

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

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Statement by Ms. Jo Tyndall, Director for the Environment Directorate, OECD

Dear distinguished delegates,

Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome you to this joint UNECE/OECD seminar on *Effective management of technological risk of accidents triggered by natural hazards* - that we refer to as Natech accidents. This event represents a unique opportunity for the membership of the two organisations, and even going beyond this membership, to exchange information and share experience on Natech risk management.

Natech accidents are increasingly becoming a concern across the globe:

- There is a growing consciousness that natural hazards, even the most common ones such as lightning, can be the cause of chemical accidents. The recent disaster at an oil storage terminal in Cuba with lightning striking at a crude oil tank - with 16 fatalities (all firefighters) - is a terrible reminder of this;
- Changes in climate is also a particular concern. This may affect the intensity, frequency and geography of natural hazards which may have an unprecedented and unexpected impact on hazardous installations.

The prevention, preparedness and response to Natech accidents bring a particular set of challenges that need to be addressed in the overall management of process safety at hazardous installations.

Leaders of public authorities and hazardous installations need to act now to ensure the appropriate delivery and governance of Natech risk assessment and preparedness. This leadership combined with appropriate technical assessment will enable long-term operability and sustainable development at hazardous installations, including where the level of threat increases due to climate change.

The OECD has been a leading institutional organisation in raising awareness of the risks of Natech. Since 2008, under the leadership of Germany, the OECD has organised two major international workshops, developed specific guidance on the prevention, preparedness and response to Natech accidents, as well as communication tools to increase awareness of the risk of Natech.

Today the OECD Natech steering committee includes 10 countries, representatives from industry and also partner organisations such as UNECE, the Joint Research Center of the European Commission, and the joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit that have been actively supporting the project since its start and have been instrumental to its development.

The next endeavour after this seminar will be the development of a joint OECD/UN/EC Joint Research Center *Guide for Senior Leaders in Industry and Public Authorities for Managing the Risk from Natech Accidents*.

We very much value this close collaboration with UNECE and also with other partner agencies. I am looking forward to the seminar and its conclusions and future work ahead to ensure a higher level of safety in the prevention, preparedness and response to Natech accidents.