



## EUWI-EECCA Component

Statement on  
Common Understanding of the State Water  
Committee and the Ministry of Nature Protection of  
Armenia and the December 2006 EU Water  
Initiative Mission  
On A National Policy Dialogue on Water-Related  
Issues in Armenia

## **Parties**

The State Committee of Water System (hereafter SCWS) of the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia (hereafter RA);  
The Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia (hereafter MNP);  
The EECCA<sup>1</sup> component of the European Union (EU) Water Initiative (hereafter EUWI),  
The Secretariat of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (hereafter EAP Task Force), and  
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (hereafter UNECE);

hereafter jointly called "Parties",

have signed the present **document** upon the following:

## **Objectives**

The objective of the present document is to establish a common understanding among the Parties concerned on the organisation of a National Policy Dialogue (hereafter NPD)<sup>2</sup> on water-related issues in Armenia.

## **Background**

National Policy Dialogues are the main mechanism within the EU Water Initiative for identifying priority actions and for establishing multi-stakeholder dialogue with partner countries, including EECCA countries. In April 2006 Armenia expressed an interest in conducting a water-related NPD and a willingness to start the NPD as soon as possible. This was confirmed in a letter from Mr. Khachatryan, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman of the SCWS of Armenia to Mr. Peter Gammeltoft, head of the Water Unit at the Directorate-General Environment in the European Commission.

A mission to Yerevan of representatives of the EU WI EECCA component, EAP Task Force Secretariat, UN ECE and the international consultant - the Institute of Applied Environmental Economics (TME) was organised on Dec. 12-14, 2006. The objective was to discuss with Armenian stakeholders and agree upon the main element of the National Policy Dialogue process, and launch the NPD in Armenia.

## **Common Understanding:**

Against this background the Parties have reached the following common understanding:

*The overall goal of the NPD is to help reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to water in Armenia. More specifically, the objectives of the NPD are:*

- (i) to develop a financing strategy for rural WSS with water-related MDGs as target;*
- (ii) to facilitate implementation of the principles of integrated water resource management in line with the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for European Community action in the field of water policy (EU Water Framework Directive, WFD), and relevant Conventions and other international agreements - with an emphasis on financial issues. This activity would inter alia include the development of a pilot project on the integrated water resource management (hereafter IWRM) for a selected river basin, taking into account EU countries' experience.*

<sup>1</sup> EECCA stands for the East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia – the region comprising the republics of the former Soviet Union except Baltic States.

<sup>2</sup> As described in the document « National Policy Dialogues - from Work Programme to Action ».

The NPD will be coordinated with other ongoing projects in the water sector in Armenia, including foreign financed projects. Full account will be taken of past and ongoing work of the EAP Task Force related to this project.

The key institutions in Armenia involved in the NPD will be the State Committee of Water System, the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Water Resources Management Agency (hereafter WRMA). Initially the SCWS will be the main Armenian contact point. The EAP Task Force will – at least, until the finalisation of the financing strategy for the rural water sector in Armenia - act as strategic partner for these institutions in Armenia, providing methodological support and facilitating the NPD process in Armenia.

A Steering Committee (hereafter SC) with multi-stakeholder representation will be established to oversee the implementation of the NPD in Armenia. The Steering Committee will build on, and extend the existing steering group established previously for the ongoing EAP Task Force project on a Financing Strategy for Urban water supply and sanitation in Armenia.

The newly-established Steering Committee will agree on the work programme and discuss documents prepared within the framework of the NPD. The documents will then be submitted to relevant government agencies and other actors in Armenia for further consideration. The Steering Committee will also approve reports for submission to the EUWI-EECCA Component Working Group on progress made, and provide overall guidance for the work.

Key Armenian actors which will be invited to nominate members of the SC representing their respective institutions will be:

State Committee of Water System of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration  
Ministry of Nature Protection/ Water Resources Management Agency  
Ministry of Finance and Economy, Department for Public Services Sectors' Projects;  
Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Department of Social Assistance;  
Ministry of Agriculture;  
Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC);  
State Sanitary Supervision Service;  
State Statistical Service;

The following donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs): US AID, UK DFID, JICA, the World Bank, EBRD, KfW and ADB, as well as the local office of the Global Water Partnership will also be invited to nominate Steering Committee members from their respective organisation.

The following actors will each be invited to nominate a member of the Steering Committee:

(1) rural municipalities/associations of municipalities, (2) water utilities operating inter alia in rural areas; (3) water users associations, and (4) local Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The individuals representing these groups may change according to the issues under discussion.

Other experts might be invited to SC meetings, as appropriate. The composition of the Steering Committee may be adapted to reflect the issues under consideration.

It is envisaged that the SCWS and WRMA will chair the SC on the basis of rotation. It was agreed that the SCWS will chair the SC in 2007. The mandate of the Steering Committee, its Co-Chairs and its composition will be agreed in January 2007 in the process of consultations of the SCWS with other Parties and Armenian stakeholders.

The Secretarial duties of the SC will be implemented by the SCWS.

A detailed work plan for the first area of work until December 2007 was approved at the preparatory meeting for the NPD on 13 December 2006 in Yerevan.

A draft work plan under the second objective of the NPD will be prepared by UN ECE with the support of the EAP Task Force for consideration at the next meeting of the Steering Committee, currently scheduled for June-July, 2007.

The parties acknowledge the importance of reporting on the progress of the NPD in Armenia to the forthcoming "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, in October 2007.

The Parties participate in the NPD on voluntary basis, and subject to the availability of adequate resources. The present document does not entail any financial obligations on the Parties with regard to financing other parties' activities in the framework of the NPD, though such financing could take place by agreements (bilateral or multi-lateral).

**Signature by Parties:**

**SCWS:** **1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman** **Mr. Khachatryan**

**Ministry of Nature Protection:** **Deputy Minister** **Mr. Matilyan**

**EAP Task Force Secretariat:** **Head** **Mr. Gillespie**

**UN ECE:** **Regional Adviser on Environment** **Mr. Libert**

**EUWI EECCA component EC DG ENV Senior Desk Officer** **Mr. Hecq**

