Introduction to the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and its relevance

Tbilisi, 5 November 2013
This presentation

- Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Environment subprogramme
- Multilateral environmental agreements
- Focus on strengthened implementation and compliance
- Introduction to the Industrial Accidents Convention
- Its relevance
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

- Set up in 1947 by ECOSOC – one of five UN regional commissions

- Promotes economic integration and cooperation among member countries and promotes actions towards achieving sustainable development
  - Policy debate (policies; good practice; experience)
  - Norms and standards (guidelines; conventions)
  - Technical cooperation

- Provides a platform to draw up regional views/inputs to global processes and a mechanism for regional implementation of outcomes of global UN Conferences
UNECE membership
56 countries from Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North America
Subprogrammes at UNECE

- Environment
- Transport
- Sustainable Energy
- Trade
- Forests
- Housing and Land Management
- Statistics
- Economic Cooperation and Integration
Subprogramme Environment

Committee on Environmental Policy
“Environment for Europe” process
Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Improving Environmental Governance & Performance

Transport, Health & Environment
Education for Sustainable Development
Environmental Performance Reviews
Environmental monitoring & assessment

Education for Sustainable Development
UNECE MEAs

Country A

- Business/science
- Public authorities
- Public

Human wellbeing & Environment

Country B

- Public authorities
- Business/science
- Public

Human wellbeing & Environment

Air quality

Water quality & access to safe drinking water

Safe industry

Public participation

Public access to justice

Environmental impact assessment
UNECE MEAs – focus in recent years

- Support to implementation & compliance
  - “Environment for Europe” process reform
  - Aarhus/PRTR compliance & capacity building
  - Espoo Implementation Committee & capacity building
  - Industrial Accidents Assistance Programme
  - Air Pollution EECCA Action Plan
  - Capacity building & Water National Policy Dialogues

- Exchange of information & practice
- Guidelines and methodologies
- Pilot Projects & Training
- Best Available Technologies
- Scientific tools & models
- Benchmarks / indicators & criteria
Increasing support for implementation & compliance

Thousands of US$
Industrial Accidents Convention

- Adopted in 1992, entered into force in 2000, was negotiated by ECE member countries in response to several major industrial accidents and their transboundary effects (e.g. Sandoz spill at Shweizerhalle in 1986 effecting all downstream countries along the Rhine)

- Designed to protect people and the environment against industrial accidents

- Helps its Parties to prevent industrial accidents and to prepare for, and respond to, accidents if they occur
Cooperation between stakeholders

Prevention
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Interior / Emergency Situations
- Other ministries

Preparedness
- Regional and local authorities
- Industry

Response
- Public
Cross-border cooperation
Relevance of the Convention (1)

• It works in partnership with other actors (EU, OECD, UNEP, OCHA)

• State-of-the-art legal instrument – regularly updated, undergoing its second revision (alignment with GHS and EU Seveso 3)

• Contributes to improving environmental performance and enhancing governance (horizontal and vertical structures)
Relevance of the Convention (2)

- Parties have experience in implementing the Convention and are willing to share that knowledge (assistance programme)

- UNECE is experienced in delivering assistance activities

- Significant transboundary component leading to enhanced cross-border exchange of information and cooperation (What role would you see for Georgia as a Party to the Convention?)
for better environment & human health