

Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (fourteenth meeting)
Working Group on Implementation (tenth meeting)

The Hague, 26-27 January 2009

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Introduction

1. A joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was held in The Hague (Netherlands) on 26- 27 January 2009 at the premises of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment of the Netherlands, at the invitation of Mr. Chris Dijkens.
2. The following members of the Bureau attended the meeting: Mr. Chris Dijkens (Netherlands), Chairperson of the CoP, Mr. Cristiano Piacente (Italy), Mr. Bernard Gay (Switzerland), Vice-chairpersons, Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia), Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany), Mr. Altynbek Yegizbayev (Kazakhstan), Ms. Suzana Boranovic (Serbia), Ms. Jasmina Karba (Slovenia) and Mr. Tobias Biermann (European Commission).
3. The following members of the Working Group on Implementation (WGI) participated to the meeting: Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia), Mr. Vadim Lozhechko (Belarus), Mr. Hrvoje Buljan (Croatia), Mr. Gunnar Hem (Norway), Ms. Svetlana Stirbu (Republic of Moldova), Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania), Mr. Tomas Trcka (Slovakia) and Ms. Sandra Ashcroft (United Kingdom).
4. Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski and Ms. Virginia Fusé (secretariat) also attended. In addition, Mr. Peter Westerbeek (Netherlands) participated in the meeting.
5. Ms. Cathy Bieth (France) Bureau member and Mr. Pavel Forint (Czech Republic) as well as Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), members of the WGI, informed in advance Mr. Dijkens and the secretariat about their inability to attend the meeting.

I. Working Group on Implementation – election of the Chairman

6. According to the rules of procedure (rule 23 ECE/CP.TEIA/3) the WGI re-elected Mr. Gunnar Hem (Norway) to serve as the Group's Chairman for the years 2009-2010.

II. Reporting procedure for the Convention's implementation

7. Mr. Dijkens recalled the decision of the CoP-5, with which the WGI was entrusted to carry out the evaluation of the reporting procedure and the Bureau was requested to decide, based on the proposal of WGI on the modification to that procedure. Mr. Dijkens also reminded

about the decision related to the adoption of the Strategic Approach and the tasks of the Bureau and WGI in this regard.

8. The secretariat, at the request of the chairperson made a short presentation on the linkages between the reporting procedure and the tasks arising for the Bureau and the WGI from adopting the Strategic Approach i.e. drawing-up a form for collecting information within the Strategic Approach and developing criteria and indicators for self-measurement of progress-achieved.

9. Following the presentation and a lively discussion on possible modalities of work in applying the two decisions, the Bureau and WGI agreed that, in view of the different timescales, the work on the two decisions should be tackled in separate groups. Nonetheless, it was recommended that the two groups established for dealing with the work would inform each other on the results of their brainstorming and progress made.

Reporting procedure

10. The Bureau and WGI welcomed the readiness of Mr. Gunnar Hem to take the lead for the task force on reporting procedure and of Mr. Bernard Gay, Ms. Sandra Ashcroft, and Mr. Francisc Senzaconi to join the task force and support its work. The members agreed then on the following to be followed by the task force:

- (a) there needs to be one, common reporting procedure for all the Parties under the Convention and it should not represent any additional burden to the Parties as compared to the current procedure
- (b) the new reporting procedure, if any, needs to facilitate reporting on the progress achieved and on the activities undertaken towards further progress by Parties and other UNECE member states
- (c) the new reporting procedure should allow a more concrete evaluation of the implementation of the Convention's provisions by Parties and other UNECE member states and thus facilitate future assessments to be done by WGI

11. It was also agreed that the evaluation of the current reporting procedure and proposal for a new one should be finalized in the first half of 2009 so that the secretariat would be able to initiate the fifth reporting round not later than in early autumn.

12. The members of the task force agreed to meet for a brainstorming on 23 February. The meeting will be held in Liverpool (Bootle) at the office of Health and Safety Executive at the invitation of Ms. Ashcroft.

Indicators and criteria

13. The Bureau and WGI welcomed the readiness of Ms. Jasmina Karba, Ms. Irma Gurguliani, Ms. Svetlana Stirbu, Ms. Elisabetta Scialanca and Mr. Peter Westerbeeck to join the task force on indicators and gave following guidance for initiating the work:

- (a) the indicators should be rather pragmatic than scientific so that they allow and facilitate self evaluation done by countries' experts
- (b) they should be prepared per working area as stipulated in the Strategic Approach
- (c) developing of checklists with narratives may be investigated
- (d) they should allow to measure the concrete outputs of the implementation and the identification of gaps

14. The Bureau and WGI agreed that the task force should first concentrate on developing indicators for one area of work and that then the indicators should be tested in a pilot project with one or two Assistance Programme participating countries. This should be done in order to assess the adequacy of developed indicators in helping the countries making the self-evaluation on progress made and identification of further steps to be undertaken.

15. The Bureau and WGI requested the task force to prepare a set of first indicators in one of the areas of work before the summer period so that they can be discussed in the next joint meeting.

