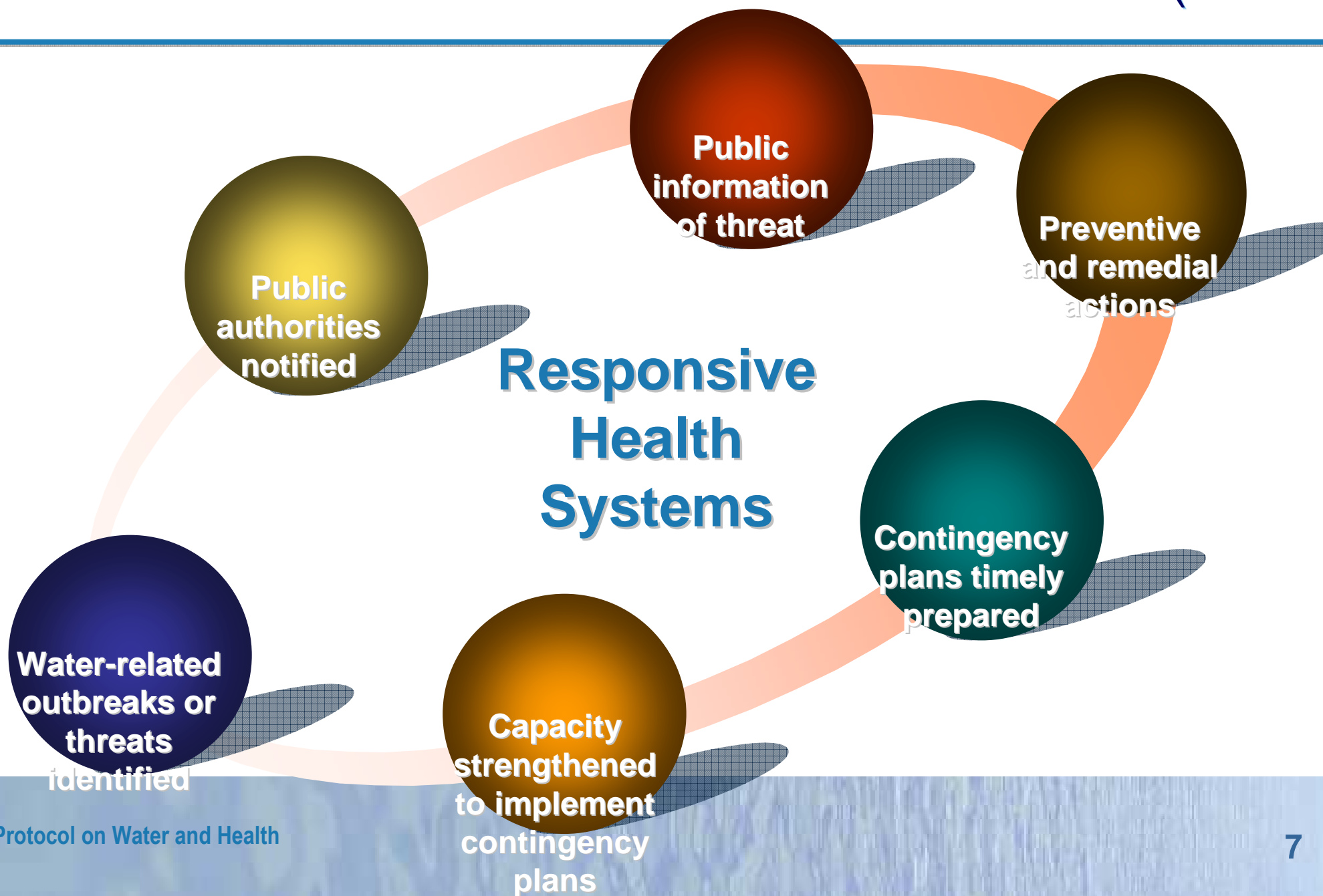
## REVIEW PROGRESS

- collect and evaluate data
- publish results
- review progress
- provide summary reports

# Areas for setting targets, following Art. 6 of the Protocol



Within 3 years each Party shall establish systems for surveillance and control of water-related diseases (Art. 8)



# Access to information and public participation - What for

Access to information and public participation in decision making concerning water and health are needed to (Art.5 (4)):

- enhance the quality of the decisions and their implementation,
- build public awareness of issues,
- give the public the opportunity to express its concerns,
- enable public authorities to take due account of such concerns.

