

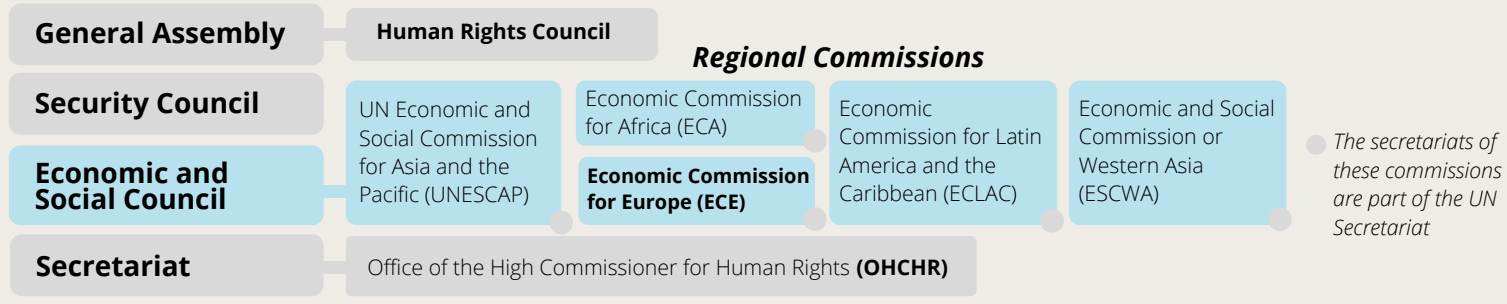
## United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)



UNECE is part of the United Nations System and together with other regional commissions, it reports to one of the UN Principal Organs, the Economic and Social Council.

### WHAT IS UNECE

#### UN PRINCIPAL ORGANS



UNECE's major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE includes 56 member States in Europe, North America and Asia. However, all interested United Nations member States may participate in the work of UNECE. Over 70 international professional organizations and other non-governmental organizations take part in UNECE activities. As a multilateral platform, UNECE facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its member countries and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity. UNECE also hosts a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Conventions and Protocols) some of which are of global reach.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF UNECE?

The UNECE together with the WHO/Europe provides the secretariat functions for the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The Protocol is a unique legally binding treaty adopted to bring together environment and health communities, the Protocol on Water and Health supports countries of the pan-European region to take concrete action on water, sanitation, hygiene and health. It aims to promote the protection of human health and well-being, through sustainable water management and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases, with a strong focus on access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

### WHAT IS THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH?

The main obligation under the Protocol is to set WASH targets according to national priorities and needs. The Protocol provides concrete tools for progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and serves as an instrument to leave no one behind when recovering from epidemics, such as COVID-19, or preventing other infectious diseases. The Protocol is jointly serviced by UNECE and WHO/Europe and currently has 27 Parties. The Protocol's compliance mechanism allows members of the public to file individual or collective complaints (communications) to the Compliance Committee in case a State, which is party to the Protocol, does not comply with its obligations under the Protocol.



## The Equitable Access Score-card: Supporting policy process to achieve the human right to water and sanitation

The Equitable Score-card is an analytical tool, developed under the Protocol, to help Governments and other stakeholders to establish a baseline measure of the equity of access to water and sanitation, identify related priorities, discuss further actions to be taken and evaluate progress through a process of self-assessment. It contains recommendations on how to plan for the self-assessment and provides concrete examples of the benefits of using the score-card in different settings. Parties to the Protocol, other countries and stakeholders are encouraged to use the Equitable Access Score-card to further address persisting inequities between rural and urban areas, wealthy and less wealthy people and for vulnerable and marginalized groups, therefore realizing the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.



## THE PROTOCOL AND THE SGDS



- The objectives and the core principles of the Protocol are fully aligned with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, water-related aspects of SDG targets 3.3 and 3.9 and several other SDGs.
- The methodologies and approaches developed or promoted under the Protocol, such as the equitable access self-assessment methodology and the Water Safety Planning (WSP) and Sanitation Safety Planning (SSP) and risk-based surveillance can be used to implement the SDGs.
- A [Practical Guide](#) is available on how to jointly implement the Protocol and the 2030 Agenda to take advantage of synergies and existing mechanisms while avoiding duplication.

## THE WAY FORWARD

**Ratifying the Protocol on Water and Health is one concrete step that States in the pan-European region can take to ensure the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, and hence to implement the SDG6. I would like to work, together with UNECE and WHO/Europe, to promote further the legal recognition of the human rights to water and sanitation.**



Pedro Arrojo-Agudo,  
UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation