

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
15 March 2010

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe**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**

Geneva, 27–28 May 2010

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol**Progress report and future work of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting****Submitted by the Chair of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting****I. Introduction and proposed action by the Working Group**

1. The present document was prepared in accordance with the request of the Working Group on Water and Health, at its second meeting (Geneva, 2–3 July 2009), to the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting to present to the third meeting of the Working Group an assessment of the work achieved and a proposal for a future programme of work for 2011–2013 (see ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2009/2 – EUR/09/5086340/4).

2. The document should be read together with the complete draft programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.3 – EUR/10/56335/XI). The Working Group is invited to comment on the information provided and to discuss proposed future activities. In particular the Working Group is invited to indicate clear priorities for future work under the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting for 2011–2013.

II. Background

3. The Task Force on Indicators and Reporting was established by the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health at its first session, held in Geneva on 17–19 January 2007, with a mandate linked to compliance with articles 6 (targets and target dates) and 7 (review and assessment of progress).

4. The main objective of the Task Force is to assist Parties to implement obligations of articles 6 and 7 and to promote the exchange of experience in these areas.

5. To this aim, the Meeting of the Parties at its first session entrusted the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting with the preparation of guidelines on target-setting and on summary reports in accordance with articles 6 and 7.

III. Activities conducted and main results

6. Three meetings of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting have been held thus far, on 13–14 March 2008, 12 February 2009 and 17–18 February 2010.

7. To support the work of the Task Force, Switzerland, the lead country for the activities on target-setting and reporting, invited a core group of experts to assist in the preparation of documents for meeting. The core group met three times in Geneva in January, September and December 2008.

8. Moreover, two workshops (workshop on setting targets and reporting, 10–11 February 2009 and workshop on reporting, 16–17 February 2010) were held in Geneva with the aim to support Parties and non-Parties in setting targets and preparing their national reports under the pilot-reporting exercise.

9. Good attendance, active participation and useful contributions at the workshops and during the Task Force meetings made it possible to prepare the guidelines on setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2009/4 – EUR/09/5086342/6) as well as the guidelines and the template for summary reports in accordance with article 7 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.2 – EUR/10/56335/X).

10. The guidelines were drawn up during the two first meetings of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting. Additional comments were provided at the second meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (2–3 July 2009) and the third meeting of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting (see document ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/5 – EUR/10/56335/V).

11. The Working Group on Water and Health at its second meeting decided on the organization of the first pilot-reporting exercise based on the draft guidelines on the summary reports. This first reporting exercise is particularly important, as it allows to identify challenges in implementing the Protocol and to test the guidelines and template for the summary reports before their formal adoption at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties.

12. All the activities conducted under the auspices of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting within the current programme of work have led to and stimulated work related to setting targets and reporting, and in general, the implementation of the Protocol at the country level.

13. The main objective of Task Force Indicators and Reporting, as set up in the programme of work 2007–2009, will be accomplished with the adoption of the two guidelines at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to be held in Bucharest on 23–25 November 2010 and the presentation of the regional implementation report based on the summary reports submitted by Parties, Signatories and other interested countries during the pilot-reporting exercise.

IV. Lessons learned in the past three years and implications for the future work programme

14. The summary reports submitted by Parties and Signatories during the pilot-reporting exercise provide a useful overview of challenges in the region that the future work programme should address.

15. In addition to the information provided in summary reports, a number of considerations and lessons can be drawn from the work of the Task Force in the past three years that should guide the future programme of work:

(a) The Task Force has proved to be crucial in the implementation of the Protocol, as setting targets, adopting measures and assessing and reporting progress enables the integration of health and water policies and that the implementation of other provisions of the Protocol. The strong participation of countries in the Task Force activities in the past three years is evidence of this importance;

(b) Target-setting is currently ongoing in many countries but only a few Parties have finalized the process. The broad scope of the areas covered under article 6 makes target-setting a complex exercise, which calls for the engagement of many sectors and the division of tasks among different authorities. Ensuring cross-sectoral cooperation and public involvement are major challenges when setting targets;

