

UNICEF Intervention – Panel on the role of the Protocol in the implementation of the 2030 agenda with regard to water, sanitation and health.

*Basil Rodrigues - Regional Health Adviser, Systems & Policy
UNICEF regional Office for CEE/CIS - Geneva*

Over the past year, UNICEF has consulted widely, both internally and externally and have successfully developed global strategies covering Health and WASH. These instruments coincide with the advent of the SDG and as such, have been informed by and therefore will seek to deliberately contribute to agreed outcomes. Both strategies cover the period 2016 – 2030 and address priorities in the areas of WASH, Nutrition, Education and Health. In reviewing the protocol, it is clear that the strategy priorities are in fact consistent with those contained in the protocol, including but not limited to; rural WASH, water safety planning, WASH in schools, WASH in health care facilities and climate change resilience.

We are cognizant of the interconnectivity of the SDG agenda which requires bringing together various sectors to identify sustainable solutions. In addressing SDG targets 3.3 (waterborne disease), 4.a (safe learning environments), as well as 6.1 and 6.2 (universal safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all) cross-sectoral cooperation is not only inevitable and a critical success factor, it is indeed, required.

The Protocol provides a regional platform, upon which the identified and related sectors can and should convene its constituencies – health and environment sectors – along with education to jointly create WASH in school environments that are supportive of children's health and development.

We see at least 3 main areas where we believe we can add value at global, regional and country level and these are;

1. Convening WASH sector stakeholders to discuss the implications of achieving universal access to WASH by 2030 (under the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership)
2. Providing technical support to countries to set ambitious national targets based on local priorities and establish a common framework for monitoring progress across countries and over time (under the WHO/UNICEF JMP)
3. Developing short, medium and long term plans for tackling inequalities by addressing sector performance bottlenecks and leveraging additional investment through new types of cross sectoral and public-private partnership (of the type described in the new WASH strategy).

The Protocol on Water and Health provides an excellent platform for country and regional level dialogue on implementation of the 2030 Agenda but additional effort is required in order to align national and regional indicators with global SDG indicators addressing inequalities in service levels and to expand them to address the means of implementation (i.e. regulation, finance, capacity, human resources, etc)

There is also potential to further support the exchange of lessons between countries within Europe and in other regions of the world by strengthening linkages with the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership.

Given the above, we wish to see a strengthening of this cooperation at the regional level, using the Protocol as a platform also for closer cooperation with UNICEF, in areas such as scaling-up water safety planning approaches and/or climate reliance of WASH services and/or WASH in schools and health care facilities.