



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

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## Report of the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (Geneva, 4 July 2014)

1. The seventh meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 4 July 2014. It was held back to back with the Regional workshop on linkages with other reporting mechanisms related to water and health (Geneva, 3 July 2014).
2. The meeting was attended by experts from the following countries: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
3. Representatives of the following international and non-governmental organizations as well as academia were also present: UN-Water, World Health Organization (WHO), WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication at the University of Bonn, Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE), ECO-TIRAS International Environmental Association of River Keepers, National Water Partnership of Georgia and the Eurasian National University under the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan. The meeting was serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe).

### Item 1: Opening of the meeting

4. The Chair of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health opened the meeting by recalling the mandate of the Task Force and the objectives of the meeting.

### Item 2: Adoption of the agenda

5. The Task Force adopted the provisional agenda as contained in document WH/TFTSR 07-01.

### Item 3: Election of officers

6. The Task Force elected Mr. Pierre Studer (Switzerland) as its Chair and Ms. Ana Drapa (Romania) and Mr. Ion Salaru (Republic of Moldova) as its Vice-Chairs for the period 2014–2016.

### Item 4: Progress in implementation of the Protocol's programme of work since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties

7. The seventh meeting of the Task Force was the first after the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Oslo, 25–27 November 2013). At its third session, the Meeting of the

Parties had reviewed the results of the second reporting exercise and specifically addressed the status of compliance of Parties to the Protocol with their main obligation of setting of targets and target dates. In addition, the Meeting of the Parties mandated the Task Force to conduct a number of activities to strengthen the implementation of articles 6 and 7 of the Protocol. The Chair summarized the tasks of the Task Force as follows:

- (a) To provide support to efforts by Parties and other States (i) to set targets and target dates in accordance with article 6 and (ii) to implement measures towards the achievement of targets;
- (b) To promote the exchange of experience and networking on the regional level to address common challenges and assess the benefits of implementing the Protocol, including benefits and challenges related to public participation;
- (c) To ensure coordination with activities under other areas of the programme of work to facilitate the translation of their findings and recommendations into possible targets and measures (in particular with regard to the equitable access, small-scale water supply and safe and efficient management areas of work);
- (d) To provide assistance in improving the quality of reporting in accordance with article 7 and in increasing the reliability of data, by establishing links with relevant regional and global data collection and reporting mechanisms.

8. Representatives of the following countries reported on their progress with setting targets and target dates as well as on other significant progress with the implementation of the programme of work:

- (a) Norway: the targets and target dates had been set and approved by the Government on 22 May 2014 and were currently being translated into English. In terms of content, targets had been set in all the areas proposed under article 6 of the Protocol. The process of setting targets started in 2008 and the acceptance of targets required over two years of discussion. While targets in some areas were not costly to achieve or were already being implemented, some others would require significant investment, for example the renewal of water supply networks which is a major infrastructure and financial challenge for Norway. An action plan for the implementation of the targets was expected to be developed by October 2014;
- (b) Bosnia: no significant progress could be reported due to recent institutional changes as well as the floods in spring 2014. The country intended to establish a core team or a working group to start setting targets;
- (c) Ukraine: no progress had been achieved since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. Significant budget cuts were foreseen, including in the water and sanitation sector. Moreover, Ukraine was unable to assess the situation with regard to water and health in Crimea, which was also to a large extent the case in Eastern Ukraine, due to political tensions. Efforts were still being made to provide access to safe drinking water to population;
- (d) Azerbaijan: while the country had not yet set targets, the work under different target areas was being implemented in the framework of ongoing State programmes. Since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, the main achievement had been the development of the national water sector strategy, supported by the UNECE-led National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation operating under the European Union

Water Initiative (NPDs), as well as the construction of water supply systems and wastewater treatment facilities and educational reforms. In addition, based on an inventory of water infrastructure, a list of villages that needed improvements had been prepared. Further, a bilateral agreement on transboundary waters between Azerbaijan and Georgia had been drafted;

(e) Serbia: a baseline study on drinking water quality and water-related diseases was undertaken prior to setting targets. Data from the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) were used in the study. The findings of the baseline study would be presented at the national target setting workshop planned to be organized jointly by UNECE and WHO/Europe at the end of 2014. Serbia was expecting to set targets within two years after becoming a Party;

(f) Hungary: the targets were set in 2008 and the country would now be interested in revising and replacing some of them. Governmental approval had been received to apply the Equitable Access Score-card at the national level, with the process expected to start in September 2014;

