

Statement by Ms Mojca Lukšić
Senior Adviser
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
of the Republic of Croatia
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Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the outset, let me congratulate you Mr. Chairman and members of the bureau upon your election as well as putting a lot of effort in organizing this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in an interactive and participatory manner. We are set on a new path in the work of the Commission after having adopted a multiyear programme of work at its previous session as well as having decided to work in two-year cycles. We have a lot of confidence that this method of work will have a direct impact on the implementation of Agenda 21, Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

In this regard, choosing the theme of Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements for its first two-year cycle shows our firm commitment to focus on these high priority issues which feature prominently both in the Millennium Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and which are central to the world's hopes of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Let me therefore commend the Secretary-General for elaborate reports on these themes as well as for establishment of an Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, to galvanize global action on these issues.

**WATER, SANITARY STRUCTURE AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
IN THE REPUBLIC CROATIA**

Water, Water Management and Water Protection

Croatia nationally also gives a lot of emphasis to these issues as protection of human health, healthy environment and safety of human lives and property are among basic human rights, also listed as such in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.

Protection of human health is primarily based on the obligation to «provide drinking water to all, and implement sanitary measures for all», within integrated water management systems, with the aim to achieve sustainable exploitation of water resources and to secure necessary water quality, which does not endanger human health, and which protects water ecosystems» (according to the Protocol on Water and Health), with the necessary level of population and industries connected to public water supply and sewerage systems. It is evident that achieving the goal of protection of human health is closely connected with environmental protection, which can be achieved only through integrated water management in the river basin. The national legislation in Croatia is addressing the stated problems, from the national to the local levels. It should be pointed out that all legislation elements are not fully harmonized, which to a certain extent makes it more difficult to manage water in the river basin and to achieve all stated basic human rights.

The Water Act and the Water Management Financing Act, both from 1995, define the legal framework of water management in the Republic of Croatia. At the national level the legal framework established by these two laws is almost complete, with only

several bylaws which regulate the development of planning documents lacking. However, the legal framework established by the two base laws whose enactment is the responsibility of the local government has not yet for the most part been established or harmonized with the legal framework at the national level. Thus a more intensive work is planned to enact this legal framework, and to further develop the implementation mechanisms for the existing legal framework. The Republic of Croatia also faces the task of harmonizing its standards with the standards of the European Union.

The long-term planning document in the field of water management, as foreseen by the legislation, is the Water Management Master Plan of the Republic of Croatia. This document is harmonized with other relevant strategies, and in the course of its development the requirements set in the EU Water Framework Directive were complied with.

However, although the existing legislation system fully accepts integrated water management, the implementation of this legislation framework continues with sectoral management. Additionally, the participation of all relevant stakeholders in water management is still not at the satisfactory level, and the forms of public participation need to be elaborated in more detail.

The basic needs for improvement relate to capacity strengthening in the field of integrated water management, i.e. further education and training of employees at all levels.

For the purpose of research and development in the field of water management, an important factor for aquatic ecosystem, funds are secured for scientific and research projects with the aim to develop water protection plans and organize their implementation, monitoring and determination of water quality, and taking measures and constructing water works for water protection.

To create a basis for water management planning and offer timely and available information in the field of water management the development of the Water Information System (WIS) was initiated.

The development of the Water Information System project was founded on the existing strategies, laws and regulations of the Republic of Croatia. It was initiated in 2001 and according to plans should be completed by 2007.

The project objectives and expected results particularly emphasize the task of the WIS to systematically and timely collect, process, exchange and make available data and information, both internally, to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and Croatian Water Institute, and externally, to bodies of state administration, international institutions and all interested parties, the general public in particular.

Standardization and monitoring, an important part of the Water Information System project, was accepted for financing by the EU CARDS 2002 programme.

Drinking water supply and sanitation

Both the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the Water Act define water as a general good which, due to its natural characteristics, cannot be anyone's property. Water as the general good has a special protection of the Republic of Croatia, and this presents the legal grounds of water protection.

Water protection measures are defined in more detail in the Water Act and the National Water Protection Plan. The National Water Protection Plan is enacted for the purpose of implementing freshwater and sea water protection from pollution from land-based and island-based sources, and it includes: necessary water quality assessment and analysis, water classification, water protection measures, contingency measures in case of accidental pollution, plan for the development of plants and facilities for waste water treatment, funding sources and way of financing the Plan, and the register of natural and legal persons responsible for implementing the Plan, their duties and powers.

The existing legislation includes protection from pollution at the source and emission control as well as the prevention principle and the «polluter pays» principle.

In Croatia, approximately 76% of population is connected to public water supply systems, 40% to public sewerage systems, with only 12% of collected wastewater undergoing some form of treatment before being discharged into the recipient. In the current state of municipal water systems, due to low population density and still low impact of Croatian economy on the status of water quality, at present we have no major water pollution problems. They are generally of local significance, in the vicinity of pollution sources.

Particularly unfavourable situation is encountered in smaller settlements (up to 10,000 inhabitants), where municipal water systems are generally not constructed, or not fully constructed, which makes the present state of the public sewerage system potentially dangerous to human health, and poses a threat of environmental pollution.

Such state has a growing influence on the need for implementation of increasingly complex measures of drinking water protection, and the need for the construction of water processing/conditioning plants. Most water presently used for drinking is distributed to users without processing/conditioning. The pollution of drinking water supplies creates the problem for sustainability and safety of water supply systems, and the sustainability and purpose of drinking water protection system (zones of sanitary protection of the source). The problem of technological sustainability of the public water supply originates from high water losses in the system (approx. 46%). This state is unsatisfactory and significantly influences the increase in the cost of water supply.

Sanitation is closely connected to the protection of human health. The lack of activities in this respect cause insufficient communication with regards to priority needs and activities at the national level, thus the necessity of a globally coordinated action at the national level and the definition of national priorities in the field of water and sanitation. It is necessary to include all stakeholders at all levels, and apply the multi-stakeholder approach to the solution of water and sanitation problems. We need to establish an institutional framework which comprises of priorities, policy and decision-making in the field of water and sanitation, as well as the effects on the population through the activities of different sectors and ministries.

In all discussions and documents, from the local to the national levels, it is undeniable that the supply of population with healthy drinking water and sanitary

disposal of wastewater is today considered the top water management priority, the precondition for both healthy living and basic standard of living of the modern man.

Human Settlements

Municipal water services to the population in Croatia are still insufficiently developed and available in comparison with the developed counties in our surroundings. The proposed concept of settlement enlargement and population concentration will make planning and provision of all kinds of municipal services to the population easier. This is additionally facilitated by the recommendation that consolidating, constructing and populating should first be focused on places with already present municipal infrastructure, i.e. drinking water supply and wastewater disposal systems included, which are a particularly important and expensive component of urban space.

The development of municipal services to the population, which are most directly related to health protection and improvement of sanitary standard, is emphasized in the Residential Strategy, which concludes with the expression of need for improvement of social and municipal infrastructure, as well as regional and urban development (counties, towns, municipalities). Based on this, the planning of municipal water systems, and other municipal systems as well, has been left to a certain extent to regional planners, who need to take into account the framework set by water management schemes and plans.