16. The task force members agreed to meet on 9 March in Geneva and to start working beforehand circulating between each other first ideas on indicators and criteria for the brainstorming. They also requested the task force on reporting to provide them with the results of their first meeting which may be useful for the work on indicators and criteria.

III. Assistance Programme

III.I. Implementation phase

17. Mr. Chris Dijkens opened the floor for discussing the priority needs of participating countries to the Assistance Programme by inviting members of the Bureau and WGI representing these countries to present the current focus of their work and possible needs for assistance.

18. Ms. Suzana Boranovic, informed the meeting about the current work in Serbia focused on the assessment of safety reports and the challenges faced due to little experience of Serbian authorities experts in this area of work. She then presented how Serbian experts could be trained in improving their knowledge and skills on assessing safety reports and be able to provide feedback to operators in charge, according to the national legislation, of preparing the reports. Ms. Boranovic also mentioned that Croatia and tFYR of Macedonia could need a training session on the assessment of safety reports and that the training session could be organized at a subregional level.

19. Ms. Svetlana Stirbu presented areas where Moldova needs assistance to implement more complex tasks under the Convention. In particular she focused on (a) the need for assistance in organising a national training on identification of hazardous activities, as a follow-up to the training session on identification of hazardous activities (Minsk, 21-22 October 2008), (b) the need to improve cooperation and coordination among the authorities involved in the implementation of the Convention and (c) prevention, with particular attention to risk assessment and the evaluation of safety reports.

20. Ms. Irma Gurguliani, also presented the priority needs for assistance for Georgia and she highlighted that at the time being the priority areas for assistance in her country are: (a) Planning and organising inspections to hazardous installations, (b) contingency planning and management of emergency situations, (c) the lack of adequate equipment for response and (d) the lack of adequate public information regarding hazardous activities in the country.

21. The Bureau and the WGI expressed appreciation to the presenters for taking the initiative and after a lively discussion with active inputs from members representing Assistance Programme participating countries, the Bureau and WGI agreed that the needs in the following areas are to be addressed with priority: (a) evaluation of safety reports with particular attention to

scenarios/risk assessments; (b) support to the organisation of national training sessions on identification of hazardous activities as a follow-up to the training session in Minsk; and (c) support to assessment of legal framework.

22. The Bureau and WGI invited the members from Serbia, Republic of Moldova and Georgia, in cooperation with other countries, if relevant, to elaborate concepts for project for the three agreed priority needs. Each concept project should contain: (a) background information, (b) project timeframe and participation, (c) suggested way of work and (d) budget. The secretariat was requested to assist the countries in drawing up the project concepts.

23. Ms. Boranovic also informed that a national training for inspectors on identification of hazardous activities will be organised in April in Serbia. The Bureau and WGI agreed that the experience gained by Serbia from organizing the training should be shared and, if needed, could be used as a basis to develop guidance for future national training session. To this end Ms. Boranovic was requested to report on the national training at the next joint meeting.

24. The Bureau and WGI invited other countries participating to the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme to regularly report in detail on their needs for assistance in the next meetings following the example of Georgia, Moldova and Serbia. It was agreed that any priority need presented in the future meetings, should be shown in a broader picture explaining the situation, linkages to work undertaken and expected outputs to follow the requested assistance activity. Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan was also invited to report at the next meeting on the Project on public participation organised in Armenia with German support.

25. Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei informed about financing opportunities available in Germany that could be used within the Assistance Programme and invited members from the Assistance Programme participating countries to file well written and convincing projects related to strengthening the Convention's implementation. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Winkelmann-Oei for the presentation and welcomed the offer from Germany which fits well into scope of the Strategic Approach.

26. Mr. Cristiano Piacente updated the Joint Meeting on the preparation to the Pilot project promoting the joint management of transboundary emergencies on the common course of the Danube River organized for Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. He explained each of the project phases (kick-off meeting, technical workshop for discussing the management of emergencies, in-field exercise and final seminar) and focused on the hands-on work. He also informed that the final seminar will be open to other countries participating to the Assistance Programme for sharing the project's results and lessons learnt. Mr. Piacente also informed that two/three experts on management of emergencies are needed to support the workshop and the evaluation of the exercise.

27. The secretariat, on behalf of Mr. Forint, informed about the preparations for the Training session on integrated approach to major hazards prevention organised within the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme to be held on 11 to 13 February 2009 in Prague. Information was provided on the agenda, expertise to be shared and confirmed participation from the Assistance Programme participating countries.

28. The Bureau and WGI welcomed the preparations to both activities and requested respectively progress or final reports to be presented at the next meeting.

III.II. Preparatory phase

29. The secretariat briefly recalled the requests for assistance expressed by Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing basic tasks under the Convention. Additionally, the secretariat presented the mechanism of awareness-raising missions as designed and adopted by the Bureau and the WGI in the previous biennium and suggested to apply it for the two countries. This suggestion was welcomed and the secretariat was requested to continue communication with Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina and that official letters are circulated to the countries, inviting them to host the missions in 2009.

