



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE**

**WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR
EUROPE**

**Strategic workshop on
“Future work on water and health in the pan-European region:
Building on results achieved and identifying priorities
for the Protocol on Water and Health for 2014-2016”**

**13-14 March 2013
Geneva, Palais des Nations**

Information notice

I - Background

Remarkable progress has been achieved in terms of water and sanitation, as confirmed by the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target on access to water at the global level. However, the global statistic hides important problems related to water quality, affordability, and inequities in access. In particular, some parts of the pan-European region (namely the Caucasus and Central Asia) have regressed instead of progressing in terms of access to water. And the MDG target for sanitation is far from being reached in 2015. Moreover, increasing demands for food and energy, pollution, degraded ecosystems and climate change are straining water resources.

The WHO-UNECE Protocol on Water and Health aims at ensuring adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone by linking water management and health issues. It is the only legal treaty designed to reduce water-related deaths and diseases through improved water management. It is also a practical instrument to achieve water-related MDGs and implement the human right to water and sanitation. Over the past years, the Protocol has offered a unique platform for cooperation and exchange of experiences on water and health issues and has fostered progress in strengthening the protection of public health and water resources in the pan-European region. Many activities have benefited from a great support from Parties (both donors and recipients) and from efficient cooperation with partners organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The third session of the Meeting of the Parties, to be held on 25-27 November 2013, will adopt a new programme of work for 2014-2016. The formulation of such programme will be done throughout 2013 through a consultation process and brings the opportunity and the need to “look back” in order to “look forward”: review what has been done and critically and strategically discuss where the work under the Protocol should focus on in the future. This will be done against the background of general trends in the pan-European region and beyond, including latest developments in the water and health policies of the European Union, and looking at the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference and the debate on the post 2015 development agenda with the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and their relevant targets and indicators.

II - Objectives

This strategic workshop is convened as follow-up to a decision taken by the Bureau of the Protocol at its meeting in October 2012, with the main objectives of:

- revisiting current challenges and needs in the protection of human health and well-being through improved water management, in the prevention, control and reduction of water related disease and in the sustainable management of water resources
- reviewing and analysing the work carried out under the Protocol
- discussing and agreeing on future objectives and develop a strategy (including prioritization of activities) that will guide the development of the Protocol's programme of work for 2014-2016, taking into account changing conditions and resource mobilization opportunities.

The workshop is an important milestone towards shaping the programme of work of the Protocol for 2014-2016 and beyond. The ideas stemming from it will be further developed in the course of spring and summer 2013, broadly consulted with all Parties, non-Parties and concerned partners, and finally formally adopted at the third session of the Meeting of the Parties in November 2013. In particular, the Bureau of the Protocol which will meet on 14-15 March 2013, will further refine the meeting outcomes in terms of human resources in the secretariat, the institutional set-up and budget implications. The deriving draft of the programme of work will be discussed at the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health in July 2013.

The strategic workshop will bring together different stakeholders involved in water and health related issues, organizations interested in cooperating with the Protocol on Water and Health as well as potential new partners, who will participate in the shaping of the plans for the way forward, defining priority areas for future work in an innovative and participatory way, and suggesting possible contributions to the implementation of the work.

III - Organization of work

The meeting will entail a number of plenary sessions as well as discussions in break-out groups. The agenda will be designed so to promote lively and dynamic interactions. All participants will be invited to contribute actively.

Discussions in break-out groups and in plenary will foster brainstorming and decisions on priorities and trades-off.

The working language of the meeting will be English.

Day 1, morning, plenary session: building on the work achieved under the Protocol and other ongoing developments

The strategic workshop meeting will review past and on-going activities under the Protocol and analyse achievements, remaining challenges and lessons learned for the future.

The strategic workshop meeting will discuss implications from other processes, in particular work in the European Union and at the global level in relation to the post 2015 development agenda.

The strategic workshop meeting will also discuss the results on the survey on the future work under the Protocol based on the answers by Parties, non-Parties and other partners.

Finally the results of the Financing Group under the Protocol, identifying opportunities regarding possible funding of future activities, will be presented and discussed.

The presentations will be followed by a critical analysis in the form of a plenary discussion. Gaps in the current programme of work in the light of emerging developments and lessons learned will be identified.

Day one, afternoon, break-out groups “brainstorming” and review in plenary

Using as a starting point the background material discussed in the morning, small groups will identify challenges and opportunities for the work under the Protocol, at the national, sub-regional and pan-European levels. They will also suggest how the work under the Protocol can respond to the identified challenges and exploit opportunities (SWOT analysis) and propose specific objectives for the Protocol and the corresponding areas of work.

In plenary, the strategic workshop meeting will review the results of the working groups and discussion on key directions of the future work under the Protocol, including through a prioritization of objectives and areas of work.

Day 2, morning, moving to action and the way ahead

On the basis of the results of the first day, in particular the prioritization of objectives and areas of work, the working groups will discuss possible activities to be carried out in the programme of work under the Protocol, including desired outcomes, expected deliverables/outputs, actors and partners involved and possible sources of funding.

In plenary, the proposals from the working groups will be reviewed and discussed and a way forward will be agreed.

IV - Participation

The workshop will gather around 40 participants representing the major stakeholders involved in the work under the Protocol on Water and Health but also possible new partners, external to the process. This would include Bureau members, representatives of countries leading activities and/or bodies under the Protocol, representatives of different geographical sub-regions with their own specific needs, partners from UN/international organizations, private sector representatives (e.g. water operators), non-governmental organizations. The intention is also to involve relevant organizations and individuals who maybe have not worked closely with the Protocol but are interested in engaging in the process and can provide fresh perspectives.

V - Practical information

The workshop will start at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 March 2013 and end at 1.30 p.m. on Thursday, 14 March 2013. The working language will be English. The meeting will be held in room XVI in the Palais des Nations.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the Conference. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (protocol.water_health@unece.org) as soon as possible, but not later than 31 January 2013. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. The minimum amount of time needed for obtaining a visa is 15 working days as Switzerland is part of the Schengen zone. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least three weeks before the meeting.

In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the registration form available online at:

http://www.unece.org/env/water/strategic_workshop_protocol_2013.html

and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat by 26 February 2013 either by fax (+ 41 22 917 0107) or e-mail (protocol.water_health@unece.org). 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 UNECE Water Convention website). Please allow time for this. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1606.

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>.

Further information, the registration form and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course:

http://www.unece.org/env/water/strategic_workshop_protocol_2013.html

VI - Contact information

For organization of work and substantive enquiries:

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