(g) Uzbekistan: the country was not yet a Party to the Protocol but was considering possible accession with consultations ongoing within the key ministries. Representatives of Uzbekistan expressed interest in hosting a workshop aimed at familiarizing national stakeholders with the Protocol's provisions and obligations. The secretariat would look into the possibility of organizing a national workshop in accordance with the methodology tested in other countries of the region, provided that there would be a formal expression of interest from the country;

(h) Georgia: the country was not yet a Party to the Protocol. However, it was already in the process of setting targets, having identified 20 indicators in 8 target areas and was looking into setting new targets in 12 areas. Georgia had submitted its national summary reports under the two reporting cycles under the Protocol and was reporting under GLAAS. As for the process of accession to the Protocol, an intersectoral commission was established and was currently preparing a set of documents to be sent to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, if approved, to the Government and to the Parliament. The NPD process in the country would be instrumental in the accession process;

(i) Belarus: a working group involving key ministries and agencies had been established by decree of the Ministry of Health. Targets had been approved at the end of 2013 and 15 targets in 8 priority areas were set by the Ministry of Health, in consultation with all other responsible agencies, with the target date of 2015. The importance of focusing on country priority areas was particularly highlighted. The subregional workshop held in 2011 had been very useful for advancing the target-setting process. Setting targets had been useful for improving the sanitary-epidemiological and environmental protection legislation in the country. Currently the country was preparing for the revision of targets;

(j) France: a National Plan for Health and Environment for 2014–2018 was under development and expected to be finalized in September 2014. The draft National Plan focused on collective services and supplies, monitoring, updating drinking water quality standards, raising awareness among stakeholders, implementation of water safety plans (WSP) in particular in small-scale water supplies, protection of groundwater resources, developing regulations for restricting agricultural activities and reduction of water-related diseases (e.g. legionella). It also included a recommendation to apply the Equitable Access Score-card at the regional level. A national action plan on non-collective sanitation was referred to as an important milestone towards the achievement of the Protocol's objectives;

- (k) Kazakhstan: the process of setting targets was ongoing with the support of NPD. In April 2014, the Interministerial Coordination Council held in the framework of NPD requested the ministry responsible for water issues to initiate the national process for possible accession of Kazakhstan to the Protocol;
- (l) Romania: no progress had been achieved since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. The country was now considering the different modalities for adoption of targets and target dates;
- (m) Netherlands: the targets set by the country were being implemented in the framework of the relevant EU directives. A number of targets had been achieved and the target setting process had helped to improve the situation in the areas of water safety and public participation. Legionella was identified as a water-related disease of concern. Improving legislation on pesticides and monitoring of pharmaceuticals and micropollutants in drinking water would be the priority areas in the future process of revising the targets;
- (n) Kyrgyzstan: the country was not yet a Party but targets had been set in the context of the Protocol and endorsed by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment. The targets were set in nine areas for the period of 2015–2020 and had subsequently been integrated in national strategic documents;
- (o) Switzerland: the country had set targets and target dates but approval from all the relevant ministries and agencies was needed in order to formalize them;
- (p) Republic of Moldova: the country was in the second phase of a UNECE- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation project which was focused on developing an action plan for the implementation of the targets set. Other project outputs included elaboration of norms and standards for small-scale water supplies, training courses for water operators, establishment of the Clearing House and awareness-raising campaigns;
- (q) Armenia: the representatives of Armenia provided information on the outcomes of the recently-completed project, supported by UNECE and the Government of Finland through the NPD process: the work on the baseline analysis had been completed and the draft targets and targets dates were set in the context of the Protocol. An action plan to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and the roadmap for ratification of the Protocol were also developed.

9. WHO/Europe briefed the Task Force on progress in the implementation of activities under the programme area 2 “Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases”. A kick-off meeting on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was to be organized by WHO/Europe, jointly with the co-lead Parties, on 18–19 September 2014. Its primary aim would be to bring together relevant stakeholders, review current evidence and map the challenges and needs. The meeting on strengthening surveillance of water-related diseases was to be organized in cooperation with lead Parties on 22–23 October 2014 in order to address priorities and define further activities. Participants were invited to attend both meetings.

10. The representative of Serbia, co-lead Party of the programme area 3 “Small-scale water supplies and sanitation”, informed the Task Force on progress in this area of work: the draft document “Small-scale water supply and sanitation systems in the WHO European Region: good

practices for policy-makers” had been revised and distributed for limited peer-review; the report of the questionnaire survey on small-scale water supplies was being finalized; the meeting of the WHO Small Community Water Supply Management Network was held in Bishkek on 26–27 June 2014, back-to-back with a WSP capacity building workshop (24–25 June 2014), both funded by the German Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. The outcomes of these activities were to be presented at the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, 26–27 November 2014).

