
Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Working Group on Implementation

Twenty-fifth meeting

Geneva, 2-3 July 2014

Minutes of the twenty-fifth meeting

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Working Group on Implementation (WGI) under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents held a meeting in Geneva, at the Palais des Nations on 2 and 3 July 2014.

2. The following members of the Working Group attended the meeting: Ms. S. Ashcroft (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Chair; Mr. E. Baranovsky (Belarus); Mr. H. Buljan (Croatia); Mr. T. Valanto (Finland); Mr. L. Iberl (Germany); Ms. E. Kupeva Nedelkova (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia); Ms. S. Milutinovic (Serbia), Vice-Chair; Mr. M. Merkofer (Switzerland); and Ms. A.-S. Eriksson (Sweden). Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania) could not participate. Ms. Franziska Ilg-Hirsch, secretary to the Convention, Ms. Virginia Fusé, Ms. Claudia Kamke and Mr. Nikolay Savov represented the secretariat.

II. Reporting on implementation

2. Reporting on implementation

a) Seventh report on the implementation of the Convention

The secretariat provided an update on the progress made with the preparation of the seventh report on the implementation of the Convention. It informed that, as requested by the Working Group at its last meeting, official reminder letters were sent by the Chair of the Working Group and the UNECE secretariat to the six Parties that had not submitted their implementation reports before the Working Group's last meeting in April 2014. The secretariat also informed the Working Group that, following those letters, Albania and Kazakhstan had submitted their implementation reports.

The Chair of the Working Group briefed the meeting on the comments received from the Bureau on the draft report on implementation at its meeting on 16–17 June 2014. **The Working Group discussed the comments and requested its Chair, supported by the secretariat, to update and finalize the seventh report on implementation based on the discussions at the meeting.**

The Chair of the Working Group also informed the meeting that there was the possibility to submit, together with the Bureau, to the Conference of the Parties a draft

decision on strengthening the implementation of the Convention. The Working Group agreed with this proposal and discussed bullet points for inclusion into the draft decision. **It requested the secretariat to prepare a draft and share it with the Working Group for comments before submitting it, through the Bureau, to the Conference of the Parties.**

b) Discussion on further issues resulting from the review of the 2012–13 national implementation reports, such as:

- Role and tasks of a country's focal point.

The secretariat presented a one-page document on the role and tasks of a country's focal point for discussion by the Working Group. The Working Group welcomed the document while requesting the secretariat to make minor adjustments, so as to highlight the coordination role of focal points and to ensure consistency in terminology. **The Working Group also decided that the final document should be: (i) Translated into Russian; (ii) Made available on the Convention's webpage; and (iii) Circulated to current and future focal points.**

- Update of the location criteria for the identification of installations falling under the Convention.

The Working Group discussed the need to update the location criteria, adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2000 and amended in 2004, which set the basis for notifying hazardous activities to neighbouring countries. **The Working Group, taking note of the progress made in the last 10 years and new methodologies developed (e.g. for risk assessment), agreed to review and possibly update the location criteria in the biennium 2015–16. The Working Group further agreed to discuss the next steps, including the possible involvement of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, at its first meeting after the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.**

- Review of the reporting format and guidelines before the next reporting round.

The secretariat presented the recommendations collected from the Working Group regarding improvements of the 2012–13 reporting format and guidelines for the next reporting round. **The Working Group agreed with the recommendations made and requested the secretariat to forward those to the members of the next Working Group when those will be preparing the 2014–15 reporting format and guidelines.** During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

(i) The practice, started in the 2012–13 reporting round, that countries highlight good practices in their implementation reports should be continued.

(ii) Progress made from one to the next reporting round should be made more visible in the national implementation reports. The Working Group could support countries in doing so through including elements from the indicators and criteria into the reporting format and/or guidelines for certain questions.

(iii) There is a need to clarify in the next reporting format and guidelines how a country that does not have hazardous activities with possible transboundary effects should report.

