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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

Sixth meeting

Geneva, 3 and 4 July 2013

**Report of the Working Group on Water and Health on
its sixth meeting**

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–12	3
A. Attendance	3–8	3
B. Organizational matters	9–12	3
II. Progress in the ratification process	13	4
III. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol	14–29	4
IV. Surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities	30–40	6
V. Small-scale water supplies and sanitation	41–50	7
VI. Public awareness, access to information and public participation	51–53	9
VII. Equitable access	54–59	9
VIII. Project Facilitation Mechanism	60–63	10
IX. Promotion of the Protocol and advocacy	64	11
X. Ongoing programme of work for 2011–2013	65–69	11
XI. Programme of work for 2014–2016, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation	70–82	12

XII.	Preparations for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties	83–85	14
XIII.	Compliance procedure	86–89	14
XIV.	Strengthening synergies between the different activities under the Protocol	90–92	15
XV.	Date and venue of the seventh meeting.....	93	15

I. Introduction

1. The sixth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held on 3 and 4 July 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. A side event on “Water in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: How to achieve an aspirational water Sustainable Development Goal?” was held during the lunch break on 3 July 2013. It was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and UN-Water with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

A. Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
4. The World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication (hosted by the Institute for Hygiene and Public Health, University of Bonn) were represented.
5. Representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) office in Tajikistan and the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia participated in the meeting.
6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment; the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition (EEHYC); the International Centre for Environmental Research; the Kyrgyz Alliance for Water and Sanitation; MAMA-86; the International Environmental Association for River Keepers (Eco-TIRAS); Kuhiston; the Social-Ecological Fund; and Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF).
7. A representative of the University of Geneva also attended.
8. In addition, the Chair of the Protocol’s Compliance Committee was present during the meeting.

B. Organizational matters

9. The Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health, Mr. Kjetil Tveitan (Norway), opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.
10. The Chair recalled that the meeting would be devoted to the preparation of the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Oslo, 25–27 November 2013).
11. The Working Group was informed about the changes in the joint secretariat and introduced to the newly appointed co-Secretaries of the Protocol from ECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe). The Working Group took the occasion to express its appreciation for the exemplary service of the previous co-secretaries.

12. The Working Group was informed of the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between ECE and WHO/Europe on work-sharing arrangements regarding the secretariat functions of the Protocol, in accordance with article 17 of the Protocol, and expressed the hope that that would further strengthen the servicing of the Protocol.

II. Progress in the ratification process

13. The Chair noted that the number of Parties to the Protocol had reached 26 with the recent ratification by Serbia. Representatives from Kazakhstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan briefed the Working Group on the progress made in their countries towards accession to the Protocol. The representative of EEHYC highlighted the importance of the participatory process that had taken place in Serbia for the completion of the country's accession.

III. Setting targets and reporting under the Protocol

14. The Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting briefly presented the outcomes of the sixth meeting of the Task Force (Geneva, 14 February 2013). A number of Parties still faced problems in the setting of targets and target dates. On a positive note, the subregional workshops that had been implemented under the current programme of work had been very successful in meeting their objectives and had been highly appreciated by the participants.

15. The representatives of Parties and other States reported on the process of setting and implementing targets and target dates. The representative of Armenia informed the meeting on the start of a project on setting targets and targets dates financed by Finland and implemented by ECE. The representative of Kyrgyzstan, recalling that the country was not a Party to the Protocol, observed that the process of setting targets and target dates in the context of the Protocol had been completed in the country, with the official adoption of targets in June 2013 in the framework of a project financially supported by Norway. A representative of Tajikistan informed participants about the finalization of the country's draft national targets through a project also supported by Norway.

16. A representative of Romania reported that Romania had progressed in its process of the official adoption of national targets under the Protocol. Belarus also noted that it was close to officially adopting its targets. The Republic of Moldova reported on progress in the implementation of national targets set in 2010. The process was currently supported by a project funded by Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by ECE.

17. Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia requested assistance in setting targets and targets dates through projects on the ground and the organization of a subregional workshop for South-Eastern Europe.

18. Representatives of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Lithuania described national activities implemented in support of the Protocol's objectives.

