



NINTH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY DIALOGUE ON IWRM IN ARMENIA

Date: December 12, 2012

Location: "Regance" Hotel Complex, 10/1 Davit Anhaght Street, Yerevan

PROCEEDINGS

In the **opening session** Mr. Narimanyan, Chairman of the 9th Steering Committee meeting of NPD on IWRM in Armenia and Head of the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, welcomed the participants of the meeting. While presenting the main agenda items for adoption he also mentioned that for the first time the NPD Steering Committee meeting is also considered as the National Coordination Council meeting of the EU "Environmental Protection of International River Basins" (EPIRB) project.

Opening statements were also made by Mr. Alisher Mamadzhanov, UNECE Environmental Affairs Officer, Ms. Tatiana Efimova from OECD/EAP Task Force Secretariat, and Ms. Ina Iankulova, International Aid/Cooperation Officer of the Delegation of the EU to Armenia. Mr. Mamadzhanov informed the members of the Steering Committee on launching a new project on "Protocol on Water and Health – Improving health in Armenia through target setting to ensure sustainable water management, access to safe water and adequate sanitation". Ms. Efimova mentioned about two main directions OECD will be working in Armenia within the NPD process: (a) development of a national strategy on sustainable sanitation; and (b) launching of a comprehensive assessment of selected economic instruments in the water sector of Armenia. Ms. Iankulova stressed the importance EU funded regional projects "Transboundary River Management for the Kura River Basin – Phase III" and "Environmental Protection of International River Basins", to which Armenia is actively participating.

Afterwards, Mr. Narimanyan summarized the status of NPD activities, and updated on recent development in water sector of Armenia. He mentioned that due to increased roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee new letters will be send to the Ministries with nomination requests as new Steering Committee members. In addition to the existing Ministries and agencies, several new institutions will be invited to assign representatives in the NPD Steering Committee, including EU delegation in Armenia.

The **Second session** of the meeting was devoted to launching of the project "Target setting process under the Protocol on Water and Health in Armenia". In this session the representatives of UNECE, project stakeholder ministries and the project experts made presentations. First, Mr. Mamadzhanov made a presentation on "The Protocol on Water and Health: advantages for Armenia to become a Party". In his presentation Mr. Mamadzhanov talked about the status of ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health, scope and function of the protocol, and the advantages to becoming a party to the protocol.

Ms. Nune Bakuntz from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia made a presentation on "Quality of drinking water and water-related diseases: overview and challenges ahead". Ms. Bakuntz presented the main issues related to drinking water diseases in Armenia and highlighted the components of the new UNECE-FinWaterWei project "On setting targets under the Protocol on Water and Health" within that context.



Mr. Harutyun Khachatryan from the State Committee on Water Systems of the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia made a presentation on “Water supply and sanitation in urban areas: overview and challenges”. In his presentation Mr. Khachatryan talked about the main indicators for water economy in 2011 (drinking water supply and sanitation, and irrigation water supply), summarized the main achievements and remaining challenges in the sector, and highlighted the results of the investments in the sector.

Mr. Vilik Sargsyan from the Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction made a presentation on “Water management: efficient systems to protect the quality of sources of drinking water”. In his speech Mr. Sargsyan highlighted the main problems related to drinking water treatment facilities, sanitary protection zones and quality of drinking water, and presented some options, where the UNECE-FinWaterWei project “On setting targets under the Protocol on Water and Health” can be particularly helpful.

Ms. Emma Anakhasyan from the “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment” (AWHHE) NGO made a presentation on “Local problems and solutions for drinking water and sanitation”. In her presentation Ms. Anakhasyan talked about the AWHHE NGO and their active role in the Protocol on Water and Health, presented some figures on waterborne outbreaks in Armenia, and told about few pilot projects implemented by the NGO in self-supplied rural communities of Armenia.

The last presentation of the session was made by Mr. Mamadzhanov, and was entitled “The new UNECE-FinWaterWei project on setting targets under the Protocol on Water and Health”. In his presentation Mr. Mamadzhanov talked about the goal of the project, target setting process, possible priority areas for Armenia, key expected outcomes of the project and the workplan up to mid-2013.

During the discussions the members of the Steering Committee welcomed the launching of the new project and stressed its importance for Armenia. Steering Committee expressed its readiness to oversee the project implementation in Armenia and organize discussions at key stages of the project implementation.

The **third session** of the Steering Committee meeting was chaired by OECD representative and included two discussion items: (a) sustainable sanitation strategy; and (b) comprehensive assessment of economic instruments. Ms. Efimova informed the members of the Steering Committee about the idea to initiate a process within the OECD component of NPD in Armenia towards development of a national strategy on sustainable sanitation. Mr. Mushegh Karapetyan from the State Committee on Water Systems under the Ministry of Territorial Administration made a presentation on “Water sanitation and wastewater treatment in settlements of Armenia: current condition, problems and perspectives”. In the Q&A session members of the Steering Committee highlighted the importance of the issue for Armenia and the need to develop national strategy for sustainable sanitation.