(iv) The idea to build a database in which countries could search for specific information from all reporting rounds was abandoned. It was rather suggested that all countries, whether Party to the Convention or not, should get access to the password protected site where all implementation reports were stored, if they had submitted an implementation report. The Working Group requested the secretariat to make the implementation reports in the future only available in pdf.

3. Report from the Chair on items arising from the 27th meeting of the Bureau (The Hague, 16–17 June 2014)

The Chair reported on further issues of interest resulting from the Bureau meeting on 16–17 June 2014. The Working Group took the following decisions regarding the below mentioned issues:

- a) Reflections from the seventh report on the implementation of the Convention in the 2015–16 programme of work

The Working Group found that many recommendations from the seventh report on the implementation of the Convention were reflected in the 2015–16 draft workplan. **It recommended that the areas for follow-up of the seventh report on implementation should be reviewed again when preparing the eighth report.**

- b) Presentation of selected good practices from the seventh report on the implementation of the Convention at the COP-8 special session on “Enhancing industrial safety in the ECE Region”

The Chair briefly introduced the proposal to organise a seminar on Enhancing industrial Safety in the ECE Region, as previously agreed in the Bureau meeting and as reflected in the Provisional annotated agenda (ECE/CP.TEIA/29) for the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties. She also explained that the seminar aimed at wider audience of attendees than the CoP and that it would be organised jointly by the WGI Chair, Ms. Jasmina Karba, Vice-Chair of the Conference of the Parties and by the secretariat.

The members of the Working Group were asked to share ideas of good practices that could be presented during the seminar. The members provided the following ideas:

- (i) The differences in the provisions concerning public participation between the text of the Seveso II and the Seveso III Directive. Denmark could be invited to present the topic at the seminar;
- (ii) The good practices in exchanging information within the Interstate Council on Industrial Safety of the Commonwealth of Independent States;
- (iii) The approach of the Russian Federation towards risk assessment and notification
- (iv) The approach of Switzerland to consultation with neighbouring countries and notification of hazardous activities;
- (v) Experience from countries beneficiaries to the Assistance Programme in using the Strategic Approach;
- (vi) A presentation from Belarus concerning the transboundary response exercise with Latvia and Lithuania.

The Working Group decided to recommend that the suggestions from points i, ii, iv and vi be recommended to be included in the seminar.

- c) Proposed updates of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, including the number of its members;

The secretariat informed the Working Group that the Bureau was currently discussing the possibility to submit updated terms of reference of the Bureau and the Working Groups on Development and Implementation to the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Bearing in mind the growing tasks that **the Working Group** absorbed since the adoption of its terms of reference in 2000, it **welcomed the Bureau’s discussion and a draft version of the updated terms of reference for the Working Group on Implementation indicating the changes envisaged, in particular the increase in its members from 10 to 12.**

4. Assistance Programme management

a) Assistance Programme tracking table

The secretariat recalled the decisions taken at the meeting of the Working Group on 27-28 November 2013 in Bootle and further at the meeting on 14-15 April 2014 in Bucharest concerning the Assistance Programme tracking table. The secretariat furthermore recalled the idea behind the creation of the Convention's tracking table to facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Approach and of the Assistance Programme. In addition, information about the current situation in all the countries currently beneficiaries of the Assistance Programme was presented.

The WGI discussed the tracking table in view of deciding its future use and the responsibilities for its update. The Working Group decided as follows:

- (i) The secretariat should update the tracking table after every mission and activity carried out;
- (ii) The secretariat is to make available to the members of the Working Group the tracking table one month before each meeting of the Working Group to provide enough time for questions and reviews, depending on the participation of the Working Group members to the activities organised;
- (iii) Part of the content of the Assistance Programme Tracking Table would be used to prepare a document for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties providing an overview of the past 10 years of activities under the Assistance Programme;
- (iv) As the document "A decade of assistance to countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: lessons learned and future prospects" makes reference to all assistance activities carried out so far, it was decided that the Assistance Programme tracking table be used as internal tool for the Working Group and that it should not be made available on the website;
- (v) After the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat would explore the possibility of making available the tracking table in a password-protected page on the Convention's website.

