



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE**

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

**REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON INDICATORS AND REPORTING ON ITS FIRST
MEETING, HELD ON 13 AND 14 MARCH 2008 IN GENEVA**

BACKGROUND

1. The Task Force on Indicators and Reporting was established by the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 17–19 January 2007) with a mandate linked to compliance with articles 6 (Targets and target dates) and 7 (Review and assessment of progress).
2. Switzerland – lead country for this activity – had invited a core group of experts to assist in the preparations for this meeting. The Core Group¹, which met once in Geneva on 22 and 23 January 2008, had prepared all meeting documentation.
3. The first meeting of the Task Force was attended by representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the Non-Governmental Organizations Eco-Forum, European Federation of Water Suppliers, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Health Organization (WHO), the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Water and Health, DHI as well as members of the Compliance Committee also attended the meeting.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. Mr. Pierre Studer, the chairman of the Task Force, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The Task Force adopted its agenda as set out in document WH/FTIR 01-01.

¹ The core group is constituted by the following experts: Mr. Jaime Melo Baptista (Portuguese Institute for the Regulation of Water and Solid Waste - IRAR), Mr. Dominique Gatel (European Federation of Water Suppliers - EUREAU), Mr. Mihály Kádár (Hungary), Ms. Kateryna Kiryanova (Ukraine), Mr. Truls Krogh (Norway), Mr. Palle Lindgaard-Jorgensen (World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Water and Health), Mr. Ion Salaru (Moldova), Ms. Zsuzsa Steindl (Hungary), Mr. Thor Axel Stenström (Women in Europe for a Common Future), Mr. Pierre Studer (Switzerland) and Ms. Ans Versteegh (the Netherlands).

II. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON(S)

5. Ms. Zsuzsanna Steindl (Hungary) and Mr. Oliver Schmoll (Germany) were elected as vice-chairpersons of the Task Force.

III. MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK FORCE ON INDICATORS AND REPORTING

6. The Chairperson recalled the relevant obligations of the Protocol on setting targets and target dates and reporting, and the mandate and work to be undertaken by the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, as agreed by the Parties at their first meeting, in particular the preparation of guidelines for setting targets and guidelines for review and assessment of progress (see ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.5).

7. It was stressed that Parties had to establish targets within 2 years after the ratification according to Article 6 of the Protocol and as target-setting was depending on specific national/local circumstances, targets could vary greatly between countries.

IV. CURRENT STATUS OF TARGET-SETTING IN PROTOCOL'S PARTIES

8. On the basis of a template distributed by the joint secretariat prior to the meeting, Parties and Signatories had provided information on their national processes for the setting of targets.

9. The joint secretariat provided a brief summary and analysis of the replies from countries to the template. The replies varied widely in their content, volume and form. Most EU-countries frequently referred to the relevant EU directives, non-EU countries also reported on other international obligations. From the replies, it appeared that only three Parties had finalized the process of target-setting. Often, many stakeholders were involved in the process of target-setting, also others than the ministry of environment and health.

10. Subsequently, the following countries reported on their target-setting process: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. All replies received can be found on the meeting website².

11. Some Parties requested guidance from the Task Force on how and what targets could be set, welcoming the draft Guidelines developed by the Core Group. In particular, several Parties asked for a clarification of the relation between EU-legislation and the Protocol. In this regard, it was stressed that the target-setting under the Protocol allowed Parties to deal with areas not covered by EU legislation such as small-scale water supplies, capacity-building or social equity.

12. The need to set meaningful and realistic targets which can be reached at a reasonable cost was stressed together with the need for additional financial resources to set targets and attain them.

13. Difficulties of coordination between different ministries and institutions at national and regional level were highlighted several times. Some Parties set up an inter-ministerial committee for the target-setting as well as more technical working groups for specific areas.

² http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_TFIR.htm

14. After the countries' presentations, Mr. Attila Tanzi, the chairman of the Compliance Committee, delivered the following statement on behalf of the Compliance Committee which had met for its first constitutive session on the 12th of March in Geneva³:

“The Compliance Committee has had a preliminary consideration of the replies by those Parties, Signatories and non-Signatories which have responded to the “Questionnaire on progress on setting targets and target dates according to Article 6” distributed by the Joint Secretariat (18 UNECE Member States). It appears that different countries are applying different approaches to the implementation of the provisions of Article 6 of the Protocol. On the one hand, EU Member States tend to link their obligations under the Protocol to the implementation of relevant EU legislation. On the other hand, in EECCA countries the main focus is placed on the development of a general regulatory framework for the implementation of the Protocol, which in a number of instances includes the establishment of certain targets and indicative target dates. With few exceptions it appears that Parties still have a long way to go to fulfil the respective obligations under Article 6 of the Protocol.