#### **Item 5: Obligations of Parties related to the setting of targets and target dates**

(a) Review of general progress in setting targets and target dates and challenges encountered by Parties which have not yet set targets

11. While progress in setting targets and target dates was mostly reported under the previous agenda item, discussions under the present item focused on the challenges encountered by Parties in this process. The countries were particularly interested in the different modalities for adopting the targets set. The recommendation of the *Guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health*<sup>1</sup> is that “the final, agreed targets and target dates should be endorsed at the appropriate political level (e.g., council of ministers or Parliament, depending on the national situation)”. The secretariat noted that while countries enjoy certain flexibility when formally adopting the targets set, ensuring continuous political commitment should be the guiding principle when selecting a procedure that would be the most appropriate in the national context.

12. It was suggested that the Guidelines could be extended or illustrated with practical examples to offer more precise guidance on this topic.

13. The communication of targets to the secretariat could also be used to share information on the modality chosen for adopting targets. The representative of Romania suggested complementing the template for summary reports with the request for information on whether the targets and target dates were officially approved and on the modality of the approval process in the country.

14. The Chair of the Task Force encouraged those Parties that had not yet set targets and target dates to use the guidance material available and to take advantage of the new consultation process offered by the Compliance Committee, which aims at assisting Parties with developing an accurate analysis of their situation prior to setting targets under the Protocol.

(b) Possible need for updating the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting*

15. Participants generally considered the Guidelines to be a clear, comprehensive and useful document that would, however, need to be updated and revised (i) in the light of new priority areas of work under the Protocol (e.g. equitable access, safe and efficient management, WASH in schools) and the examples of targets set in these areas, (ii) taking stock of the lessons learned and (iii) in view of the future Sustainable Development Goals.

16. It was decided to establish a drafting group that would work on updating the Guidelines in the course of 2015. The following experts offered to take part in the work of the group: Ms. Alena

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<sup>1</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=11644>

Drozdova (Belarus), Ms. Marta Vargha (Hungary), Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway), Mr. Ion Salaru (Republic of Moldova), Ms. Ana Drapa (Romania), Ms. Irina Rudenko (Ukraine), Ms. Andrea Rechenburg (WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication) and Ms. Emma Anakhasyan (AWHHE).

17. It was agreed that the first revision of the Guidelines would focus on certain procedural aspects of target setting and examples of targets set under the different areas. More detailed information should be added to the Guidelines on the possible process to follow for the formal adoption of the targets. The revision should also address earlier comments by the Compliance Committee.<sup>2</sup> This exercise was expected to be completed by July 2015 and the outcomes of the revision would result in an addendum to the current Guidelines.

18. After July 2015, the drafting group would start working on mapping priorities and the scope of a broader revision that would take into account the post-2015 development agenda and reflect these new perspectives in the publication of a second edition of the Guidelines. The question of whether to reissue Guidelines would be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session in 2016.

## **Item 6: Obligations of Parties related to reporting**

### **(a) Revision of the guidelines and template for summary reports**

19. Participants agreed on the need to revise the template for summary reports to reflect the priority areas of the current programme of work of the Protocol in the reporting scheme. Participants agreed to send their comments to the secretariat by 15 September 2014. The comments by the Compliance Committee should also be taken into account. A first draft of the revised template should be prepared by the drafting group by the eighth meeting of the Task Force (tentatively scheduled for July 2015) and subsequently to the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (tentatively scheduled for October 2015).

20. Further revision of the template for summary reports and reporting guidelines, for the fourth reporting exercise, would also take into account the post-2015 development agenda and establish linkages with the existing and future global monitoring and reporting mechanisms such as GLAAS and the WHO / United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP).

The comparative advantage of the Protocol is that it looks into certain areas where information is not yet available in the public domain.

