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Statement

by

Ms. Tatiana Molcean

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

**European Regional Dialogue: Accelerating Action on Climate and Health,
convened by the WHO Regional Office for Europe**

(Dubai, UAE)

3 December 2023 (WHO Health Pavilion, 15:15–16:30)

Excellencies, Ministers,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change manifests itself through water.

Increasingly frequent extreme weather events, shifts in rainfall patterns and water scarcity are already severely undermining human health and well-being and the environment across the globe.

To address these challenges, we need cross-sectoral efforts to build safe and resilient water and sanitation services that can guarantee the protection of human health, in particular that of the most vulnerable, and the realization of human rights.

The Protocol on Water and Health, jointly serviced by UNECE and WHO/Europe, is a unique legal instrument bringing together water, environment, health and recently also climate communities.
I call upon those countries not yet Parties to join the Protocol.

Just a few weeks ago, on 13-14 November in Geneva, a strategic roundtable convened under the Protocol identified pan-European priorities for climate action in the water and sanitation sector.

Governments, water and wastewater operators and scientists clearly

concluded that the climate resilience of WASH services is a key component of health adaptation.

The roundtable also stressed the need for translating global commitments and ambitions into tangible action at national and local level, for example in the national and local adaptation plans.

It finally highlighted that Protocol mechanisms and tools, such as target-setting and water and sanitation safety plans, can help address the impacts of the changing climate.

UNECE stands ready to support countries in strengthening their resilience by applying the Protocol's tools.