Having due regard to the fact that two and a half years have already passed since the Protocol entered into force, on behalf of the Compliance Committee I have to remind Parties to the Protocol that, pursuant to Article 6.3, each Party is to establish and publish targets and target dates (under Article 6) within two years of becoming a Party. I regret to say that failure to fulfil this requirement represents an apparent situation of non-compliance with the obligations, hence subject to action by the Compliance Committee. With that in mind the Compliance Committee has high expectations on the most fruitful outcome of the meeting of the present Task Force so that it may provide useful guidance and impulse to Parties for a correct interpretation and application of article 6 of the Protocol”.

V. GUIDELINES ON THE SETTING OF TARGETS, EVALUATION OF PROGRESS AND REPORTING

15. On the basis of a background document, prepared by the Core Group, WH/TFIR 01-02 Draft Guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting, the Task Force discussed the different steps in target-setting to be included in the Guidelines. It was highlighted that the Guidance is of a non-binding nature and only intended to assist Parties in complying with their obligations.

16. The steps in setting targets identified in the draft guidelines were discussed and commented: (i) identify key stakeholders concerned to present the Protocol and its obligations to them; (ii) creation of a coordination mechanism; (iii) baseline analysis in order to explore the legal basis, strategies and visions of the different key-players and assessing the current situation; (iv) gap analysis and prioritization of the most relevant issues for the country, including an approximate cost assessment and cost-benefit analysis⁴ (v) agreement on proposed targets, target dates and relevant programme of measures; (vi) consolidation of the targets and programme of work and development of relevant legal and administrative tools for implementation; and (vii) publication of the targets and programme and communication to all stakeholders, including the public and consumers.

17. It was stressed that stakeholders such as water associations, local health associations, local/regional offices from different sectors and levels should be involved in the process of target-setting

³ Information on the meeting can be found under : http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_CC.htm

⁴ See presentation on costs-benefit analysis at http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_TFIR.htm

and their opinion should be taken into account since they can help to disseminate information about the Protocol. In addition, websites provide another important tool for communication to the public, already during the target-setting.

18. Regarding the guidelines on reporting, it was noted that for transboundary waters, relevant information should be collected and assessed jointly with other riparian countries. In addition, Parties expressed the need to avoid duplication of reporting obligations with EU directives and thus the need for a clear delineation and harmonization of the reporting system.

19. Finally, a representative of the WHO Collaborating Center for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication presented the opportunity provided by Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for setting targets, evaluating progress and reporting.

VI. INDICATORS, ESPECIALLY FOR TARGETS UNDER ARTICLE 6, PARAGRAPHS 2 (A)–(N)

20. The Core Group on Indicators and Reporting and the joint secretariat had prepared a background document WH/TFIR 01-03 containing options for targets and indicators for countries, possible common indicators for all Parties and information on other relevant reporting systems.

21. In order to promote harmonization, the Task Force decided to identify some core indicators and targets for all Parties in some areas (a) to (n) and for all other target areas to present options in the annex to the Guidance which Parties might choose from, but do not have to.

22. The Task Force recommended that, if possible, 2005, the year of entry into force of the Protocol should be considered as baseline year for the reporting on indicators.

23. Regarding the quality of drinking water (paragraph 2 a), the Task Force agreed that all Parties should set targets and report on the parameters *E. coli* and eventually enterococci, with the possible use at the discretion of the Parties to also report on *p. aeruginosa*. Some countries noted that they might wish to set targets and report also on cyanobacteria.

24. Concerning chemical parameters the Task Force decided on the following five common parameters: fluoride, nitrate and nitrite as defined in the EU Drinking Water Directive, arsenic, lead and iron. However, some Parties requested more time to check within their ministries whether the current monitoring system can bring the required data. The Task Force also agreed that Parties could set targets and indicators for small scale and decentralized systems of water supply depending on the national circumstances.

