



WISDOM



# FINAL REPORT

International Conference

**The implementation of the human right to water and sanitation in  
Moldova with a focus on the Protocol on Water and Health**

*22 March 2011  
Chisinau – Moldova*

## 1. Introduction



On World Water Day, March 22, WECF in partnership with National Centre of Public Health and WiSDOM association have organized the international conference “Implementation of the human right to water and sanitation in Moldova with a focus on the Protocol on Water and Health”. The conference was held at the National Centre of Public Health conference hall in Chisinau. The conference and its preparatory meetings were financed by Church World Service and

Milieukontakt International. Considering the fact that the right to water and sanitation was recognized as a fundamental human right by UN and that the promotion of human rights is an important mean for improving the water access and governance and being aware of the fact that in Moldova there is limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation, especially for children, the goal of the working conference was to address the urgent need for legal recognition of this new human right and develop practical recommendations for the implementation of this right in Moldova.



The conference brought together more than 50 Representatives of civil society organizations in the field of water and health and human rights, Ministry of Health, Public Health Centres, research institutions, donor organizations and journalists.

The main theme of the conference was the human right to water and sanitation and its implementation in Moldova. Within this theme important questions like the Protocol on Water and Health as a tool for the right to water and

sanitation implementation, the situation of this human right in the laws and practice in Moldova, children health, and the legal, financial and technical mechanisms adapted to Moldavian context.



The conference was chaired by Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, head of international association EcoTiras and welcomed by Vice-minister of Health, Mihai Magdei, Anke Stock, WECF human rights and gender expert and Ion Şalaru, vice-deputy director of National Centre of Water and Health and the National focal point to the Protocol on Water and Health. Statements from the UN Independent expert on water and sanitation Catarina de Albuquerque and Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand were

read by Anke Stock and Natalia Dejean. In these statements it was emphasized the importance

of the criteria for the implementation of human right to water and sanitation (accessibility, availability, affordability, acceptability and safety), on the conditions when this human right is violated (for example there is access to water, but the water is unsafe to drink, water is abundant but is unaffordable, toilets are available but are not hygienic or placed in an unsafe location etc.) and the need for changing of the global policy for monopolization of water resources and ensuring safe access to water and sanitation for all.

## 2. Plenary session “Human rights to water and sanitation”



In his presentation “World Water Day 2011 – water for cities – responding to the urban challenges”, Mr. Ion Șalaru has emphasized on the importance of water related problems not only for rural areas but also for urban areas of Moldova considering the rapid increase in the urban population and also of the problems related to water and sanitation. For example, the urban areas there are big water losses (30-60 %) and also the existent infrastructure of water supply and sanitation does not meet the needs of

the growing urban population. It was also mentioned that the country lacks regulations regarding the collection and disposal of wastewater in the rural areas and sanitation is the field with the lowest support from the local authorities and the population. It is important to elaborate the normative and legislative basis, for example of the sanitary regulations and guidelines for the application of good management practices.



Water safety plans, which have been implemented by WECF for a number of schools in Moldova were mentioned as succesful practices for implication of young generation and the community in the evaluation of health risks from water contamination and sustainable management of water resources.

The human rights and gender expert of WECF, Anke Stock has revealed the main aspects on the definition and the history of legal recognition of human right to water and sanitation. From the range of requirements for the realization of human right to water and sanitation, it could be traced that Moldova fails to fulfil many criteria for water and sanitation as regarding the water quality/safety, water and sanitation accesibility and economic affordability.

The chair of the Territorial Branch of the Ecological Movement of Moldova, Mr. Vladimir Garaba has presented the view of NGOs regarding some aspects of the human rights in Moldova. In his presentation entitled „Lack of safe water sources and support in the rural areas” Mr. Garaba

has mentioned that the realization of the right to water and sanitation in Moldova is hindered by the lack of safe water sources for a large number of communities as well as insufficiency of financial resources for the supply from central sources. Around 2/3 of the population is using the shallow wells as the main source of water, most of these being highly contaminated. In the Center and South of Moldova also many of the artesian wells are polluted with high concentrations of fluoride, methane and other pollutants that have a negative effect on health. Among the main proposals for improving the situation were the provision of drinking water to public institutions and most in need population in certified water trucks, the sanitary-ecological arrangement of ponds as drinking water sources, ensuring water filtration, etc.



The Regional Coordinator for Europe, Church World Service, Vitali Vorona has stressed the importance for the provision of safe drinking water for children as the main bearers of the health burdens from poor drinking water quality. Dr. Vorona has also presented the main priorities of funding for Moldova, including water safety plans and construction, operation and maintenance of EcoSan toilets.