19. A representative of Norway reported on outcomes of the subregional workshop for Nordic and Baltic countries held in Oslo on 7 and 8 November 2012. The ECE secretariat reported on the results of the subregional workshop for countries of the Caucasus (Tbilisi, 27–28 May 2013) and shared plans for the organization of the last subregional workshop in the current programme of work, which was to be for Central Asia.

20. A representative of WHO headquarters informed the Working Group about the current status of access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation in the WHO European Region, based on data from the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) of WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Overall, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target 7c had already been met with respect to access to improved drinking water sources. However, the WHO European Region might not meet the MDG sanitation target if the current trend continued. There were significant disparities in access to piped water supplies and improved sanitation between the countries and between urban and rural areas, in particular in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

21. The WHO/Europe secretariat briefed the Working Group on the outcomes of a meeting on strengthening the monitoring of water supply and sanitation held in June 2013 in Bonn, Germany. The meeting had aimed at raising awareness about the advantages and future needs of the WHO co-led global monitoring programmes, such as JMP and the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS). It was highlighted that JMP and GLAAS data could be used for baseline analysis, target setting and monitoring of progress under the Protocol. In response to member States' requests, WHO/Europe continued to support national capacity-building on global monitoring programmes and facilitated the participation by a number of Protocol Parties and Signatories in the 2013–2014 GLAAS reporting cycle.

22. Based on the discussion, the Working Group expressed its appreciation for the work of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting in 2011–2013, and underscored the expected central role of the Task Force in the work on target setting and reporting for the next triennium.

23. The Working Group also appreciated the usefulness of the subregional workshops and expressed strong support for their continuation in the next programme of work. In that regard, it requested the Chair of the Task Force to prepare an overview of the lessons learned and future work on target setting and reporting for submission to the third session of the Meeting of the Parties.

24. The Working Group recognized the complementary role and potential synergies of the global monitoring programmes (JMP and GLAAS) for baseline analysis, target setting, monitoring and reporting under the Protocol, and encouraged countries to continue to support those activities.

25. The Chair of the Task Force opened the discussion on reporting under the Protocol by presenting the main conclusions and recommendations of the workshop on reporting held in Geneva on 12 and 13 February 2013.

26. A representative of the ECE secretariat presented the status of the submission of national summary reports and summarized their initial analysis. There was an overall improving trend in water and health issues in the region, and considerable improvement in the rate of compliance of Parties with the guidelines and template for reporting as compared with the pilot reporting exercise held in 2010.

27. The Chair of the Working Group invited Parties that had not yet submitted their summary reports to do so as soon as possible.

28. The Working Group entrusted the secretariat with the communication of all national summary reports to all Parties and other States through the Protocol website prior to the third session of the Meeting of the Parties.

29. The Working Group also entrusted the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with the finalization of the regional report on the implementation of the Protocol for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

IV. Surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities

30. A representative of the WHO/Europe secretariat updated the Working Group on the achievements under programme area 2 (Surveillance and early-warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities), particularly the final publication of the technical and policy guidance documents on water-related disease surveillance, the activities on prevention and control of soil-transmitted helminths (STH) and the further development of the Atlas on Water and Health. Further activities foreseen under the programme of work could not be further pursued due to resource constraints.

31. The WHO/Europe secretariat raised concern about the substantial challenges encountered in the human and financial resources to support implementation of the planned activities under the current programme of work. Therefore, the secretariat requested the Working Group to review whether the Task Force on Water-related Disease Surveillance (Task Force on Surveillance) should be maintained in the future, as well as examine possibilities for different modes of its operation in the new triennium.

32. Furthermore, a representative of the WHO/Europe secretariat informed the Working Group about the expert group meeting on “advancing approaches towards effective prevention and reduction of water-related diseases in the European region”, scheduled to be held on 5 and 6 September 2013 in Bonn, Germany. The aim of the meeting would be to support the implementation of the current programme while also looking forward to plan for the realization of the activities contained in the proposed programme of work for 2014–2016. He thanked the Government of Norway for funding that activity that had been pending due to lack of funds since 2012.

33. The representative from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication at the University of Bonn presented the scope and design of the updated Atlas on Water and Health. The Atlas served as a “one stop” entry point to various existing data sources on water, sanitation and health and provided tools to retrieve country-specific information. It supported baseline analyses and target setting under the Protocol on Water and Health, as well as informed decision-making on water and health issues.