25. Regarding the article 6 (2) (b), the reduction of the scale of outbreaks and incidents of water related diseases, it was highlighted that the concept of “water-related” diseases referred to in the Protocol is substantially different and broader from the one of “water-borne” diseases and that, for instance, it could be understood to include also diseases deriving from the lack of water. It was agreed that all Parties should report on priority diseases, while reporting on emerging diseases could, at least in the first instance, remain voluntary.

26. In contrast to the definition by the Adhoc Copenhagen expert group, regarding the article 6 (2) (c), access to drinking water, the Task Force decided that reference should be made to the definition of the Joint Monitoring Programme for the access to safe drinking water as improved water supply. According to JMP, improved drinking water sources include: piped water into

dwelling, plot or yard; public tap/standpipe; tubewell/ borehole; protected dug well; protected spring; rainwater collection. Unimproved drinking water sources include unprotected dug well, unprotected spring, cart with small tank/drum, bottled water (only when the household uses water from an improved source for cooking and personal hygiene), tanker-truck, and surface water.

27. It was also suggested that a social indicator, such as cost for water supply for a family compared to the average family income, could be considered when setting targets.

28. In relation to Article 6 (2) (d), the Task Force decided to use the following common indicator for reporting by all countries: access to improved sanitation which would include small decentralized sewerage systems (also septic tanks etc.) Reporting in detail about the percentage of primary, secondary and tertiary treatment would show progress of countries, but this was considered very ambitious and often the data were not available. It was noted that even the EU Wastewater Treatment Directive currently does not require tertiary treatment for all wastewater (only in sensitive areas).

29. Regarding article 6 (2) (e), the levels of performance of collective systems and other systems for water supply it was agreed not to set any common indicator for all Parties because of substantial differences between countries.

30. One Party warned to mix “statistical” data with “performance” data and proposed instead as possible indicators the following: compliance with abstraction license, the ratio of total production/total abstraction and the existence of internal quality management systems with third party supervision. It cautioned, however, that the cost of third party supervision is a considerable brake on this kind of independent certification.

31. It was criticized that statistical data, such as the number of water supply systems covered by certification, did not represent good indicators and that, instead, higher emphasis should be placed on actually implemented activities such as Water Safety Plans. It was also suggested to include a social indicator such as the comparison of the cost for water with the income of the family.

32. Regarding the Article 6 (2) (f), application of recognized good practice to the management of water supply, no common indicators were identified, but Parties will set their own quantitative or qualitative targets which may be needed to implement best practices.

33. Regarding the application of recognized good practice to the management of sanitation it was highlighted that this issue should be harmonized with the previous article on sanitation.

34. Due to lack of time the Task Force had to stop discussions at article 6 (2) (f). Task Force members were invited to provide further comments to the draft guidelines by 4 April 2008. The Task Force entrusted the joint secretariat to prepare a revised version of the draft guidelines based on the comments provided for consideration by the Working Group on Water and Health at its first meeting.⁵ It also requested the Core Group to further elaborate the guidelines for the second Task Force meeting.

⁵ See documents ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2008/L.1, ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2008/L.2 and ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2008/L.3 available from http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGWH.htm

VII. WORKSHOP AIMED AT SHARING EXPERIENCE ON TARGET-SETTING

35. According to the programme of work decided at the last meeting of the Parties a workshop shall be organized aimed at sharing experiences, best practice examples, but also challenges and problems among Parties. Based on the background document “Concept note on objectives and themes of the workshop” (WH/TFIR 01-04), prepared by the Chairman and the joint Secretariat the Task Force discussed the preliminary programme, objectives and target audience of this workshop, tentatively scheduled for 2 and 3 December 2008.

36. The Task Force agreed that the few Parties that had already completed the target-setting should be invited to give a presentation at the workshop, but also those which are still in the process and might face problems.

37. It was suggested that the Joint Secretariat could send another questionnaire to Parties prior to the workshop and prepare an overview/ analysis of the answers for presentation at the seminar.

38. The Task Force agreed that the Core Group should further refine the proposal for the workshop.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING

39. It was noted that any changes to Focal Points should be sent to the Joint Secretariat via email.

40. The Chairperson closed the meeting on Friday, 14 March 2008 at 4.30 p.m.
