



UNECE/OECD Seminar on effective management of technological risks of accidents triggered by natural hazards

Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Geneva, Switzerland and online, 29 November-1 December 2022

CONCLUSIONS

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STRUCTURE OF THE SEMINAR

Opening with high-level panel:

Natural hazards triggering technological disasters (Natech), no longer an emerging risk?

Session 1:

Understanding Natech and existing instruments in an international context

Session 2:

Towards effective Natech risk governance in the ECE and OECD regions (and beyond)

OPENING: NATECH: NO LONGER AN EMERGING RISK? POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Although Natech is no longer an emerging risk, climate change may aggravate Natech; mitigating and managing climate change impacts on national and transboundary levels, now and in the future, needs sustained efforts
2. Industrial Accidents Convention and the OECD Working Party on Chemical Accidents are well-placed to address Natech
3. Use of (transboundary) early warning systems, such as those of river basin commissions in the UNECE and OECD regions, should be considered in implementing the Early Warnings for All Executive Plan
4. Natech risk management and adaptation are linked; relevant international initiatives comprise the Bali Agenda for Resilience and the Adaptation Agenda (CoP-27)
5. Natech and mitigation are linked; technological means (raw materials and chemical processes) to facilitate the green and low-carbon transition are expanding the potential exposure of industry to hazards
6. Inter-institutional cooperation on the local, regional and transboundary levels and the development of integrated DRR and industrial safety policies are key (NPDs, working-groups, national programmes)

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING NATECH AND EXISTING INSTRUMENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

1. Natechs are multi-hazard; climate-related and hydro-geological natural hazards affect multiple sectors and industries
→ Integrated risk analysis of key natural hazards, to be integrated into (technological) risk management policy, is needed
2. Natech events can be triggered by small and common natural events; this should be taken into account in risk assessments and management strategies
3. Consequences of Natech accidents affect people, societies, settlements, industry, economic activities, the environment and biodiversity
→ Strengthened need for inter-institutional cooperation and integration of natural and technological hazards and risks in national and local strategies and action plans on DRR
4. In terms of policy coordination, OECD, UNECE and the EU Joint Research Centre unite multiple (inter)national organizations to ensure coordination among policy initiatives covering natural hazards, industrial and chemical safety and DRR – Inter-Agency Coordination Group
5. JRC's e-Natech database is a hub for reporting and analysis of Natech accidents; ECE and OECD countries are invited to share relevant data on Natech risk management
6. Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents encourages addressing Natech and accidental water pollution, combining good practices and guidance documents, including for mine tailings facilities

SESSION 2: TOWARDS EFFECTIVE NATECH RISK GOVERNANCE IN THE ECE AND OECD REGIONS (AND BEYOND)

1. In strengthening the capacity of both public authorities and industry to prevent, prepare and respond to Natech:
 - a. Integrated multi-hazard and multi-risk maps are important
 - b. Government activities including land-use planning and development of infrastructure should take account of local natural hazards and their potential impacts, with a focus on resilience
 - c. Operators of hazardous installations should make use of hazard maps, to assess the risks of the potential impact of natural hazards on their activities
 - d. Inspection by public authorities should ensure that operators are aware of their responsibilities to understand their specific local natural hazards, to regularly assess the related risks and to take appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts and respond in the event of a natural hazard event
2. Development and application of national guidance documents on Natech risk management, including examples of good practices, are essential to enable countries to face Natech risks on the national level
3. The OECD/UN/JRC guidance document on Natech risk management (forthcoming, planned for 2024), developed for senior leaders in industry and public authorities, will build on existing cooperation and complement publications issued from former Natech projects

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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