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English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Bureau

Forty-seventh meeting

Working Group on Implementation

Forty-second meeting

Geneva (online), 24 February 2021

Minutes of the joint meeting

1. Opening of the joint meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair of the Bureau and Chair of the Working Group on Implementation (Working Group) opened the joint meeting of the Bureau and Working Group. The following Bureau members attended: Torill Tandberg (Norway), Chair; Michael Struckl (Austria), Vice-Chair; Martin Merkofer (Switzerland), Vice-Chair; Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus); Camille Siefridt (European Union); Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland); Marie-Claire Lhenry (France); Margarita Redina (Russian Federation); Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia); and Jasmina Karba (Slovenia). The following Working Group members attended: Ms. Helena Fridh (Sweden), Chair; Mr. Pavel Chukharev (Belarus), Vice Chair; Mr. Raphaël Gonzalez (Switzerland), Vice-Chair; Ms. Reelika Kuusik (Estonia); Ms. Laura Vizbule (Latvia); Ms. Nicoletta Bouman (Netherlands); Mr. Vitalii Mutaf (Republic of Moldova); Ms. Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation); Ms. Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia); and Ms. Mária Šebestová (Slovakia). The meeting was serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat.

2. The Director of the ECE Environment Division welcomed the Bureau and Working Group members to the joint meeting. He recalled the mandates of the Bureau to, among other tasks, advise on and take steps needed for carrying out the workplan for the biennium, oversee implementation and prepare for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and the Working Group to provide substantive guidance on implementation and assistance activities.

3. The Bureau and Working Group adopted the agenda (CP.TEIA/2021/B.2–WGI.2/Agenda) without changes.

2. Follow-up on the seminar on mine tailings safety

4. The Chair of the Bureau recalled the achievements of the seminar on mine tailings safety (online, 1 December 2020) and of the adoption of decision 2020/1 on strengthening mine tailings safety in the ECE region and beyond (ECE/CP.TEIA/42.Add.1 and ECE/CP.TEIA/2020/L.1) at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva and online, 7-9 December 2020). She thanked the secretariat and the small group that

prepared the seminar,¹ which had been formally discontinued but remained available for discussion on relevant matters.

5. The secretariat presented the evaluation, conclusions and final report of the seminar, which had been circulated to Bureau and Working Group members in advance. The lead of the small group that prepared the seminar (Vice-Chair of the Bureau from Austria) reflected on the seminar, recalling that the risks of tailings management facilities had been underestimated but were critical and important. He highlighted the need for awareness and the fact that the number of these facilities will significantly increase, in line with the expected rise of mineral resource demand. The secretariat reported that the evaluation of the seminar showed very positive results. It also recalled some of the actions which Parties had agreed to by adopting decision 2020/1, notably: taking note of the seminar conclusions (paragraph 1); that the identification and notification of hazardous activities shall comprise mine tailings facilities and reporting on these as part of their national implementation reports (paragraph 8); and requesting the Bureau to prepare an orientation paper for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties with proposals for further actions for mine tailings safety under the Convention, taking into account activities of other international organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (paragraph 11).

6. The Bureau and Working Group took note of the seminar evaluation, conclusions and final report and thanked the secretariat for preparing the documents, to which members had no comments for revisions. The Bureau and Working Group also took note of the relevance of sharing knowledge and lessons learned from the seminar within and beyond the ECE region. The Bureau and Working Group endorsed the secretariat's continued work in its partnerships and work with countries to implement the actions in the decision. The Working Group Chair informed the joint meeting that the Working Group agreed to work on updating the reporting format and guidelines for national implementation reports, including to feature components on mine tailings safety.

7. The Chair of the Bureau shared information of the United Nations Roundtable on the Extractive Industries and Sustainable Development in the ECE region (online, 20 January 2021), at which she and Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard, as a representative of Switzerland, raised awareness of the Convention's guidance materials to strengthen mine tailings safety as part of mineral resource governance. She encouraged the Bureau and Working Group to raise awareness on these areas and to cooperate with industry, including on standards, to that effect. The Bureau member from the European Union shared information on the objectives of the European Union expert group on risk management, including its work on the European Union Directive on the management of waste from extractive industries, the planned development of guidelines for best risk management approaches in the extractive sector and the establishment of a Technical Advisory Group on the scope and content of the guidelines. He explained that experts from the Convention with technical expertise in the area could still join the expert group, which would hold its first meeting on 16 March 2021 and would take into account existing guidance in this area for the development of the guidelines. He also encouraged the Bureau and Working Group members to be aware of the European Union expert group's best available techniques reference document.²

8. The secretariat presented the recently launched Online Toolkit and Training for Strengthening Mine Tailings Safety, available on the ECE webpage in English,³ which

¹ The small group was composed of four members – Mr. Michael Struckl (Austria), Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany), Ms. Tandberg (Norway) and Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland).

² Available at <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/best-available-techniques-bat-reference-document-management-waste-extractive-industries>.

