

**First Meeting of the Parties  
to the Protocol on Water and Health  
to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and  
Use of the Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**

**Geneva, 17 – 19 January 2007**

**Final Statement of the Chairperson  
at the closure of the First Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health**

Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We are now at the end of the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. Your interest in this “unique international legal instrument” that combines a special care for water and health was fully proved by your presence in such a great number and by your strong involvement during these three days’ meeting.

Water is an important component for the improvement of the livelihoods of people. The right to health and the right to water are not only fundamental rights encapsulated within beautiful international instruments, they are essential for people’s survival and development and a fully observance of these rights constitutes the primary basis for an economic growth.

Gathering here today and working hard during these days, we proved our strong commitments in having “healthy waters” for all people, not only from European continent, but also from Asia and Africa which are the most affected by lack of safe water.

For Romania, it was a great honour to chair this first meeting of the parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. Because, I personally was placed for the first time in a position of a chairperson at a Meeting of the Parties to an international convention, please accept my apologies for some of my hesitations. Also, I do not want to miss this occasion without thanking to all my colleagues from the Joint Secretariat who helped me a lot during these days. Its expertise and experience gave me the courage to fulfill my task.

I am leaving this meeting with the feeling that I learnt a lot. Thank you all for having been given me the opportunity to learn.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the chair of the Bureau, I will have great responsibilities in observing the decisions that we took here. If they are not implemented efficiently in each of our countries, this means that we have not stepped forward too much. So, that is why, back to our capitals, we must invest all our efforts in order to see the provisions of the Protocol and activities that we today have included in the workplan, to be efficiently implemented.

Today, we have adopted the Programme of Work for the next three years (2007 – 2009). This set of activities could help us to have a brilliant implemented Protocol, but, in the same time, I am and also we are aware of the fact that for this output we need technical and financial support. Therefore, as a chair of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties, I would like to encourage you to allocate funds and other resources for the activities mentioned in the Programme of Work. We have to pay a special attention and assistance to the countries from SEE and EECCA regions. Also, in this position, I hope to be an efficient link between the EU and non-EU countries.

I would also like to send my words of congratulation to the members of the Compliance Committee. I am positively sure that their experience, knowledge and competence will transform this body into a very efficient one.

Also, I make an appeal to you to designate the focal points of the Protocol and send their coordinates to the Joint Secretariat in order to assure an efficient work and cooperation under the umbrella of the Protocol. For this, please, have in mind that the Protocol promotes water and health and the focal points should be nominated accordingly.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The road towards implementation of the decisions of the First Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol is not without obstacles. Your devoted involvement in all activities proposed under the scope of the Protocol is crucial. We, Parties, have to support other Signatories and non-Parties to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible.

At the end of my intervention, I wish to express my thanks to all the international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other bodies for their interest in supporting the Protocol. Towards the Joint Secretariat I would like to send again my words of appreciation and thanks. Also, I would like my appreciation to go to the Working Group on Water and Health for his work done and for his future work. As regards the members of the Bureau, I hope to have their support in the future. I would like also to thank you all for your support and involvement during these days that made our meeting a success.

And finally, I wish you all **GOOD HEALTH and SAFE WATER AROUND YOU and SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES.**

Not to forget, I would like to thank our interpreters for their excellent job that deserves your applauds.

Have a nice and safe trip back home.

Thank you.