34. The Chair invited the Working Group to provide inputs for the further development of the Atlas and to give feedback on the usefulness of the Atlas and its linkage with the national reporting under the Protocol. The representatives of Italy, Switzerland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia acknowledged the added value of the Atlas in its provision of easy access to data and felt that it could serve as a useful tool in setting targets, evaluation of progress and reporting under the Protocol. The Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting suggested discussing the details of the Atlas and its potential use for target setting and reporting at the next Task Force meeting.

35. The Working Group recognized that the Atlas could serve as a complementary information source for Parties in setting targets under the Protocol, and recommended that the linkage with the work of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting be further strengthened.

36. The WHO/Europe secretariat provided an overview of the burden of STH in the region and basic epidemiology of the transmission of that disease. Adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and disposal of human excreta were key determinants of STH transmission. Therefore, creating sustainable WASH conditions in child-intensive settings was an important component of the STH prevention and control strategies.

37. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the outcomes of the country assessments of the WASH and STH situation in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Romania, and on the status of preparation for and scope of a forthcoming workshop on a regional framework for control and prevention of STH to be held on 16 and 17 September 2013 in Bonn, Germany.

38. The Working Group recognized the relevance of STH prevention and control activities to the Protocol and recommended that the programme of work for 2014–2016 emphasize that issue within the programme area on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases.

39. The WHO/Europe secretariat introduced the proposed future activities under programme area 2 for 2014–2016 (prevention and reduction of water-related diseases), which included: (a) strengthening water-related disease surveillance, outbreak detection and management; (b) supporting effective and resource-sensitive drinking-water quality surveillance; (c) promoting targeted health interventions for water- and sanitation-related diseases; and (d) strengthening and promoting hygiene education and sanitation in schools.

40. The Working Group supported the proposed workplan for 2014–2016 under programme area 2, and advised that such activities should be implemented through a flexible and cost-effective work approach, calling upon thematic expert groups rather than through a task force structure. The Working Group entrusted the Bureau and the joint secretariat to explore potential lead and/or co-lead countries and organizations for that area of work.

V. Small-scale water supplies and sanitation

41. The representative of Germany provided an overview of work under the programme area on small-scale water supplies and sanitation (SSWSS) since the second session of the Meeting of the Parties. She highlighted a survey aiming at improving the evidence base on the current status of small-scale water supplies in the pan-European region. There had been a high response rate to the questionnaire — 81 per cent (43 countries). The analysis of the reported data was under way and was expected to be finalized by the end of 2013.

42. The representative of Germany also updated participants on the scope and progress in the development of the policy guidance document, “Small-scale water supplies and sanitation in the pan-European region: Policy instruments and programmes towards improvement”. At two lead-Party meetings held in June 2011 and June 2013 in Berlin the scope of the document had been defined and chapter drafts had been discussed. Further development of the chapters, including practical case studies, was ongoing. Collaboration had been established with the programme areas on equitable access and on target setting and reporting, with the representatives of those activities actively contributing to the development of the document. Since the start of the activity, the progress had been slower than initially expected, primarily due to a lack of resources.

43. The Working Group stressed the importance of the document and suggested that it should include practical case studies from various subregions, provide information on the definitions of categories of SSWSS, address a simplified, conceptual risk-based monitoring framework and include financial and cost-recovery aspects.

44. The representative of Germany further informed the Working Group that the WHO guidance document, *Water Safety Planning for Small Community Water Supplies: Step-by-*

*step risk management guidance for drinking-water supplies in small communities,*¹ had been translated into Russian and widely disseminated to better facilitate the application of the Water Safety Plan (WSP) approach in small-scale water supplies in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

45. Furthermore, the German representative noted that field projects, funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, had been implemented in Georgia and Tajikistan jointly by national counterparts, WHO/Europe and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Drinking Water Hygiene at the German Federal Environment Agency. In Tajikistan, WSP demonstration projects had been implemented in rural areas alongside with broad WSP capacity-building of local, regional and national stakeholders. As an outcome of the project, a WSP field guide had been published in Tajik and English. In Georgia, in order to support baseline analysis, a rapid assessment of the situation of small-scale water supplies had been undertaken. A representative of Georgia expressed gratitude for the support provided by WHO/Europe and Germany and highlighted the added value of the project in understanding the extent of problems related to small-scale supplies in rural areas and raising awareness and focusing attention on the subject at the political level.