³ Available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/industrial-accidents/online-toolkit-and-training-strengthening-mine-tailings>.

includes the video on mine tailings safety. It discussed its target audience, envisaged usage in upcoming activities and that a Russian version of the webpage would be made available soon.⁴

9. The Bureau and Working Group welcomed the preparation of the online toolkit, as presented by secretariat, and with thanks to the UN regular budget resources. The Bureau and Working Group members agreed to consider forwarding the online toolkit to national agencies to promote its use.

3. Organization of a seminar on the Beirut accident

10. The Bureau and Working Group recalled the request of the European Union at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for an exchange of views on the ammonium nitrate accident which occurred in Beirut in August 2020. The Bureau and Working Group considered a background note, which had been prepared by the secretariat, regarding the organization of an online seminar on the follow-up of the Beirut explosion, including with a preceding survey. The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Bureau reflected on the guidelines and tools that exist for ammonium nitrate. They suggested that the seminar be focused on storage of this substance and its fertilizers within the context of accident prevention and preparedness, including issues regarding intermediate storage.

11. The Bureau and Working Group thanked the secretariat for preparing the background note and agreed to proceed with the organization of the seminar on the safe storage of ammonium nitrate, accident prevention and preparedness, and the preceding survey, depending on the resources that are made available to support the seminar. The Bureau and Working Group also agreed for the seminar to be global in reach and co-organized under ECE's lead with partner organizations, including the UN Environment Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Joint Environment Unit, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

12. The Bureau and Working Group endorsed the Bureau's establishment of a small Advisory group to support the preparation of the seminar, which would comprise both Vice-Chairs of the Bureau, including with the Vice-Chair from Austria as the lead. The Bureau members from Austria and the European Union and Working Group members from Latvia and Sweden informed the joint meeting that they planned to nominate representatives to become members of the Advisory group, which could be joined by the members of the Bureau or other constituencies of the co-organizing partner organizations.⁵ The Bureau and Working Group agreed to seek financial support for the seminar, including for, among other expenses, the online platform and interpretation.

⁴ Following the meeting, this webpage has been made available and is accessible at <https://unece.org/ru/node25/onlayn-instrumentariy-i-podgotovka-po-povysheniyu-bezopasnosti-khvostokhranilisch>.

⁵ The Advisory group is comprised of Mr. Struckl (Vice-Chair of the Bureau, Austria, lead) and Mr. Merkofer (Vice-Chair of the Bureau, Switzerland), in addition to members beyond the Bureau who confirmed their participation after the meeting, notably Mr. Ivan Nakurts (Latvia, Civil Protection Department of the State Fire and Rescue Service), Ms. Maureen Wood (European Union, Major Accident Hazards Bureau of the Joint Research Centre (EC JRC)), Ms. Heike Michael-Schulz (Germany, Bundesamt für Materialforschung (BAM)) and Mr. Lorens Van Dam (Sweden, Swedish Civil Contingency Agency). The Bureau member from France indicated her envisaged follow-up with INERIS to invite their contribution through a presentation at the seminar, and a possible contribution to the small group.

4. Update on the work on risk assessment

13. The Vice-Chair of the Bureau from Switzerland, in cooperation with the secretariat and small group on risk assessment,⁶ updated the Bureau and Working Group on the work on risk assessment and the next steps for the development of a report on the use risk assessment methodologies in the ECE region. He recalled that the origin of the project was the seminar on risk assessment methodologies at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and that the small group's subsequent work would be presented in a report to provide an overview of risk assessment methodologies and software tools and their use in the region based on case studies. He informed the Bureau and Working Group that an institutional contract was expected to be in place soon, with the aim of preparing the report for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In view of the preceding discussion, the Vice-Chair from Switzerland suggested that the case studies to be collected as part of this assignment could be extended to ammonium nitrate facilities.

14. The Bureau and Working Group took note of the information presented, stressed the importance of this work and endorsed the envisaged next steps.

5. Assistance and Cooperation Programme

15. The Bureau and Working Group discussed the assistance activities, in particular those under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, as included in the workplan 2021–2022 (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1 and ECE/CP.TEIA/2020/L.3).

(a) Update on on-going and planned assistance activities

16. The secretariat presented an update on ongoing and planned assistance activities under the current workplan, including the Project on National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Central Asia (Phase I: Launch) (2020-2021), Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe (2021) and Central Asia (2022), launch of the National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Serbia (2021), technical country missions (2021-2022), activities under the projects to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities, in Tajikistan and Central Asia (2021-2022), etc. The secretariat was closely monitoring the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to make adjustments to the above planning, in case required, while expressing the hope to be able to proceed again soon with the organization of capacity-development activities in person. While several Project activities had been modified to an online format, not all activities were suitable for such a setting. Several activities, in particular national-level meetings, involving several authorities under the National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety and sub-regional workshops should be held in person in order to yield maximum benefits.

17. The Bureau and Working Group endorsed the plans for the continuation of ongoing and new activities of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. The Working Group Chair thanked the secretariat for informing the joint meeting on the activities.