21. Experts from WHO Headquarters offered to support the Protocol's activities for establishing links with global monitoring and reporting mechanisms on water and sanitation. Wastewater would be an area of particular interest for WHO, which intended, at a later stage, to approach countries and to invite them to participate in a voluntary exercise to map how countries can feed a future global monitoring mechanism on wastewater. As pointed out by WHO/Europe, a national workshop on target setting under the Protocol and the capacity building training on global monitoring mechanisms, to be organized back to back in Serbia in December 2014, would be the first in-country support activity to link the national target-setting and the global monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Report of the Compliance Committee to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WH/2013/4-EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/MOP-3/11)

b) Linkages with other monitoring and reporting mechanisms

22. The Chair presented the conclusions of the regional workshop on linkages with other existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms related to water and health (Geneva, 3 July 2014). He highlighted that the establishment of linkages with global monitoring and reporting mechanisms (WHO/UNICEF JMP and GLAAS) could improve the quality of reporting under the Protocol. In particular, he noted the need to identify and utilize existing sources of data and indicators from national and international monitoring and reporting mechanisms. This usage of internationally available data sources would also avoid duplication in reporting efforts.

23. The Task force was also informed of the outcomes of the discussions that took place during the workshop. Participants in the workshop had highlighted:

(a) The high variability of the responsibilities held by different institutions at the national level regarding monitoring and reporting on water, sanitation and health, the problem of collaboration and data exchange between different ministries and the key role of the national department of statistics;

(b) The complementarity of information collected under JMP, GLAAS and the national monitoring systems in establishing of a national baseline and the identification of priority targets, as well as preparation of national summary reports;

(c) The great opportunity for harmonizing the national indicators to monitor progress in implementation of targets under the Protocol with indicators of existing monitoring programmes as well as the new SDG indicators;

(d) The usefulness of the common indicators in the national summary reports under the Protocol and the need to add other types of indicators (e.g. indicators related to hygiene promotion, equity of access to water and sanitation, human resources, financing mechanisms, WSP and wastewater treatment and reuse ) to better reflect countries' situations on water, sanitation and health.

24. The Task Force requested the secretariat and the drafting group to consider these issues when revising the *Guidelines on Target Setting and Reporting*.

(c) Role of the Atlas on Water and Health in support of reporting under the Protocol

25. The Task Force was also informed about the results of the discussions held during the regional workshop on linkages with other reporting mechanisms, in particular the potential role of the Atlas on Water and Health in supporting reporting under the Protocol. The Task Force recognized that the Atlas is both a good source of information for countries in the baseline assessment or review of progress over time and an important tool to support reporting under the Protocol and to communicate to the public the progress made by countries.

26. It was suggested (i) to develop a template for on-line reporting that could be used by countries in reporting under the Protocol and (ii) disseminate the main findings of the national reports in the form of standardized short summary sheets using the Atlas platform. WHO CC expressed its readiness to be involved in the development of the template, as well as producing the communication material for the public.

**Item 7: Public participation in target setting and reporting**

27. A representative of Romania presented the *Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health*, which was adopted at the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. She invited the Task Force to promote the exchange of experience at the regional level to support public participation in implementing the Protocol, in particular in setting and implementing targets and in reporting on the progress achieved, according to the decision adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. The *Guide to Public Participation* was already available in English and Russian. The Chair noted the importance of further promoting the guidance document. The Task Force agreed that the revision of *Guidelines on Target Setting and Reporting*, as well as the reporting template and guidelines should refer to the *Guide to Public Participation*.

#### **Item 8: Implementation of the Task Force's programme of work for 2014–2016**

28. The Task Force reviewed its programme of work for 2014–2016 and discussed the importance of setting clear priorities. Regarding the scope of the future meetings of the Task Force, participants suggested the inclusion of a thematic aspect on sanitation and wastewater, ensuring cooperation between sectors to create a broader commitment to the Protocol and the prioritization and cost-benefit analysis of targets.

29. The Task Force agreed that priorities for future work should be set in accordance with the financial resources available and the pledges received from Parties. The Chair encouraged all Parties to the Protocol, and lead Parties in particular, to consider financing the activities of the Task Force.

30. Albania, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia expressed interest in the organization of a subregional workshop that would facilitate the process of accession to the Protocol and the target-setting process.

31. The joint secretariat reported on the funding received from the United Nations Development Account for activities under the programme areas of equitable access and small-scale water supplies and sanitation and encouraged eligible countries to express interest in organizing country missions, national workshops and regional activities.

32. UNECE noted the significant support to the implementation of the Task Force's programme of work that had been provided by the UNECE-led NPDs. Contributions were both financial (co-funding the organization of workshops at national and subregional levels, sponsoring participants for the meetings of the Task Force, etc.) and substantive (boosting involvement of the water, environment and health authorities in the process of target setting and/or accession to the Protocol).

33. The Task Force tentatively agreed to hold its next meeting on 2–3 July 2015.

#### **Item 7: Closing of the meeting**

34. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.30 p.m.

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