Afterwards, Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan made a presentation on “Comprehensive assessment of selected economic instruments in the water sector of Armenia”. In his presentation Mr. Tonoyan presented the selected economic instruments for comprehensive assessment (adaption in the abstraction fee, adaptation in the pollution tax, and land tax for houses nearby valuable water bodies), scope of the analysis, additional investigation to be carried out and the expected final outcome of the assessment. Steering Committee members approved the idea of having recommendations for a policy package on the introduction of the economic instruments in water sector of Armenia as final outcome of the assessment.



Fourth session of the Steering Committee meeting was devoted to discussing the EU funded “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” project activities.

Mr. Zurab Jincharadze, Deputy Team Leader of the EPIRB project, presented the main activities of the project and the progress made so far. In his presentation Mr. Jincharadze spoke about the main outline of the project, overall and specific objectives, and expected results. Mr. Jincharadze also presented the main results of the project activities in all countries undertaken to the date.

Mr. Benyamin Zakaryan, Director of “Geoinfo” LLC made a presentation on draft river basin analysis (RBA) for Akhuryan Water Basin Management Areas, which was conducted with the support of “Geoinfo” LLC in close cooperation with Akhuryan Water Basin Management Authority. In his presentation Mr. Zakaryan presented in detail the 4 main chapters of the draft RBA: characterization, human activities, identification of pressures and impacts, and monitoring in the basin. Particular emphasis was made on the pressure-impact analysis, which has done according to EU WFD Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No 3 (IMPRESS: Analysis of Pressures and Impacts).

Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, EPIRB project country water management experts for Armenia, presented the tentative workplan of upcoming project activities in Armenia. He presented in detail all tasks under the two main activities of the project: (1) improvement of hydro-biological, chemical, and hydro-morphological monitoring and assessment of surface water bodies, including groundwater; and (2) development of joint River Basin Management Plans for selected river basins. For each task Mr. Tonoyan provided tentative timeline and some specifics for implementation in Armenia.

The presentations were followed with Q&A session, during which the members of the Steering Committee asked questions about the specific activities of the project and presented few observations on the draft RBA. Mr. Jincharadze and Mr. Tonoyan replied to questions raised and thanked the members of the Steering Committee for the comments on draft river basin analysis.

The Steering Committee approved the proposed tentative workplan of project activities in Armenia, and called EPIRB project to try to get some basic hydrological data from the Turkish part of Akhuryan River basin, given the fact that over 70% of the basin is located in the territory of Turkey.

The **fifth session** of the Steering Committee meeting dealt with cross-fertilization with the NPD process and technical assistance projects in Armenia. Presentations were made by various national and regional water-related projects.

Mr. Anatoly Pichugin from the EC-funded “Transboundary River Management for the Kura River Basin – Phase III” regional project (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) presented the main results and achievements of the project, which will be completed in 2013. Mr. Pichugin reported on the progress of the project by all 4 components: (1) development of a common approach to water quality assessment; (2) institutional technical assistance and training; (3) joint field survey to pilot the proposed common approach; and (4) coordination with the relevant projects in the region. At the end of presentation of Mr. Pichugin, CDs were distributed to all members of the Steering Committee and other participants, which included all the reports, documents and major deliverables in Armenian language prepared within EU Kura River Phase II and Phase III project.

Ms. Lilit Harutyunyan from USAID Clean Water and Energy Program in Armenia presented the main progress achieved by the program so far. The four main project components presented, included the following: (1) develop capacity for integrated energy and water resource planning; (2) improve local clean



energy, water, sanitation, and hygiene as well as water management and development practices; (3) improve hydropower and water regulation; and (4) donor coordination and public outreach.

Mr. Tigran Kalantaryan, UNDP/GEF "Reducing Transboundary Degradation in the Kura-Aras River Basin" regional project (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) national coordinator for Armenia, presented the progress of the project in Armenia. In his presentation Mr. Kalantaryan talked about the progress made by the project according to the main activities: (i) transboundary diagnostic analysis; (ii) development of the Arpa River basin management plan; (iii) regional strategic action program; (iv) MSc curriculum on IWRM as part of public awareness activities; and (v) demonstration project with Arpa River basin being pilot in Armenia.

Presentations were followed by Q&A session. Steering Committee members thanked the representatives of projects for their continuous coordination efforts within the NPD process in Armenia, and expressed readiness to serve as forum for coordination of all water-related national and regional projects implemented in Armenia.

During the **last session** of the Steering Committee the chairman Mr. Narimanyan recalled the Steering Committee decisions made, as follows:

- *Steering Committee welcomes the launching of the new project and stresses its importance for Armenia. Steering Committee expresses its readiness to oversee the project implementation in Armenia and organize discussions at key stages of the project implementation;*
- *Steering Committee stresses the importance of the issue for Armenia and the need to develop national strategy for sustainable sanitation within the OECD component of the NPD process in Armenia;*
- *Steering Committee approves the idea of having recommendations for a policy package on the introduction of the economic instruments in water sector of Armenia as final outcome of the OECD component of the NPD process in Armenia;*
- *The Steering Committee approves the proposed tentative workplan of the EPIRB project activities in Armenia, and called EPIRB project to try to get some basic hydrological data from the Turkish part of Akhuryan River basin, given the fact that over 70% of the basin is located in the territory of Turkey.*
- *Steering Committee expresses its readiness to continue serving as forum to coordination of all water-related national and regional projects implemented in Armenia.*