(c) The opportunity offered by the Task Force to exchange experience in this area will continue to be important, especially because the remaining Parties will have to set targets, identify corresponding indicators and adopt programmes of measures during the period 2011–2013;

(d) In 2013, Parties and Signatories will have to provide summary reports to the joint secretariat in accordance with article 7. The Task Force can again play a role in facilitating the reporting exercise and identifying key common issues for the pan-European region in order to make proposals to improve the situation;

(e) Articles 6 and 7 of the Protocol require the Parties to set targets, adopt measures, review and report on a list of parameters linked to water-related diseases and water management. This means that all Parties will need to assess how much their actions have contributed to prevent, control and reduce water-related diseases. Thus the Task Force can play an important role in establishing evaluation systems that allow a correlation to be made between the incidence and outbreak of water-related diseases and other relevant indicators. Such an evaluation will make it possible to focus activities on challenges that require priority action;

(f) Discussions during previous meetings have highlighted the potential difficulties encountered with the common indicators. The Task Force should continue promoting a better understanding of these indicators and review them if needed;

(g) A main strength of the Protocol is that each Party can tailor its action to match its needs and priorities. While the situations in the different countries of the UNECE/WHO-EURO region vary greatly, countries share common problems, especially at the subregional level. Therefore, the exchange of experience is and will continue to be one of the main added values of the Protocol throughout the pan-European region, and the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting has an important role to play in promoting such an exchange.

V. Proposals for future areas of work

A. Overall objectives

16. Taking into account the above and considering the outcome of the third meeting of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting as well as the discussions at the fourth meeting of the Bureau of the Protocol, held in Geneva on 23–24 February 2010, the future work for the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting should continue to focus on the following:

(a) Supporting Parties' compliance with articles 6 (targets and target dates) and 7 (review and assessment of progress) and other related articles, in particular by promoting the implementation of the Guidelines on setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting, as well as the Guidelines on the summary reports;

(b) Promoting the exchange of experience between Parties and non-Parties on the implementation of the Protocol, in particular articles 6 and 7, and developing tools to address emerging issues within the framework of the Protocol by setting targets and developing programmes of measures that can help tackle them;

(c) Assisting Parties to assess the activities undertaken under the Protocol and to demonstrate progress towards its overarching objectives, in particular the prevention, control and reduction of water-related disease.

17. The Task Force should work closely with other bodies established under the Protocol and in particular the Task Force on Surveillance and the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism.

18. A general overview of the areas of work for the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting is presented below. More detailed proposals, including concrete activities and their financial implications, are listed in the draft programme of work for 2011–2013 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2010/L.3–EUR/10/56335/XI).

B. Setting targets, implementing measures and reporting

19. Within this area, work could focus on the following:

(a) Facilitating and promoting mechanisms for cross-sectoral cooperation;

(b) Strengthening public participation and fostering involvement of civil society;

(c) Linking targets with operational tasks and programmes of measures;

(d) Assisting Parties and non-Parties to comply with the reporting obligations of article 7.

C. Exchange of experience and emerging issues

20. Within this area, work could focus on the following endeavours:

(a) Strengthening implementation at the national level by promoting the exchange of experience in water and health within small groups of countries with similar conditions and challenges, possibly neighbouring countries;

(b) Exchanging experience and developing tools to address emerging issues through the setting of targets and the implementation of programmes of measures. Emerging issues could include small-scale supplies, access to sanitation and its sustainability, application and effectiveness of water safety plans, how to take into account

climate change and variability in setting targets, how to set targets at the local level and in the transboundary context, prevention and reduction of specific pollutants, and health impacts.

D. Assessment of the implementation of the Protocol and demonstration of progress

21. Within this area, work could focus on assisting Parties in designing indicators to show how far progress towards targets has contributed to the prevention, control and reduction of water-related disease.

E. Capacity-building and country-level assistance

22. Within this area, work could focus on capacity-building activities and assistance for individual countries in setting targets, designing and adopting a programme of measures, evaluating progress and reporting.
