



Report of the eighth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (Geneva, 2 July 2015)

1. The eighth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 2 July 2015. It was held back to back with the Informal Review Group under the Task Force (1 July 2015) and the fourteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Protocol (3 July 2015).
2. The meeting was attended by experts from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.
3. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations as well as academia were present: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE), MAMA-86 and WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication at the University of Bonn. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Compliance Committee as well as of the project "Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova". 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 opened the meeting and invited the Vice-Chair to introduce 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 08–01.

Item 3: Progress in implementation of the programme of work of the Task Force and review of general progress in setting targets and target dates, as well as challenges encountered by Parties

6. 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) The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: the country, while not yet being Party to the Protocol (the accession process is expected to start next year), has already established inter-sectoral mechanism and prepared draft targets in accordance with the *Guidelines on the setting of targets*,

*evaluation of progress and reporting under the Protocol on Water and Health*¹, including making the targets available to the general public through a web-based platform. The targets have been prepared within the National Health and Environment Strategy which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2015;

(b) The Republic of Moldova: the latest achievement under the UNECE- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation project was the finalization of the National Programme on implementing national targets under the Protocol, including the draft Action Plan and draft financial mobilization strategy as well as the revised targets. Revised indicators and new targets related to safe and efficient management and equitable access were introduced. The National Programme is expected to be adopted by the end of 2015. The importance of involving relevant ministries beyond environment and health sectors as well as the civil society and local communities was also highlighted;

(c) Norway: the targets were set in May 2014 and communicated to the secretariat in 2015. The focus is now on developing an action plan to implement the targets which is to be finalized by October 2015. Information on the targets set and activities under the Protocol was also reported to the Norwegian Parliament within the regular reporting on public health issues. The Parliament was particularly interested in the targets and action plan for implementation. Speeding up the renewal of water pipelines networks and raising awareness among the municipalities remains a major infrastructure and financial challenge in the country;

(d) Serbia: the targets were set and communicated to the secretariat within two years of becoming Party to the Protocol and the country is already planning implementation activities, including a number of projects at the local level. The representatives of Serbia also requested support for applying the Equitable Access Score-card;

(e) Slovakia: the targets, initially set in 2007, have been revised in 2014 with target dates by 2020. Implementaion workplan is currently under discussion and is expected to be finalized in December 2015.

(f) Hungary: the targets were set in 2008 with most target dates being until 2015. The revision of the targets and targets dates has been initiated.

(g) Switzerland: the country had set targets and target dates but the official approval by the authorities responsible for health and environment is expected by the end of 2015;

(h) Netherlands: targets were set, when applicable, in accordance with the relevant EU regulatory framework (Drinking Water Directive, Waste Water Directive and Water Framework Directive). As some target dates are until 2015, the Netherlands will consider revision. Revision will *inter alia* follow the policy document on Drinking Water which was adopted by the Parliament;

(i) France: the National Plan for Health and Environment for 2015–2019 developed with participation of the ministries of environment, agriculture, health and civil society has been recently adopted. The Plan calls for the application of the Equitable Access Score-card at the regional level. Targets under the Protocol might be set in 2016;

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

(j) Romania: the targets have not been officially approved as the country is still considering different modalities for adoption. With the recent changes in the government, the official adoption of targets could be expected by the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties. Representative of Romania considered useful a possibility of an exchange on certain aspects of target setting with the Republic of Moldova;

(k) Bosnia and Herzegovina: there is strong support to the Protocol at national level and every opportunity is used to promote it. However, an inter-sectoral mechanism has not been established yet. The current focus is on the development of the first national water management plan, then efforts will be concentrated on target setting under the Protocol. The invitation to join the Compliance Committee consultation process as an observer was appreciated;

(l) Belarus: the targets set in 2013 were being implemented thanks to the funding allocated from the national budget. The country is currently in process of assessing the progress made. The revision of targets and target dates is to be initiated in late 2015 in order to coincide with the budget planning for the next period;

(m) Armenia: the Ministry of Nature Protection was working closely with AWWHE on accession to the Protocol and official adoption of the targets set within the UNECE-led project. AWWHE also promoted the Protocol at a number of international meetings such as the 7th World Water Forum (Daegu and Gyeongbuk, 12–17 April 2015) and the High-Level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade for Action «Water for Life» (Dushanbe, 9–10 June 2015).

7. A member of the Compliance Committee recalled the possibility of using the unique consultation process under the Committee to support implementation of the target setting and reporting obligations of Parties to the Protocol. The Task Force would be called to provide expertise and contribute to the follow up of the consultation processes.² The Task Force was also invited to provide financial resources for the planned and future consultations.

8. The Task Force was informed about a number of national workshops conducted in 2014–2015 (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) as well as about the future plans (activities planned in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine). The joint secretariat intended to follow the same pattern of combining accession and/or target setting aspects with technical issues as such format proved to be useful and well received by national stakeholders.

9. Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed interest in the organization of a subregional workshop that would facilitate the process of accession to the Protocol and the national target setting processes in the countries of South-Eastern Europe. The country also welcomed the possibility of a subregional project.

10. WHO/Europe briefed the Task Force on the key highlights from the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme's final MDG assessment report and outcomes of the GLAAS 2013/2014 reporting exercise. The representatives from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia noted that GLAAS data was useful for establishing baseline and setting targets.

² More information on the upcoming consultations is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38171#/>

Item 4: Revision of the guidelines and template for summary reports and updating the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting*

11. The informal review group established at the seventh meeting of the Task Force (Geneva, 4 July 2014) to revise the template for summary reports introduced, at its first and second meetings (Oslo, 8 May 2015, and Geneva, 1 July 2015), a number of explanatory notes and clarifications and editorial changes made to the template for summary reports adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session. The Task Force reviewed and endorsed the suggested revisions to the template and recommended the Working Group on Water and Health to encourage Parties and non-Parties to the Protocol to use the revised template in the third reporting cycle. Further written comments on the document were invited by 20 July 2015.

12. The Task Force also considered that the deadline for submission of summary reports should be, as in previous reporting cycles, 210 days prior to the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Bern, 14–16 November 2016), i.e., 18 April 2016.

13. The Task Force discussed that the *Guidelines on the Setting of Targets, Evaluation of Progress and Reporting* proved to be a comprehensive tool that has been extensively used in the past five years. Applying the Guidelines in the process of target setting and reporting has allowed acquiring a wealth of experience on how to translate the guidelines into practice which could now be made available to all Parties to the Protocol and other States. The Task Force has agreed that an interactive exchange at its next meeting, also linked to a session on reporting, would be timely and useful. The output of this exercise could be made available in a document collecting good practices in target setting and reporting and analysing them in a systematic way.

14. The Task Force members suggested a number of issues to be included in such collection of good practices on target setting and reporting under the Protocol:

- Role of the focal points of the Protocol as well as of a national coordination mechanism (including using the National Policy Dialogues framework);
- Cooperating with the municipal authorities to support implementation at local level;
- Mechanisms, procedures and solutions in place in different countries for setting and implementing the targets;
- Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis prior to the target setting process and sharing the experience and tools with other countries;
- Development and implementation of national action plans to implement the targets set, including distributing responsibilities among relevant authorities and financial implications;
- Added value of the Protocol requirements vis-à-vis EU legislation;
- Delivering a strong message about the usefulness of the target setting process to the politicians;
- Illustrating with examples each step of the target setting process.

15. As regards further revisions to the template for national summary reports to be adopted for the fourth reporting cycle, the Task Force has agreed on a number of key considerations for future reporting system under the Protocol:

- Strengthening the Part IV of the current reporting template with a view of gaining comprehensive information on the overall implementation of the Protocol with a particular focus on the core obligations under the Protocol (e.g. articles 6, 7 and 8);
- Careful judgment of the usefulness of the information requested;

- Harmonizing the reporting system with the priority areas under the programme of work (e.g. equitable access, small scale systems, safe and efficient management);
- Reflecting success stories that demonstrate progress achieved under the Protocol as well as the added value of joining the Protocol;
- Strengthening reporting on inter-sectoral cooperation and public and citizens' involvement;
- Aligning reporting requirements under the Protocol with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) relevant to the water, sanitation, hygiene and health;
- Aligning with other regional and global commitments such as the human right to water and sanitation;
- Considering establishing linkages with other reporting systems.

16. It was agreed that the Informal review group would work on a proposal for future reporting under the Protocol to be submitted to the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties. If approved, an online tool for reporting would be established.

17. The Task Force was informed about the progress with the post-2015 agenda as well as the UN Water proposal on indicators for the future water goal. Country representatives were encouraged to liaise with the national focal points to influence the development of indicators. It was noted that the Protocol is well positioned to take forward implementation of the sustainable development goals related to water and sanitation as well as has clear synergy with targets on education and gender equality.

Item 5: Preparations for the third reporting cycle under the Protocol on Water and Health

18. The Task Force was informed about the timeline for the third reporting cycle, particularly of the proposed deadline of 18 April 2016 for submission of national summary reports by Parties, Signatories and other interested countries (210 days prior to the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Bern, 14–16 November 2016)).³

Item 6: Closing of the meeting

19. The Task Force tentatively agreed to hold its next meeting in Geneva on 1 March 2016, back to back with the workshop on collecting good practices on target setting and reporting under the Protocol.

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

³ Timeline for the third reporting cycle is available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/WAT/07Jul_01-03_TF_Geneva/Timeline_third_reporting_exercise_Jul2015.pdf