46. The representative of WECF informed the Working Group of projects implemented in Bulgaria to promote the WSP approach in rural settings, in particular in schools. WSP training modules for rural settings had also been developed and made available online. It was stressed that water and sanitation safety plans required a harmonized approach and that training modules or guidance should be developed for sanitation safety plans.

47. The WHO/Europe secretariat updated the Working Group on plans for convening a meeting for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia under the joint auspices of the WHO International Small Community Water Supply Network and the Protocol on Water and Health. The meeting would seek to raise awareness on the regulation and practical implementation of WSPs, with a particular focus on SSWSS. The meeting was expected to take place in June 2014.

48. The WHO/Europe secretariat described the steps taken and the outcomes of the discussion with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on cooperation in the area of SSWSS, and outlined potential joint activities for 2014–2016 under the Protocol.

49. The Working Group acknowledged the efforts and substantial achievements made in the area of SSWSS. It entrusted the co-Leaders for SSWSS to prepare an extended outline of the policy document to be presented to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session, and to submit a peer-reviewed, finalized draft for adoption to the Working Group on Water and Health at its next meeting in 2014.

50. The Working Group further noted the steps taken by the joint secretariat and UN-Habitat to strengthen cooperation in the area of small-scale water supplies within the programme of work for 2014–2016.

¹ World Health Organization (Geneva, Switzerland, 2012). Available from http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2012/water_supplies/en/.

VI. Public awareness, access to information and public participation

51. A representative of Romania presented the process that had led to the elaboration of the final draft of the guide to public participation under the Protocol. Inputs had been provided by the members of the drafting group and an editorial group meeting had been held in Geneva on 8 May 2013. She thanked WECF, the ECE secretariat, including members of the secretariat of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), and the members of the drafting group for their support to the development of the guide. The need for such a guide had been affirmed during the Workshop on Reporting under the Protocol (Geneva, 12–13 February 2013). The representative of WECF presented the final draft of the guide, thanked Romania for leading the activity and shared ideas on possible ways to promote the guide.

52. Representatives of EEHYC and the Social-Ecological Fund congratulated partners on the work accomplished and highlighted the importance of public participation and the possibilities for using the Aarhus Centres to involve the public in water and health-related decision-making.

53. The Working Group called upon Parties and other States to comment on the final draft of the guide to public participation by 20 July 2013. It entrusted Romania and WECF, with the support of the secretariat, to arrange for the finalization, publishing and printing of the guide to public participation under the Protocol before the third session of the Meeting of the Parties.²

VII. Equitable access

54. The representative of France reported on the progress made towards the finalization of the equitable access score-card and the elaboration of recommendations on its use. The score-card was an analytical tool to be used by Governments to carry out a baseline analysis and assess progress in the progressive implementation of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. The draft score-card had been tested through three pilot projects — in the Greater Paris Urban Area (France); in Portugal at the national level; and in Ukraine both at the national level and in the city of Sevastopol. It had then been revised at the second meeting of the expert group on equitable access (Paris, 15–16 May 2013).

55. The representative of France highlighted that the self-assessment process in Paris and Portugal, using the score-card, had been an elaborate but very useful exercise, which had resulted in the development of an accurate and consensual baseline metric of the status of equitable access on which an objective debate could be based. It had also been instrumental in building a multisectoral community of stakeholders to develop new initiatives in the area of access to water and sanitation. The equitable access score-card would be used in seven subregions around Paris, as well as on the islands of Mayotte and Reunion, and would be promoted through the French WHO Healthy Cities Network. In addition, the promotion of the score-card would be included in the third French national plan on environment and health.

² The *Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health* (ECE/MP.WH/9) was subsequently published in November 2013. It is available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34075>.

56. A representative of Ukraine expressed gratitude for the support provided by the secretariat and France for the pilot project in Ukraine. The project had highlighted the clear discrepancy in access between rural and urban areas and the lack of data related to access by vulnerable and marginalized groups. The outcomes had been published in mass media and communicated to governmental agencies to raise awareness and for targeted fundraising. She requested further support from the secretariat to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation in Ukraine and to develop WSPs.