30. The secretariat informed that it will consult the former members of the awareness-raising team of 2007 on their availability in 2009. Ms. Jasmina Karba and Mr. Cristiano Piacente on behalf of Mr. Gorgio Matiello confirmed readiness to continue on the awareness-raising team.

31. The secretariat updated on communication with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which still have to report to the Bureau on the completion of the remaining basic tasks. Unfortunately none of the countries was ready to submit a final report, nevertheless some positive signals were received confirming the countries' interests and commitment,

IV. Joint Expert Group

32. The Chairperson recalled that the CoP entrusted the Bureau to develop and implement, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), a strategy to improve the functioning of the Joint Experts Group (JEG), which also includes a mechanism for steering by the two Bureaus.

33. The Bureau supported by the WGI agreed that (a) a clear and concise strategy for the JEG should be developed on the basis of the document prepared by the JEG's Chairmen and presented to the fifth meeting of the CoP as conference room paper; (b) the most efficient way of developing the strategy is through the creation of a small task force composed of few members of both Bureaus; and (c) the task force should work out the strategy before May to have it ready for the approval of both Bureaus by mid 2009 and to present it to the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention (November 2009).

34. The Bureau nominated Mr. Winkelmann-Oei, Mr. Peter Westerbeek and Mr Cristiano Piacente for joining the task force for elaborating the strategy.

35. The Bureau requested its Chairperson and the secretariat to contact the Bureau of the Water Convention, to share the proposal, requesting the participation of its representatives in the task force and to pursue the joint work on the strategy

V. UNECE Industrial Accidents Notification System

36. The secretariat recalled the decision at the CoP-5 to entrust the Points of Contact to test the Industrial Accidents Notification (IAN) System and to carry out analytical exercises and to discuss the results at their next Consultation for Points of Contact. The Points of Contact were also requested by the CoP to evaluate the compatibility between the IAN System and the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) of the European Union and to make recommendations in this respect.

37. The Bureau requested to create a task-force to: (a) ensure the organization of a number of analytical exercises in 2009, (b) collect and make preliminary evaluation of the results of the analytical exercises to discuss them at the next consultation of points of contact (c) organise the next Consultation for Points of Contact and (d) make the evaluation on the compatibility of the IAN and CECIS Systems and prepare the recommendations for consideration by the Bureau.

38. The secretariat was asked to contact the Points of Contact and to invite them to nominate representatives to be members of the task force. The task force members should have experience with assessment of exercises as well as for the compatibility assessment be familiar with CECIS System.

39. Mr. Buljan offered to host the next Consultation for Points of contact in Croatia at the beginning of 2010. The Bureau welcomed this offer.

VI. Review of the long-term Programme of Work

40. The Bureau and WGI decided to postpone the discussion on the review of the long-term Programme of Work to their next meeting. Mr. Dijkens asked the secretariat to send to the members of the Bureau and of the WGI the current long-term Programme of work together with a note recalling the reasons requiring the revision. The Chairperson recommended that the members of the joint meeting prepare themselves for the discussion on the basis of the documents received from the secretariat.

VII. Future meetings of the Bureau and of the Working Group on Implementation

41. It was agreed that the next joint meeting would be organised in Geneva from 13 to 14 July.

VIII. Other business

42. The secretariat informed on behalf of Germany about the German-Polish exercise that is planned to take place in the second week of September 2009 and that both countries examine to combine it with a UNECE workshop to discuss topics as contingency planning in cross-border areas. The decision of both countries is expected in the near future and the Bureau will be informed accordingly.

43. Mr. Tobias Biermann updated about the activities within the Seveso II Directive and in particular that the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) entered into force in mid-January 2009. The transition was made so as to leave the scope of the Seveso II directive unchanged. A technical working group within the framework of the Seveso II Directive is currently working on examining the possibilities GHS may offer to define the scope of the directive in a way that takes better into account the potential for major accidents of the chemical substances. This could lead to a further amendment of the Directive annex I. The results of this work will be presented to the Bureau at the future meetings, especially to consider the effects on the annex I of the Convention amended in 2006.

44. Mr. Biermann, in addition, informed about the further progress in implementing the web-based Major Accidents Reporting System (MARS), a Beta version of which was under testing. The web-based MARS is expected to be fully operational by May 2009 and it should be made

available to all UNECE countries that will be invited to register with the MARS web-application. Details on it will be provided through the secretariat.

45. The secretariat presented the report of the CoP-5 containing the comments received from Bureau members. The Bureau adopted the report.

46. Mr. Dijkens asked the secretariat to provide, together with the minutes of the meeting, a short list of “action-items” that is of tasks that the Bureau, the WGI with the support of the secretariat will have to implement in the current biennium (before the next meeting of the CoP in 2010).

IX. Closing of the Joint meeting

47. Mr. Dijkens thanked the members of the Bureau and the WGI for the active participation and closed the meeting.