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**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE**

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE
PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION
AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL
LAKES

Working Group on Water and Health

Second meeting
Geneva, 2–3 July 2009
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

SETTING TARGETS AND REPORTING UNDER THE PROTOCOL.

**REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP ON SETTING TARGETS AND REPORTING
HELD IN GENEVA ON 10 AND 11 FEBRUARY 2009**

Note by the secretariat¹

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A workshop on setting targets and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health was held on 10 and 11 February 2009 in Geneva in accordance with programme area II, item 2.1, of the Protocol's programme of work for 2007–2009 (ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.5 - EUR/06/5069385/1/Add.5, para. 38 (b)). The workshop was organized under the leadership of the Government of Switzerland, with financial support provided by the Government of Germany.

¹ The present document was submitted late due to resources constrains.
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The joint UNECE²/WHO-EURO³ secretariat assisted in the preparations and serviced the meeting.

2. The workshop was attended by experts from the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.
3. Representatives of the following international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also attended: the WHO Collaborating Centre for the Protection of Water Quality and Human Health (University of Surrey), Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, European ECO-Forum, European Federation of Water Suppliers, International Office for Water, Women in Europe for a Common Future and Women for Health and Healthy Environment.

II. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

4. The workshop aimed to support implementation of articles 6 and 7 of the Protocol. Article 6 requires that Parties establish and publish national and/or local targets and target dates in different areas – related to access to water and sanitation, protection of human health and environmental and water management – in order to achieve or maintain high levels for the protection of human health and well-being and for the sustainable management of water resources. Moreover, in accordance with article 7, Parties shall collect and evaluate data on their progress vis-à-vis the achievement of the targets and shall develop indicators that show how far that progress has contributed to preventing, controlling or reducing water-related disease.

5. Thus, the workshop's objectives were the following:

- (a) To present the concept, possible approaches and the main steps for setting targets and indicators and target dates under the Protocol, and to illustrate these with concrete examples and case studies;
- (b) To provide a platform for the exchange of both positive and negative experiences and lessons learned by Parties that had set targets under the Protocol, and to provide assistance to Parties that were currently undergoing or were planning to initiate the target-setting process;
- (c) To illustrate and discuss the draft guidelines for a summary report in accordance with article 7 and the format for reporting;

² United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

³ World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

(d) To review and provide additional inputs to the draft guidelines on setting targets and the evaluation of progress and reporting, as well as to the guidelines on summary reports currently being developed by the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting. Drafts of these two guidelines were presented and discussed, and further inputs into the guidelines, such as examples and case studies, were sought.

6. The workshop was organized in the following five sessions:

- (a) Protocol's provisions and support mechanisms, with a focus on articles 6 and 7;
- (b) The main steps in the process of target-setting;
- (c) Target-setting in the areas of article 6 of the Protocol;
- (d) Evaluation of progress and reporting under the Protocol;
- (e) Conclusions and recommendations to the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting.

7. The workshop programme, list of participants and presentations are available at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/target_setting_workshop.htm.

III. PROCEEDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Mr. Pierre Studer (Switzerland), Chairperson of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, welcomed participants and explained the meeting's objectives. He noted the main provisions of the Protocol, focusing in particular on the requirements related to setting targets and reporting (articles 6 and 7). In his presentation, he recalled the main steps of the target-setting process and possible tools for assessing progress in reaching the targets.

9. The UNECE secretariat presented the results of a survey conducted prior to the workshop on progress achieved by Parties and non-Parties with respect to setting targets and target dates. The survey revealed that by the time of the workshop, only four Parties to the Protocol had set targets as required by article 6. In the other 17 Parties, the process of setting targets was ongoing and at different stages of advancement. The fact that some non-Parties (mostly Signatories, but not only) were also engaged in setting targets was a positive sign. As many Parties had not yet set targets, despite the requirements of the Protocol, the need to intensify efforts was clearly apparent.

10. Parties had set different "types" of targets, usually mixing different aspects related to areas under article 6 and measured by quantitative and qualitative indicators. For countries with economies in transition, the main focus was on access to water and sanitation (e.g. building new or improving existing infrastructure). A number of countries highlighted special needs for local/rural areas. Many European countries made reference to European Union (EU) legislation (mainly with respect to compliance with Water Framework Directive and Drinking Water Directive); usually the timetable and indicators of progress were in line with those applied for the

EU. Development of awareness-raising/informational materials, e.g. handbooks on water and health or on good management of water resources, was often mentioned.

11. The number of targets and the level of detail varied significantly, ranging from general statements – e.g. to increase access to water, without providing information on indicators – to very detailed targets with sophisticated indicators. Only a few Parties had adopted specific approaches to setting targets and had analysed their existing programmes, strategies and legislation in the light of the Protocol's provisions. Parties that had set targets reported having inter-ministerial coordinating bodies. Cross-sectoral cooperation was noted as a key issue in the process of target-setting.