57. The Working Group called upon Parties and other States to provide comments on the draft score-card by 26 July 2013, and requested France, with the assistance of the secretariat, to finalize, publish and print the score-card synthesis report for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session. The Chair encouraged the Working Group to promote and use the score-card at the national, regional and local levels.

58. The WHO/Europe secretariat provided key findings of the wealth quintile analysis of access to water and sanitation of three Eastern European countries (Hungary, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia). The analysis had been conducted by WHO headquarters with financial support from France. The study showed that the poorest were discriminated against with regard to access to piped water on premises, and that that was especially true for the poorest living in rural areas. A significant disparity had also been observed between the rich and the poor regarding the percentage of people benefiting from a connection to sewerage both in rural and urban areas. The wealth quintile analysis provided information that made it possible to understand and assess inequities in access to drinking water and sanitation by service levels. Therefore, it was suggested that such an analysis be undertaken for the JMP-led post-2015 monitoring, which could be complementary to the score-card approach.

59. The Working Group recognized that the wealth quintile analysis complemented the score-card approach by providing country-specific information on the disparities between the rich and the poor in access to drinking water and sanitation. The analysis also supported informed decision-making at the national level for the targeting of resources for the reduction of prevailing inequities.

VIII. Project Facilitation Mechanism

60. The Chair of the Project Facilitation Mechanism informed the Working Group about the developments since its fifth meeting. She reported on the achievements made by the Mechanism under the current programme of work, particularly focusing on the implementation of projects on setting targets and target dates in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. She concluded that the Project Facilitation Mechanism had fulfilled its work and that new ways forward for providing international assistance to the countries under the Protocol needed to be explored.

61. The Project Facilitation Mechanism Chair further informed the Working Group that provision of assistance to countries in the programme of work for 2014–2016 would be carried out under programme area 6 (assistance to support implementation at the national level), under the responsibility of the Bureau.

62. The Chair of the Working Group and the joint secretariat provided updates on the recent fundraising efforts under the Bureau to map possible partnerships in support of the Protocol and initial progress made for building cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). At the fourth meeting of the EBRD Water Fund (London, June 2013), which had been attended by the Chair of the Working Group and the joint secretariat, further strengthening of the policy alignment between the Protocol and the Water Fund, as well as concrete proposals for possible future cooperation, had been

discussed. One of the potential areas of collaboration identified was to pilot the inclusion of the WSP approach in EBRD infrastructure projects to improve the sustainability and health benefits of long-term investments.

63. The Working Group reaffirmed that the Project Facilitation Mechanism had fulfilled its mandate, and advised the Bureau to explore possible ways to maintain flexible means for ensuring mutual assistance under the Protocol. The Working Group also noted the initial progress on cooperation with EBRD to support the implementation of the Protocol.

IX. Promotion of the Protocol and advocacy

64. The Working Group was informed about promotional opportunities linked to the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation. A representative of Hungary noted the possibility of organizing a side event on the Protocol during the Budapest Water Summit (8–11 October 2013). The secretariat thanked Hungary for the opportunity to increase the Protocol's visibility and confirmed that it had already started the related preparations. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the high-level international conference on water cooperation (Dushanbe, 20–21 August 2013) and invited the participants to use that occasion to promote the Protocol.

X. Ongoing programme of work for 2011–2013

65. The joint secretariat summarized the progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of work adopted at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties (Bucharest, 23–25 November 2010), noting the programme areas that had been fully implemented and those that had not been due to a lack of resources.

66. The Working Group reviewed the financial status of the ECE Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and the WHO/Europe Voluntary Fund, based on the presentation by the joint secretariat, noting contributions received, the funds used and the resources that would be required until the third session of the Meeting of the Parties.

67. In that regard, the WHO/Europe secretariat particularly reflected upon the substantial funding gap encountered in the current programme of work. The funding gap had particularly hampered the implementation of the programme area 2 (surveillance and early-warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities) but had also led to resourcing problems in supporting secretariat services. The ECE secretariat referred to difficulties in raising sufficient funding to hold the meetings of the Compliance Committee and other bodies under the Protocol, as well as to cover the costs of extrabudgetary staff serving the Protocol.

68. Building on the lessons of the current triennium, the Chair invited participants to share information on their country's intention to finance the work under the Protocol for the current and coming years. Germany, Norway and Switzerland noted that they planned to continue to support the work under the Protocol in the future.