Mr. Ilya Trombitchi, the chair of the international network Eco-Tiras has mentioned a number of financial and social mechanisms that would facilitate the realization of human rights in Moldova, for example involvement of NGOs in fundraising of local projects, revitalization of the water user associations, partial compensation for low-income families, prohibiting of the disconnection of water supply to disadvantaged groups for non-payment, provision of a minimal water supply or reconnection in the case of partial payment of the water and sanitation bills, monitoring of the formation of water and sanitation prices and lobbying for more realistic prices and considering the needs of women in water and sanitation access.

### **3. Workshop “Legal and institutional aspects on the implementation of the right to water and sanitation**

The workshop was chaired by Rodica Iordanov, environmental lawyer, Milieucontact local national coordinator. The participants were from environmental and human rights NGOs as well as human rights research institutions. The main questions addressed during the workshop were:

- Shall the human right to water and sanitation be declared as separate from other environmental rights?
- How should be the rights to water and sanitation reflected in the legislation, while fulfilling non-discrimination principles?
- How should be legally regulated the construction of water provision together with sanitation?
- How to ensure the realization of the rights to water and sanitation to indirect beneficiaries?

It was mentioned that the human right to water and sanitation shall be included in the Water Law, which shall state what institutional bodies have the obligations to guarantee this right.

As the human right to water and sanitation is a right of new generation it also suggested to be included in the Constitution.

Another aspect that was discussed was that the water provider shall ensure a differentiated tax for different social groups. The state shall also provide a compensation system for vulnerable groups and also apply a tax incentive mechanism for those water providers that ensure social and environmental protection.

#### **4. Workshop “Capacity building and technical aspects on the implementation of the right to water and sanitation**

The workshop was chaired by Ion Shalaru and Anke Stock. The workshop participants were NGOs, Public Health Centre specialists, representatives from international donor and development organizations (WECF, GTZ, UNICEF, SDC).

The Workshop treated about the financial mechanisms that had to be developed in Moldova in order to implement effectively the human right to water and sanitation. Several proposals were done by the participants and will be published by the local partner for local NGOs purpose and the national authorities.

- Promote fair prices and adapted technologies
- Strengthening planning capacities at sectoral level
- Elaboration and approval of the regional water supply drinking and sanitation by the Government
- Ensure more efficient cooperation among the institutions responsible for water management and sanitation
- Promote the rights to water in law and practice by the Agency for Water Resources as a state specialized institution of Moldova.
- Strengthening capacities and information on right to water and sanitation at the consumer level, the provider and the local authorities

#### **5. Communication and dissemination**

Before the conference a press release was written and sent to a e-network of journalists.

The press release was also published on the green media

<http://ro.greenmedia.md/conferinta-de-ziua-mondiala-a-apei-3975.html>

and on the website of National Centre of Public Health.

The conference was attended by reporters from Prime TV, Publica TV, Radio Moldova, Radio Moldova International, Vocea Basarabiei and Arena.md

The news on the conference topics were reflected on the following sites:

[http://voceabasarabiei.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=15225&Itemid=169](http://voceabasarabiei.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15225&Itemid=169)

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[http://www.arena.md/?go=news&n=3982&t=P%C3%A2n%C4%83 %C3%AEn 2017, R.Moldov a va avea potabil%C4%83 \(video\)](http://www.arena.md/?go=news&n=3982&t=P%C3%A2n%C4%83%C3%AEn%202017%2C%20R.Moldova%20va%20avea%20potabil%C4%83%20(video))

<http://www.allmoldova.com/ro/moldova-news/1249054497.html>

and also on the news during 22 and 23 of March on the above mentioned TV and radio.

News on the conference was also placed on WECF website – <http://www.wecf.eu> and WiSDOM website <http://wisdom.md> ORMAX website: <http://www.cubolta.info/>

France Libertés website : <http://www.france-libertes.org/Nouvel-article,855.html>

## **6. Follow up of the conference**

The recommendations developed during the conference will be sent to relevant stakeholders including Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment. Also there will be a cooperation with Amnesty International for lobbying of the legal recognition of the human right to water and sanitation, as part of the campaign launched by Amnesty International – Campaign for adequate access to water and sanitation.

Some of the ideas of the conference discussions will be also used at the local level, for example the development of a local action plan in the field of water and sanitation in Tohatin commune. WECF France and its partners are developing the idea of a national campaign on children’s right to water and sanitation in Moldova.