12. In the majority of the Parties, the public had been informed about the target-setting process through websites, newsletters issued by the relevant ministries and articles in the press. Only in a few cases had more active forms of public involvement – such as public hearings, workshops and campaigns – been reported.

13. The initial workshop's discussions focused on the advantages and benefits of setting targets under the Protocol. A number of speakers demonstrated the added value of setting targets, which included, inter alia: bringing together different stakeholders with relevance to water and public health, thereby allowing the formulation of cross-sectoral, integrated policies; drawing political attention to water and sanitation issues; and taking into consideration countries specific needs and helping allocating resources at the national and international levels.

14. Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway), Chairperson of the Working Group on Water and Health, stressed that Parties should see the Protocol as within the broader framework of other international commitments (in particular the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the EU directives) and as a useful tool to support their implementation.

15. Many Parties had built their targets around EU legislation, and participants stressed that the activities carried out under the Protocol could help countries comply with EU directives. The role of the Protocol in helping to achieve national goals concurrently with international commitments, particularly with the EU directives, was presented by Mr. Mihaly Kadar (Hungary). He highlighted that the Protocol could not only complement the implementation of EU directives, but also allow for addressing a number of subjects that lay out of the scope of the European legislation, e.g. pool and spa waters, covered by the Protocol's articles 3 (e) and 6 (2)(k).

16. Ms. Carola Bjørklund (Norway), Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism, presented the concept of international assistance in accordance with the Protocol. She stressed that the Mechanism was providing benefits for both recipient and donors countries. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were the first countries to submit project proposals on target-setting under the Protocol. Both proposals had been taken up by donors (Switzerland, and Norway and Israel, respectively) and substantial efforts to set targets under the Protocol were being made in both countries. Several recipient countries had indicated their interest in submitting project proposals to the next meeting of the Mechanism, scheduled for 2 July 2009.

Thus there was a need for more donor countries, and also international financial institutions, to get involved. Norway had been working to catalyse additional support. The Chairperson stressed that the assistance and the Mechanism would be needed not only for the formulation of targets, but also for their implementation.

17. The UNECE secretariat presented the draft guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting. It stressed that the guidelines offered a general framework and main steps for setting targets, which still needed to be adjusted to specific national and local circumstances.

18. The presentation was followed by a number of practical examples from Parties and discussions of experience gained by Parties engaged in the target-setting process, as well as examples of tools and mechanisms already tested by countries that could be used in different stages of target-setting.

19. The Government of Ukraine had enlisted the State Ecological Academy in the target-setting process. The Academy was entrusted with analysing existing water monitoring systems, classifying indicators and providing some general recommendations for setting targets. Many stakeholders in addition to the scientific community were involved in the process, among them seven different ministries, many national agencies and NGOs.

20. Mr. Mihaly Kadar (Hungary) provided an advanced list of targets and described the steps taken in the process of setting them. A special committee had been established to coordinate the Protocol's implementation. This was made up of a broad group of stakeholders, including representatives of the Ministries of Health, Environment and Water, Local Government and Regional Development, Economy and Transport, and Agriculture and Rural Development. Among other institutions and organizations involved, were: the National Institute of Environmental Health, the National Development Agency, the Centre of Epidemiology, the National Inspectorate of Medicinal Spas and the Association of Hungarian Water and Sanitation Utilities. A number of thematic working groups had been established under the committee. Each of these had proposed targets, which were then further discussed by the committee. At the time of the workshop, the committee was resuming the working groups to further examine the needs and possibilities of revising the targets according to current knowledge and requirements.

21. Mr. Valery Filonau (Republic of Belarus) informed the meeting about national plans and legislation related to improving access to drinking water across his country. A number of tools, standards and reporting mechanisms had been developed. Certain sanitary rules and in particular the requirements for the quality and safety of drinking water were stricter than international standards. Although Belarus was still not a Party, official procedures were being carried out by the Council of Ministers of Belarus to ratify the Protocol. The coordinating authorities to implement the Protocol at the national level would be the Ministries of Health and of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

22. Several support tools were presented and discussed. These tools could be used to identify and prioritize targets; if needed, the development of such tools could constitute a target itself. One of the tools presented was the Rapid Assessment of Drinking Water Quality Provision

(RADQP). RADQP provided basic information for building national surveillance needs as well as identifying and prioritizing preventative action, triggering collection of existing data and providing a information for policymakers. Tajikistan was one example of a country where RADQP had worked in practical terms; however, the tool was already up and running in six different countries. RADQP could be used for prioritizing targets, or establishing RADQP could be a target itself.