# Access to information

- Review and assessment of progress (Art.7):
  - Publish (and make available to the public (Art. 10 (3)) data on the assessment of progress towards the achievement of targets
  - Make results of water and effluent sampling available to the public
  - Provide to the secretariat and for circulation to the other Parties national summary reports on the assessment and progress achieved
- Inform the public on (Art. 10 (1)):
  - The establishment of targets and dates for their achievement and development of water management plans
  - The establishment, improvement or maintenance of surveillance and early-warning systems of contingency plans
  - The promotion of public awareness, education and training

# General provisions and principles for public participation I:

## Parties shall:

- Create frameworks, in which the public can contribute towards the improvement of water management for the purpose of preventing, controlling and reducing WRDs (Art. 4 (5))
- Supplement public participation (and access to information) by appropriate access to judicial and administrative review of relevant decisions (Art. 5 (4))

# Provisions for public participation II:

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## Parties shall:

- Make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for public participation, within a transparent and fair framework, and ensure that due account is taken of the outcome of the public participation”  
(Art. 6 (2))
- Make appropriate arrangements for public involvement in the review of compliance (Art.15)

# Putting principles into practice => Public involvement in target setting (Art.6)

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## Guidelines on setting targets and reporting under the Protocol:

Public participation enhance the social acceptance of the targets, contribute to the target-setting process, helps the implementation of the programme of measures,

To allow an informed participation of the public and relevant stakeholders => information on target-setting should be published on the Internet and regularly updated,

The proposed targets, target dates and relevant programme of measures should be disseminated as much as possible to the broader public,

If consultations take place at the local, provincial and national levels, they should be mutually reinforcing,

The opinions of the public and stakeholders should be taken into account in the elaboration of the documents and further elaboration/revision of the targets and programme of measures.

# The Public & review of compliance (Art 15)

- Compliance mechanism aim is to promote and secure compliance by Parties with their obligations under the Protocol
- Protocol provides the possibility for the members of the public to make communications to the Compliance Committee on cases of alleged non-compliance with the Protocol
- Guidelines on communications from the public developed by the Compliance Committee: simple format, basic questions (who, why, when, what, how ? etc)

## The Protocol – the current status

- At the national level progress has been made, however, many Parties are lagging behind with implementation: only 4 Parties have clearly set targets with the approach of the Protocol,
  - Responses received: 22
  - Parties: 17
  - Signatories: 5
- Forms of public involvement vary: public hearings/workshops/campaigns to disseminating information on the websites
- Room for more active involvement of the public under the Protocol

# Conclusions:

- The Protocol serves purposes beyond its main goal, one of them is provision of framework for cooperation between governmental authorities and the public
- The Protocol's approach is to move away from the usual pollution treatment solutions towards risk management and prevention
- Access to information and public participation are the key features of the Protocol - in the general principles, and more the operational Articles i.e. (Art. 6)
- The Protocol points out the rights but also the responsibilities of the public: counterpart to their rights and entitlements natural persons should contribute to the protection/conservation of water resources
- Dialogue is necessary outside the traditional politico-administrative boundaries, stakeholders have a key role to play in expressing the society's expectations

# Public participation cooperation is a core prerequisite for successful implementation.

- States have clear commitments under the Protocol and NGOs could and do help fulfil the obligations,
- The targets are mostly decided at the national level => cooperation governmental authorities and NGOs should help to translate national targets into actions at the local level and vice versa,
- Framework for cooperation not only between Ministries but also between NGOs active in different (environment, water, health, human right) sectors,
- So far this is not being widely recognized: by both governmental authorities and NGOs.

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**Thank you for your attention !**

[http://www.unece.org/env/water/Protocol\\_implementation\\_reports.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/Protocol_implementation_reports.html)