

# Second interagency coordination meeting on industrial accidents

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27 May 2014, Bonn, Germany

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

In opening the meeting, Dr Elizabet Paunovic, Head of the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, noted that interagency meetings play an important role not only in coordinating action to meet political commitments at the international level but also to prepare for industrial accidents, which could lead to environmental pollution and a negative impact on human health. She stressed WHO's particular interest in mobilizing resources to prevent such events, bearing in mind the Organization's high level-commitments and obligations in this area, for example, in the International Health Regulations. Dr Paunovic expressed her appreciation and strong support of the initiative shown by the international organizations involved in the management of chemical emergencies in sharing information, knowledge and experience, planning cooperative projects and action, developing guidance documents, discussing areas of common interest, identifying gaps in existing regulations, and developing appropriate tools. This meeting would be a further step in strengthening the cooperation of international and regional organizations in the area of chemical safety and the coordination of the work they are doing: a good sign of the consistency of our intentions. Dr Paunovic wished the participants a productive meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Irina Zastenskaya, Technical Officer, Chemical Safety, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

The provisional agenda was adopted (Annex 1).

## **1. Participants**

The meeting was attended by representatives of seven international and regional organizations and institutions (Annex 2). In introducing themselves, the participants voiced their main expectations from the meeting, namely: to be updated on current and planned activities, to identify points of common interest, and to learn from each other.

## **2. Current status of activities in the area of industrial accidents and of interagency coordination**

The Chair briefly presented tables summarizing the information received from the participating organizations about their ongoing and planned activities in the area of

industrial accidents, and about the areas in which they were particularly interested in cooperating. The format for providing such information was agreed at the First interagency coordination meeting, in Geneva, Switzerland, on 29 April 2013.

The information included in the tables was received from the following organizations: the Convention on Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Environment Division; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit (JEU); and the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Based on the information presented and the ensuing discussions, the participants identified priority areas of cooperation for the short and long terms.

### ***3. Priority areas and opportunities for strengthening interagency coordination***

The following priority areas of cooperation were identified for the short and long terms:

- facilitation of information exchange, including: information about hazardous accidents, on-going and planned projects, upcoming meetings, new documents to be developed, trainings and training materials, and experts;
- cross-linking of information related to the prevention of, preparedness for and response to chemical emergency situations, and to chemical incidents on the websites of the participating organizations;
- implementation of the practice of sharing documents under development between the participating organizations for peer reviews;
- the collaborative development and revision of guidance documents on, for example: inspections, the ageing of hazardous installations, awareness and preparedness for emergencies at local level, the management of accidental oil spills, as well as the second edition of health and environment risk assessment;
- the development of strategic partnerships in priority areas identified by the participating organizations: enhancement of industrial safety; implementation of international agreements that are legally binding (such as, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, the International Health Regulations) or voluntary (such as, the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals); information exchange and awareness raising; joint recognition of individuals and organizations that actively participate in the prevention of, preparedness for and prevention of industrial accidents (for example, the Green Star Awards<sup>1</sup>);

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<sup>1</sup> The biennial Green Star Awards recognize individuals, organizations, governments and companies that have demonstrated achievements in the prevention of, preparedness for and response to environmental emergencies (<http://www.gcint.org/green-star-awards3>).

The participants in the meeting also identified the following topics for consideration in the future: creation of a special website with links to available information on industrial accidents and related topics; creation of a joint roster of experts; accreditation of experts for competence; development of a system for ranking enterprises according to their preparedness to respond to industrial accidents.

#### ***4. Reporting on industrial accidents and incidents and strengthening of information exchange***

The Major Accident Hazards Bureau of the European Commission Joint Research Centre, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and the WHO Collaboration Centre for the Public Health Management of Chemical Incidents presented information about existing systems for the collection of information on industrial chemical incidents and accidents, namely: the eMARS information system (functionality and lessons learnt; current and future eMARS products and services, including the AIDA accident analysis tool, which is currently under development); information about challenges and opportunities related to the notification of chemical events in accordance with International Health Regulations obligations; the Early Alerting and Reporting for CBRN Events project (its goal, evaluation of first-stage results, lessons learnt and ways of further development).

The participants took note of the information provided. It was agreed that it would be useful for the participating organizations to share the results of their projects with each other.

#### ***5. Chemical industrial accidents in the light of ongoing global processes***

UNEP/OCHA informed the participants about ongoing activities aimed at mainstreaming issues of chemical industrial accidents into the global agenda of chemicals management, including the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Sustainable Development Goals discussion, and at including technological disasters in the post-2015 framework for disaster-risk reduction. The participants expressed their appreciation of these activities.

#### ***6. Terms of reference of the group and operating procedures***

As a result of a short discussion on the group's terms of reference, the scope and purpose of the group will be considered at the next meeting, with the main focus on activities, mode of communication, and distribution of information (distribution list, type of information). In connection with the last-mentioned, it was agreed to distribute a list of the participants email addresses to facilitate an exchange of updates and information.

#### ***7. Other business***

OECD kindly offered to host the Third interagency consultation meeting on industrial accidents in Paris, France, in May-June 2015. The proposal was gratefully accepted.

## Annex 1

### Agenda

8:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants
9:00 – 9:15	Opening of the meeting <i>Organizational matters</i>
9:15 – 9:45	Introduction of participants (tour de table)
9:45 – 12:00	Current status of activities and interagency coordination in the area of industrial accidents (completed and on-going projects, case-studies, partnerships and lessons learned) (10 min presentations followed by discussion)  <i>All agencies/organizations are invited to present relevant information</i>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break
13:00 – 14:45	Agency/organization priority areas and opportunities for strengthening of interagency coordination (joint activities, technical and practical arrangements, coordination among different regulations) (10 min presentations followed by discussion)  <i>All agencies/organizations are invited to present relevant information</i>
14:45 – 15:30	Reporting on industrial accidents and incidents and strengthening of information exchange (data, experience, lessons learned, way forward)  <i>EU (MAEB) and WHO are invited to make presentations on information systems on industrial accidents. Agencies/ organizations are invited to share view on needs and mechanisms for strengthening of information exchange.</i>
15:30 – 16:10	Chemical industrial accidents in the light of on-going global processes (SDGs, HFA, SAICM)  <i>UNEP is invited to introduce the agenda item for discussion.</i>  Terms of references of the group and operating procedures  <i>MAEB is invited to introduce the agenda item for discussion</i>
16:10 – 16:30	Other business and closure of the meeting

## Annex 2

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