

**Third Session of the Meeting of the Parties
to the Protocol on Water and Health
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Statement of Dr. Svetlana COTELEA,
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Equitable access to drinking water and sanitation

Dear Ms./Mr. Chairman,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since becoming a Party to the Protocol on Water and Health in 2005, the Republic of Moldova has progressively strengthened national capacities to ensure better access to safe water and adequate sanitation to all people in the country. A key focus of these efforts has been particularly on addressing the equity dimension and giving special attention to those who are most vulnerable.

Significant disparities among different population groups in our country hamper achieving the overall goal under the Protocol – universal access to water and sanitation. Thus, 84% of the urban population has access to improved sanitation, as opposed to only 40% in the rural area. Similar inequalities exist in terms of geographical regions, as well as the settlement size.

Recognizing the need to address prominently the most disadvantaged, we have considered a focused approach for the activities developed under the Protocol implementation. This is also reflected in the set of national targets developed and approved for the Protocol implementation, which are focused on the most vulnerable groups.

I am pleased to mention the important progress made under the Protocol framework during the last years, specifically in terms of increasing access to improved drinking water sources. Thus, compared to the baseline year of the Protocol implementation it has raised from 17% (in 2005) to 35% (in 2012) in the rural area, reducing the gap between urban and rural regions.

At the same time, special attention is given to achieve target on ensuring the schools' access to improved sources of drinking water. Following the Parma Declaration that recognized children as a vulnerable group, Republic of Moldova set a target to provide each child with access to water and sanitation in homes, child care centers and schools, by 2020. A progress has been achieved in this area as well, with access increasing from 69% in 2009 to 82% in 2012. We consider that there are all prerequisites to accomplish the intermediate target, as 90% of schools by 2015. Achievement of the target indicator for ensuring the schools with access to improved sanitation also registered a progress from 55% in 2009 to 75% in 2012.

From the health perspective, access to water and sanitation is a major social and environmental determinant of health and could generate itself significant inequalities in the health status of different populations. As it is emphasized by the Health 2020

policy framework, cross-sectorial cooperation is crucial for bridging the disparity gaps.

Republic of Moldova has been successful in establishing mechanisms for joint actions across the sectors at different levels. Work under the Protocol on Water and Health set an operational platform for close cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment, and the other authorities still need to be involved more. Currently, Republic of Moldova is taking important steps forward in the implementation of the health in all policies approach and building capacities across sectors. The 2nd edition of the National Health Forum, that has launched today in Chisinau, is bringing together all relevant partners from different authorities to discuss health care in the light of cross-sectorial partnership.

Moldova is committed to work further and to ensure implementation of the programme of work for 2014-2016, transposing Protocol on Water and Health into practice and eliminating disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Finally, I wish to conclude by expressing our deep gratitude to the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for the priceless assistance in ensuring progress in the implementation of the Protocol until now.

Thank you for your attention.