69. Based on the information provided, the Working Group entrusted its Chair, the chairs of the task forces and the lead countries for different activities, with the assistance of the joint secretariat, to prepare the report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2011–2013, including an overview of contributions and expenditures, and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

XI. Programme of work for 2014–2016, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation

70. The Chair of the Working Group introduced the draft programme of work for 2014–2016 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2013/L.1–EUDCE/1206123/3.1/2013/WGWH/04), which had been prepared by the joint secretariat in close cooperation with the Bureau. The draft programme was based on the outcomes of the strategic workshop, “Future work on water and health in the pan-European region: Building on results achieved and identifying priorities for the Protocol on Water and Health for 2014–2016” (Geneva, 13–14 March 2013) and on the findings of a survey of priority needs of Parties, other States and partners to the Protocol.

71. The Chair highlighted the need for having an aspirational and realistic programme of work: aspirational for attracting donors and partners to join forces and support programme implementation; and realistic in terms of reflecting the human and financial resources that could be made available for its implementation.

72. The Chair explained that the discussion on the draft would be structured along the following seven proposed programme areas:

(a) *Programme area 1* — Improving governance for water and health: support for setting targets and implementing measures;

(b) *Programme area 2* — Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases;

(c) *Programme area 3* — Small-scale water supplies and sanitation;

(d) *Programme area 4* — Safe and efficient management of water supply and sanitation systems;

(e) *Programme area 5* — Equitable access to water and sanitation: translating the human right to water and sanitation into practice;

(f) *Programme area 6* — Assistance to support implementation at the national level;

(g) *Programme area 7* — Compliance procedure.

73. Following the introduction of programme area 1 by the Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting, the participants discussed the proposed activities including the future subregional and regional workshops. The representative of the OSCE office in Tajikistan noted that his organization was interested in possible cooperation on the arrangement of national and subregional workshops in Central Asia. That proposal was echoed by a representative of WECF, who also expressed interest in contributing to such events in Central Asia. Switzerland confirmed its interest in leading the work for programme area 1, while inviting other Parties to contribute. A representative of Romania highlighted that the issue of public participation under the Protocol would be incorporated into programme area 1 under the next programme of work.

74. With regard to programme area 2, the secretariat reiterated the necessity of using a more flexible and cost-effective work arrangement, recalling the difficulties in funding the meetings of the Task Force on Surveillance. Armenia, Belarus, Hungary, Italy, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia confirmed the high relevance of the programme area, as it was at the core of the Protocol’s provisions, and noted their interest in contributing to that area of work. They supported the proposed approach of utilizing individual, thematically oriented technical expert groups provided an efficient mechanism of managing the proposed

activities was in place; however, lead Parties were still to be established to steer the individual activities under the programme area.

75. WECF and the EEHYC noted that their organizations could contribute to activities related to drinking water and sanitation in schools, and welcomed the link to Regional Priority Goal 1 of the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health. Representatives of Hungary, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia suggested to put more emphasis on monitoring of bathing waters under programme area 2. The WHO/Europe secretariat noted that new activities could be added only if the required funding was secured. The WHO Collaborating Centre at the University of Bonn offered to update and maintain the Atlas on Water and Health, and to tailor it to the needs of the Parties, provided that external funding could be raised.

76. Programme area 3 was introduced by the representative of Germany, who confirmed the interest of her country in continuing its support to that programme area, but also calling upon other Parties to co-lead. A representative of Georgia underlined the importance of sanitation safety plans while a representative of Ukraine noted the importance of WSP capacity-building with a focus on small-scale systems. WECF noted the links between programme area 3 and the work on equitable access, especially in relation to rural settings. A representative of the Kyrgyz Alliance for Water and Sanitation mentioned the problems related to SSWSS in Kyrgyzstan, calling for the consideration of water solidarity mechanisms under that programme area.

77. With regard to programme area 4, the joint secretariat noted that so far no Party had expressed interest in leading that area. The Working Group broadly supported the idea to focus on the WSP approach under that programme area. Georgia highlighted the importance of considering integrated approaches to water and sanitation management issues and wastewater treatment. Belarus, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine mentioned national activities on water safety planning. Those countries particularly highlighted the need for broad capacity-building, pilot projects and sharing of experience between countries with and without broad WSP experience.