(b) Financing

18. The secretariat presented information on the financing of the assistance activities and indicated those that had been financed and those that require resources for implementation,

⁶ The small group is comprised of seven members in total both from the Convention's Bureau—Mr. Michael Struckl (Austria, Vice-Chair), Mr. Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus), Mr. Martin Merkofer (Switzerland, Vice-Chair), Ms. Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia)— and the Working Group on Implementation—Ms. Laura Vizbule (Latvia), Mr. Raphael Gonzalez (Switzerland) and Ms. Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia).

based on those included in Table 3 of the Convention’s workplan (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1). These are reflected in the tables below:

Table 1. Project activities currently implemented and their respective donors

Activity	Beneficiaries	Donor
<i>National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Central Asia (Phase I: Launch)</i>	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Russian Federation
<i>Launch of the National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Serbia</i>	Serbia	France
<i>Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe</i>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia	France
<i>Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety in Central Asia</i>	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	France
<i>Project on supporting countries of Central Asia in strengthening the safety of mine tailings</i>	Kazakhstan, Tajikistan	Switzerland
<i>Project to strengthen the safety of tailings management facilities in Tajikistan</i>	Tajikistan	Switzerland

Table 2. Project activities that require financial resources for implementation

Activity	Beneficiaries
<i>Danube Delta-II Project, including completion of the joint contingency plan, exercises and drafting of a protocol</i>	Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
<i>National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in South-Eastern Europe</i>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
<i>National Policy Dialogues for Industrial Safety in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus</i>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
<i>Project on strengthening Natech risk management in Central Asia, for example through the development and application of guidelines</i>	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
<i>Project on strengthening mine tailings safety and preventing accidental water pollution</i>	Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, South-Eastern Europe
<i>National workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety</i>	Armenia

19. The secretariat also pointed out that it hoped that additional funding be made available for the conduct of technical missions to beneficiary countries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme which had requested support, and which would help further the

implementation of the Strategic Approach, with the development of self-assessments and action plans. The conduct of such missions would naturally depend on the evolution of the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also hoped that Germany would extend its previous support to the preparation and conduct of a technical mission to facilitate the process of accession by Ukraine to the Convention, which had been postponed to this biennium.

20. The Bureau and Working Group took note of the assistance activities that are funded and those that still required financing. The Bureau and Working Group agreed to consider possible financing options within their national authorities, particularly for the projects and activities not yet financed. The Bureau recalled its role in financing the implementation of the Convention's workplan and agreed to further discuss financing options in the small group on financing.

(c) Industrial Safety Measurement Indices (ISMI)

21. The Working Group Chair introduced the ISMI tool, the development of which is included in the Convention's workplan for 2021–2022 in the framework of a pilot project under the leadership of the Major Accidents and Hazards Bureau of the European Commission Joint Research Centre (EC JRC), and the existence of an offline e-tool for self-assessments under the Convention's Strategic Approach developed by the Working Group member from the Russian Federation. The Bureau member from Serbia presented background information on and engagement with the project. She recalled that the project supported countries in monitoring and analysing progress towards implementing the European Union Seveso III Directive. Based on Serbia's suggestion, the idea of the current endeavour was to use the tool to help facilitate self-assessments under the Convention's Strategic Approach, where applicable.

22. The secretariat presented further information on the ISMI tool. It recalled that the tool originated from the EC JRC's development of a progress measurement indices for the European Union Seveso III Directive, including to set a baseline for and measure chemical accident risk management and to prioritize needs and assess the adequacy of support. With the Convention's joining of the Project, it has been jointly agreed with the EC JRC to develop an "industrial safety measurement index", which would allow beneficiary countries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme that participate in the pilot project (the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine) to make use of the tool for completing the self-assessments and action plans under the Convention. The secretariat informed the joint meeting that three groups would be involved with the ISMI pilot project: a steering group; a technical team on the tool's development; and a test user group. The three main objectives of the tool include:

(a) To achieve easier access and use for countries to conduct self-assessments through: collaborating on the national level when filling out the self-assessment; clearer structuring of information; storing all information in one protected online environment; and engaging linkages between the European Union Seveso III Directive and the Convention.

(b) To facilitate communication and analysis of results through: facilitating analysis of self-assessment results; and helping to identify key areas and priorities for future action.

(c) To improve options for partnerships in jointly implementing the Convention and, when applicable, the European Union Seveso III Directive by: using synergies in monitoring progress of both the Convention and European Union Seveso III Directive; and identifying common needs for capacity-building.

23. The Bureau and Working Group took note of and agreed to review the pilot project with the ISMI tool, the related partnership with the EC JRC and implications for further work under the Convention following the project's envisaged completion in 2022. The Working

Group Chair also informed the joint meeting that the Working Group agreed to test the offline e-tool for self-assessments developed by the Working Group member from the Russian Federation, with the view of making it available for use by the Assistance and Cooperation Programme beneficiary countries after the next Working Group meeting.

6. Other business

24. In view of his upcoming retirement, the Bureau and Working Group thanked the Deputy Director of the ECE Environment Division for his many years of work on the Convention.

7. Closure of the joint meeting

25. The Chair of the Bureau and Working Group Chair closed the joint meeting on 24 February at 12.30.
