

MINUTES
of the Second Meeting of the Working Group on Tailings Safety and Prevention of
Accidental Pollution of Water Bodies in Kazakhstan

15 March 2023

Astana city

The second meeting of the Working Group on Tailings Safety and Prevention of Accidental Pollution of Water Bodies in Kazakhstan (hereinafter referred to as the Working Group) was held on March 15, 2023 in a hybrid format in Astana and online. The meeting was attended by representatives of interested state bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan, experts from public and international organizations, operators, business representatives and scientific institutions (see Appendix 1 - list of participants).

Opening of the meeting:

Mr. Mereke Pshembaev, Vice Minister for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Noted that despite the work carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Convention, Kazakhstan needs to improve inter-institutional coordination and cooperation in the field of industrial safety and water resources. In this regard, the Inter-Institutional Working Group, which is designed to become a platform for discussing and developing joint proposals for the prevention of industrial accidents in Kazakhstan, both between interested state bodies and operators, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and other parties, was created.

Expressed his gratitude to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (hereinafter - UNECE) for the support provided to Kazakhstan in the creation of the Inter-Institutional Working Group.

Expressed hope for a constructive discussion of current problems, the development of coordinated measures, approaches and proposals for the further work of the Working Group.

Mr. Dosbol Bekmaganbetov, Vice Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

Expressed his gratitude to the UNECE, the Water Initiatives Center, representatives of the Ministry of Emergency Situations for organizing the meeting of the working group.

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan is taking measures to prevent and reduce the risks of water pollution from industrial accidents, in particular, tailings in Kazakhstan. On an ongoing basis, unscheduled inspections and preventive control are carried out with visits to the subjects (objects) of control and supervision on compliance with the requirements of the environmental legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Expressed his gratitude to the European Union and UNECE for their support in the implementation of the project "Development of joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution of the Syr Darya River in emergency situations."

Noted that taking into account the susceptibility of the territory of our region to almost all types of natural and man-made disasters, and including the risks of industrial accidents, this

platform provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen the capacity in developing measures to reduce the risks of man-made and industrial accidents in Kazakhstan.

Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa, Regional Adviser for the Environment, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources for organizing the meeting of the Working Group, as well as to the OSCE and the Public Fund “Water Initiatives Center” for cooperation and support.

Congratulated Kazakhstan for formally establishing the Working Group in February 2022 and noted that Kazakhstan is a leader in Central Asia in strengthening industrial safety and an active party to the Industrial Accidents Convention.

The working group is very important as it is a means of strengthening inter-institutional cooperation. Therefore, Kazakhstan can use this platform for a comprehensive dialogue and exchange of best practices and information. The working group is also important for ensuring the harmonization of policies and legislation in the field of industrial safety and disaster risk reduction.

Ensuring a high level of industrial safety, as well as preventing accidental pollution, is especially important, since Kazakhstan has rich mineral and metal resources, in particular, it is a leading producer of uranium. As we know, uranium is not only radioactive, but also dangerous. Therefore, it is covered by the Industrial Accidents Convention.

Recommendations have been prepared under UNECE projects, including under the Syr Darya River Basin Project, which was mentioned in the speech by Mr. Dosbol Bekmaganbetov, and under the review of Kazakhstan's national legislation. Discussion and further implementation of these recommendations will reduce the risks of man-made disasters, which can also have a transboundary impact, and enhance the safety of the population and the environment. An inter-institutional working group can serve as a platform to discuss these issues and start this process.

Mr. Yerlen Badykhan, National Economy and Environment Officer, OSCE Program Office in Astana.

Drew attention to the close cooperation of the OSCE with the authorities of Kazakhstan, international organizations and industrial enterprises. He noted that the main task of the OSCE is to ensure comprehensive security, not only military-political, but also environmental, throughout the entire OSCE area, which consists of 57 countries. In this regard, the Industrial Accidents Convention is very important, and the OSCE is doing its best to help the authorities of Kazakhstan in its implementation.

Session 1: Review of progress in the implementation of the Work Plan of the Working Group on Tailings Safety and Prevention of Accidental Pollution of Water Bodies in Kazakhstan

Mr Yerkin Duisenbaev, Chief Expert of the Department of State Supervision in the Mining and Metallurgical Industry of the Committee for Industrial Safety of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Presented information on the progress made and further steps to implement the work plan of the Working Group on tailings safety and prevention of accidental pollution of water bodies in Kazakhstan for 2022.

Ms. Ksenia Nechunaeva, Environmental Consultant, Industrial Accidents Convention, UNECE

Presented an analysis of the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which provides recommendations for better harmonization of national legislation with the requirements of the Industrial Accidents Convention. This report has been sent to representatives of government agencies in Kazakhstan and, if necessary, operators can access the report through the authorities.

During the discussion of the presentations of this session, it was noted that the presented mechanisms have already been implemented in the national legislation. Last year, Kazakhstan adopted a new environmental code, which was developed taking into account the recommendations of the UNECE and UNDP, aimed at transboundary waters, EIA and long-range pollution.