78. Concerning programme area 5, France confirmed its interest in continuing to lead that activity but invited another country to co-lead. A representative of Ukraine and of MAMA-86 expressed their readiness to share their experience, and a representative of the Republic of Moldova mentioned that the country would like to initiate the self-assessment process by using the score-card through a twinning project with Ukraine. A representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also mentioned interest in using the score-card. WHO/Europe noted that it would facilitate the use of the score-card through the WHO Healthy Cities Network.

79. The Chair noted that the implementation of programme area 6 would be overseen by the Bureau. The Working Group discussed the role of the European Union Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and on Water Supply and Sanitation in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia under the Water Convention and of EBRD in implementing that programme area.

80. In connection with programme area 7, the Chair of the Compliance Committee underlined the importance of the Committee's Consultation Process in facilitating the implementation of the Protocol by Parties, and invited Parties to support the programme area through their financial contributions.

81. The Chair then opened a discussion on the funding of the next programme of work. He recalled his letter sent to all focal points on the need to receive sufficient pledges of direct and indirect contributions for the adequate implementation of the next programme of work. If sufficient pledges were not received, the Bureau would have to trim activities that

were not covered. He also briefed the Working Group on the fundraising efforts undertaken by the Bureau in the scope of informal financing meetings.

82. Based on the discussions, the Working Group entrusted the Bureau with the finalization of the draft programme of work, including the resource requirements, for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

XII. Preparations for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties

83. A representative of Norway, the host country for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, reported that the organizational preparations for the meeting were progressing well. A special session on equitable access to water and sanitation would be organized during the high-level segment of the meeting. He invited participants to facilitate the participation of high-level representatives of their countries. He further invited Parties and other States, as well as NGOs, to express their interest in the organization of side events during the third session and to communicate their proposals to the joint secretariat by 26 July 2013.

84. In that regard, the representative of EEHYC reported on the organization's plans to hold a side event on the role of youth in the work under the Protocol, and underlined the willingness of youth to play a stronger role in the practical aspects of the Protocol's implementation.

85. The Working Group discussed the draft provisional agenda of the meeting and entrusted the Bureau and the secretariat with the finalization of the preparations for the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, as well as the timely issuance of official invitations and all documentation and publications for the meeting.

XIII. Compliance procedure

86. The Chair of the Compliance Committee informed the Working Group of the outcome of the Committee's ninth meeting (Geneva, 1–2 July 2013) and the status of preparation of the Committee's report to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session.

87. Recalling the Committee's mandate, he stressed that its primary role was to provide assistance to Parties in implementing the Protocol and not to apply punitive measures. Parties were encouraged to engage more actively in the Committee's Consultation Process.

88. The Committee Chair also shared some observations based on the Committee's analysis of the outcomes of the second reporting exercise under the Protocol. Overall, there had been a good level of participation by Parties in the reporting, with a large majority of them having submitted their national reports. There had also been an overall improvement in the quality of the reports submitted, and in the level of compliance with the guidelines and template for reporting. That improvement might have been the result of capacity-building activities, including the workshop on reporting.

89. Based on the results of the second reporting cycle, the Compliance Committee had decided that it might invite a Party or a small group of Parties having identical or almost identical implementation problems to engage in a consultation under the Consultation Process, even if there was no guarantee that the Party or Parties would respond favourably to the invitation.

XIV. Strengthening synergies between the different activities under the Protocol

90. The Chair informed the Working Group of the discussions in the Bureau on the ways and means to strengthen synergies between the different areas of work under the Protocol. In that regard, he noted that the current draft programme of work for 2014–2016 had been structured with a view to maximizing such potential synergies, which was also important in the light of the lack of funds for carrying out Protocol activities.

91. Furthermore, the Chair reported on the outcomes of the third informal meeting of chairs of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements, held on 27 February 2013 in Geneva, which had been convened upon the initiative of the Chair of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. In that context, he highlighted some issues of particular interest to the work under the Protocol, including those pertaining to possible synergies between the ECE environmental conventions and their protocols.

92. The Working Group was invited to comment on the information provided and to discuss how to further ensure synergies between different activities under the Protocol.

XV. Date and venue of the seventh meeting

93. The secretariat announced that the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health had been tentatively scheduled for 25–27 November 2014.