23. Another support tool, FEASIBLE, designed for analysing the financial feasibility of achieving targets, was presented by Ms. Svetlana Vardanyan (Armenia). The risk-based approach used to regulate small-water supplies in Scotland was another instrument Parties could employ when setting targets. The risk-based approach was particularly relevant for individual well users/owners or for small community supplies. By applying the risk-based approach, well owners could identify activities having negative effects on the quality of drinking water and undertake measures to reduce them. Participants noted that this approach, if carried out appropriately together with appropriate training of the water suppliers, presented a good alternative for households not connected to central water supply and sewage systems. By securing the supply of safe drinking water, this approach offered a good way of creating healthier lives for the people living in remote areas.

24. Other experts highlighted potential role of the Protocol in promoting and supporting adaptation to climate change. Ms. Luciana Sinisi (Italy), Chairperson of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events, encouraged Parties to take into account the impacts of climate change when setting targets, as both the water and health sectors were already affected. It was pointed out that most targets were dependent on water availability, and thus possibly affected by floods and droughts. Water scarcity could force local communities to use new sources of water. Therefore, possible climate change impacts and social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities should be assessed during the baseline assessment and taken into consideration in the target-setting process.

25. The workshop also addressed public participation. Target-setting under the Protocol created a great opportunity to get the public involved in the decision-making process. However, to date in many countries, the involvement of the public had meant only providing access to information, and in many cases it was a process of informing rather than involving the public. Participants noted that having NGOs among the stakeholders, preferably from the very beginning of the process, was an important factor having positive consequences for further implementation phases. Stakeholder involvement helped foster a better understanding of problems at the local level. It also aided with (a) the setting of realistic targets, (b) the creation of a broad and common ownership and shared responsibility for implementation, and (c) monitoring of progress.

26. All elements of the workshop – the survey, presentations delivered and the discussions – showed that there were still problems of coordination between environment and health authorities. In some cases, the targets were considered without the input or consideration of both sectors. There was a need for dialogue and cooperation, as well as for a clear division of responsibilities, between different authorities.

27. The experiences shared by Parties that had already set their targets or were well advanced in the process clearly demonstrated that a coordinating body would be extremely helpful not only for the formulation of the targets but also for the Protocol implementation overall. A forum was necessary for all the relevant authorities and stakeholders to inform each other about existing environmental strategies and legislation as well as ongoing activities. This would enable them to see how these related to the Protocol's implementation and how they could be coordinated to formulate and implement targets.

28. The workshop also addressed the reporting under the Protocol in accordance with article 7. It was stressed that although the information provided would be assessed by the Meeting of the Parties, the main goal of preparing and submitting the summary reports was the self-assessment by the submitting Party. This would allow for analysing the implemented policies and actions and their impacts, and would further provide a basis for possible revision. Additional goals of the summary report were an exchange of experiences and lessons learned and the demonstration of difficulties and gaps to be overcome. The proposed reporting template reflected the "spirit" of the Protocol, as it allowed Parties to provide, in a descriptive way, information on targets set in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol and progress made towards achieving them. Moreover, in most areas, depending on the targets set, Parties would be free to use the most appropriate indicators of progress, taking into account their existing national data-gathering systems.

29. Nonetheless, for the sake of harmonization and consistency, for some areas Parties would report by using common indicators. If Parties could not report using such indicators, they should consider setting targets that would eventually enable them to do so.

30. Two members of the secretariat of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) informed participants about that Convention's obligations, the existing reporting mechanism and prior experience under this treaty. They noted that the national reports enabled looking not only at the challenges but also the positive developments of complying with the Convention's provisions. The Aarhus Convention secretariat had words of caution about the practicalities of reporting, as it required not only substantial human resources for Parties when preparing the reports, but also for the secretariat when processing the information. After the two reporting cycles, the Parties to the Aarhus Convention saw much added value in keeping the reporting system, however, as they saw it as a valuable input to reviewing Convention's implementation.

31. A representative of the WHO-EURO secretariat presented an overview of international data providers related to reporting under the Protocol. As the Protocol covered a wide range of areas, the process of preparing the national reports should be well coordinated between different national statistical and governmental institutions. Many of these national institutions provided data to international bodies such as the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX) the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO), the European Commission Joint Research Centre, the European Environmental Agency (EEA) and Eurostat. These national institutions should similarly be involved when preparing the national reports under the Protocol.

32. In his concluding remarks, the Chairperson underlined that while in many countries, numerous ongoing activities, programmes and projects were contributing to the aims of the Protocol. To date, only few countries have set targets as required by the Protocol. The target-setting process offered a means to bring together and streamline all these activities. The Chairperson called upon Parties to intensify their efforts to comply with the Protocol's provisions, in particular with fulfilling their obligations regarding articles 6 and 7. He noted that the Protocol focused not only on the results, but also on the process of achieving them. The Protocol complemented and supplemented the EU *acquis communautaire* and could support its further implementation and bridge gaps.

33. The Chairperson stressed that awareness of the Protocol and its benefits was still low and that this hampered implementation. However, he expected that this workshop would stimulate ongoing and planned national activities related to implementation of the Protocol's provisions, and in particular would encourage target-setting by Parties.
