

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

29 November 2021

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Fifty-ninth session

Geneva, 29 November-8 December 2021

Item 14 of the provisional agenda

Other business

Progress report on South Africa's AN Task Group formed after the August 2020 Beirut Port catastrophic explosion of ammonium nitrate

Transmitted by the Responsible Packaging Management Association of
Southern Africa (RPMASA)

Introduction and background

1. This paper is to provide Sub-Committee Members with a progress update to informal documents INF.51 (57th session) and INF.27 (58th session) on the South African (SA) initiative to evaluate current regulations, and practices in place, to prevent a similar type of incident / catastrophe happening in South Africa, and to identify gaps to address to improve the safety of dangerous goods in storage and transport.
2. The Task Group, a public-private partnership, co-chaired by the SA Department Of Transport (DOT) Maritime and RPMASA, and the five Expert Work Groups (EWG's) continued their work to identify gaps in regulations, areas of overlap, replication, or conflict to address, as well as the needs to strengthen training of regulators, raising awareness in industry of mandatory training requirements, improving the quality of risk assessments and to get regulations fully aligned with latest revisions of the UN Model Regulations and the modal dangerous goods regulations.
3. The Task Group includes representatives from all modes of transport, together with the SA Police Explosives Unit, SA Port Authority, SA Port Terminals, SA Maritime Safety Authority, DOT Maritime, Roads, Road Traffic Management Corporation, Road Traffic Inspectorate, Rail Regulator, SA Civil Aviation, National Department of Labour for Regulation of Major Hazards Installations, National Department Environment for Environmental Impact Assessments (Dangerous Goods Operational facilities), National Disaster Management Centre and Emergency response and the Fire Protection Association and SA Local Government.
4. Key outcomes of the November Task Group meeting include agreement to :
 - (a) value the collaboration and communication across national regulatory departments to be more aware outside of their silos,
 - (b) extend the Task Group in 2022 to include other priority on dangerous goods based analysis of known incidents in SA and internationally,
 - (c) adopt minimum dangerous goods training requirements for regulators as well as industry and extend this to include the packaging sector,
 - (d) to review dangerous goods and related regulations to revise where necessary to align with the UN Model Regulations and modal regulations,

(e) engage with the National Transport Education Training Authority (TETA) to get better aligned standards for industry compliance, as well as address the quality of training and trainers,

(f) address the need for greater awareness of all applicable dangerous goods regulations and how each part of the supply chain could adversely affect the next one through non-compliance e.g. packaging non-compliance or failure could cause disaster at sea,

(g) communicate with industry associations the importance of their members' understanding and complying with applicable regulations, including the need for greater awareness and training of responsibilities, and consequences of non-compliance, e.g. various international dangerous goods disasters,

(h) address regulatory requirements for the scope and frequency of risk assessments to identify potential dangerous goods risks along the supply chain.

5. In addition to paragraph 4 above, it was agreed that the Task Group work and the EWG's programme should be extended to encompass all classes of dangerous goods to progress and evaluate needs including :

(a) strengthening relations to fill gaps and reduce replication of efforts,

(b) capacity building and awareness raising,

(c) strengthening operational practices,

(d) improving access to quality training,

(e) filling the gaps in regulations,

(f) extend experience and expertise to other countries in our region

together with other needs identified to keep South Africa safe.

6. The authors would appreciate any offers of assistance and support to help us progress our efforts, as well as with awareness raising, capacity building and training.