Session 2. On current problems and necessary measures taken in the field of safety and prevention of accidental pollution of water bodies in Kazakhstan

Mr. Altai Myrzabaev, Deputy Head of the Department for Prevention of Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan

He presented information on ongoing activities in the field of flood forecasting and prevention.

Mr. Yermek Umarov, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Regulation and Control of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Presented information on the measures taken to prevent and reduce the risks of water pollution from industrial accidents, in particular, tailings in Kazakhstan. He noted that the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, represented by the Committee of Ecology and its territorial Departments, on an ongoing basis conducts unscheduled inspections and preventive control with visits to the subjects (objects) of control and supervision on compliance with the requirements of environmental legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Trent Collins, Head of Dams and Tailings, KAZ Minerals

Made a presentation on challenges in tailings for operators.

Mr. David Gwede, Director of Tailings, JSC "ArcelorMittal Temirtau"

Presented lessons learned from recent international tailings accidents.

Mr. Meimanbek Chekyrbaev, Deputy Director of the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction

Presented information on the risk assessment and strategy for the development of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in the field of disaster risk reduction for 2022-2030 with a focus on Kazakhstan.

In the process of discussing the presentations of this session, the participants noted the need to tighten national legislation on tailings and strengthen work on the prevention and prevention of accidents. They also expressed the opinion that the European standards for tailings management should be adapted to the political and natural environment of the country. It was also proposed to include in the Work Plan of the Working Group for 2023 a corporate analysis of two legislations, in particular State Standards in Construction (SSC) and Building Norms and Rules (BNRs), which are applied in Kazakhstan, and GISTM standards (Global Industry Standard for Tailings Management).

Session 3. Regional instruments and projects on tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution

Ms. Ksenia Nechunaeva

Presented UNECE projects and tools to improve the safety of tailings and prevent accidental water pollution.

Ms. Alexandra Riedl, UNECE consultant

Made a presentation on updating the cadastre and mapping of tailings in Kazakhstan, which was developed under the UNECE project to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings, in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Mr. Yerbol Yelekeyev, Head of the Sector for Health and Safety at Samruk-Kazyna JSC and Mr. Dmitry Rudakov, UNECE Consultant

Presented the main results and recommendations of the project Development of joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution of the Syr Darya River in emergency situations (stage I).

During the discussion of the presentations of this session, it was proposed to consider in more detail the recommendations of the Road Map to improve the safety of tailings in the UNECE region at the next meeting of the Working Group. The participants also expressed their interest in the project on the integration of man-made risks and man-made accidents into strategic documents for the further work of the Working Group.

The participants noted the interest of the Central Asian countries in the results of the first stage of the Syr Darya project and asked international organizations to consider the possibility of financing the second stage of the project.

Session 4. Innovative approaches and initiatives in the field of safe management of tailings

Mr. Brendan Duprey, Director of the Kazakhstan Research Institute for Sustainable Development, Associate Professor of Sustainable Development, Narxoz University

Made a presentation on a project to introduce natural solutions to prevent pollution of tailings in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Reijo Pold, founder of Value Space

Presented space-based risk assessments and monitoring of tailings, on the example of the Jagersfontein diamond mine in South Africa and the Ridder-Sokolnoye tailings in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Andy Small, Senior HR Consultant, Klohn, Crippen Berger, International Commission on Large Dams

Provided a summary of the work of the Large Dam Commission and an updated bulletin on the design principles for tailings.

During the discussion of the presentations of this session, the importance and necessity of environmental solutions to combat air pollution in industrial sectors and cities was noted. A proposal was also made to consider the possibility of local organizations joining the International Commission on Large Dams.

Session 5: Wrap-up and discussion of next steps

Moderator: Mr. Musa Tanabaev, Deputy Chairman of the Industrial Safety Committee of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Informed that the draft work plan of the Working Group for 2023 would be sent to all participants for suggestions and comments.

Thanked everyone for their active participation in the meeting. He expressed special gratitude to the UNECE and the PF "Center for Water Initiatives" for their support in organizing the meeting.

Mr. Akzan Shiranov

Thanked the speakers for interesting presentations. He expressed hope for further fruitful cooperation.

Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa

Noted the importance of the Working Group in further strengthening industrial safety both at the national and regional levels. The development of a joint contingency plan for the Syr Darya river basin will improve preparations for the prevention and response to industrial pollution.

Emphasized the importance of considering the issue of safety at the design stage of tailings. In this regard, Kazakhstan can use the tools and best practices developed under the Industrial Accidents Convention and Water Convention.

Encouraged Kazakhstan to continue work on improving the safety of tailings and to take into account the relationship between natural, climate-related and man-made hazards. This can be done by holding regular meetings and continuing the work of the working group with the participation of the MENR and MES.

The participants of the meeting, having listened to the speeches of the speakers, and having discussed the issues included in the agenda, decided the following:

1. Take note of the speeches of the speakers on the agenda of the meeting;

2. Approve the draft Work Plan of the Working Group for 2023, taking into account the proposals of the members of the Working Group;

3. Recommend the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to consider the possibility of involving the UNECE, other international organizations, operators, non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions in the implementation of the activities of the Work Plan of the Working Group for 2023.

4. Recommend the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with the Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to consider the possibility of holding the third meeting of the Working Group in the first half of 2024.