The discussion about activities organised provided also the opportunity to touch upon partnership with other international organisations programmes and projects and about funding opportunities. In particular, the following observations were made:

- (i) The material contained in the table would be very valuable also if exchanged with other projects and programmes;
- (ii) It would be useful to increase the partnership with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; it would not be possible to access to funds from the Global Environment Facility and other global programmes, because the latter only finances activities on a global scale and the Convention is at regional scale;
- (iii) Further cooperation with the Convention concerning the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents of the International Labour Organisation and with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants could be explored. Participation in meetings of such partners or potential partners should be considered by members of the Bureau and Working Group on Implementation, or by the secretariat.

b) Self-Assessment and Action Plans received

The Chair informed the meeting that no new self-assessment or action plan was received from Assistance Programme countries. It was pointed out that no reminders were

sent since the last meeting, in view of the review of the document on Indicators and Criteria.

It was furthermore decided to postpone further discussions concerning responsiveness of countries beneficiary to the Assistance Programme to the use of the Indicators and Criteria to after the election of the new Working Group on Implementation at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 3-5 December 2014).

c) Past, planned and on-going assistance activities

The secretariat provided information about planned and on-going assistance activities. The following activities were mentioned:

The meeting on Implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Montenegro (15 - 16 April 2014), organised with the funding from the Environment and Security Initiative, was the first activity having taken place in the country. It allowed the secretariat to create contacts and ensure the participation of the country to the Conference of the Parties, where the representative from Montenegro would deliver a presentation about the activity organised.

The High-level and Expert Meeting to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents for Bosnia and Herzegovina (19 - 21 May 2014). The secretariat informed the Working Group that the meeting had to be shortened because of the heavy flooding hitting South-Eastern Europe at the time of the meeting. The focal point from Bosnia and Herzegovina was to contact the secretariat with information about the possible scheduling of the continuation of the event.

A brief update was provided about the Danube Delta Project and about the Project Management Group meeting that took place on 18 June 2014 in the Netherlands, back to back with the Bureau meeting. It was highlighted that there was the need to ensure financial resources to cover the organisation of the crisis management exercise under the project.

The secretariat also mentioned the organisation of the upcoming national workshop on the Convention organised for Turkmenistan, in partnership with the National Policy Dialogues under the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The workshop was to take place on 9 - 10 October 2014 in Ashgabat with the participation of some members of the Bureau and Working Group on Implementation.

Replying to a question from the Working Group, the secretariat also mentioned training sessions, planned as per the Assistance Programme Tracking Table, currently without funding for its implementation. This was for instance the case for a training session on notification of hazardous activities to neighbouring countries that would benefit Uzbekistan. The Working Group welcomed the inclusion of sub-regional activities, especially concerning notification of hazardous activities, as inserted in the draft workplan for 2015-2016.

d) Review of the document on Indicators and Criteria

The Chair, with the support of the secretariat provided updates concerning the review of the document on indicators and criteria and informed the meeting that the document was to be able on time for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The members of the Working Group would be able to comment on the document before the CoP meeting.

The Chair also informed the Working Group that the two training sessions – one in Albania and one in Azerbaijan – were to take place at the latest in October 2014, to allow the finalisation of the document. In addition to the consultant in charge of the review of the document and of a member of the secretariat, members of the Working Group were to participate to the meetings as facilitators.

The Working Group requested that representatives from Albania and Azerbaijan have a brief intervention during the CoP about the training session and the new version of the document on indicators and criteria.

The secretariat informed the Working Group that the Terms of Reference for projects under the Assistance Programme were adopted at the Bureau meeting on 16-17 June 2014.

5. Schedule of meetings

The Working Group confirmed its next meetings after the Conference of the Parties to take place in Geneva on 28 and 29 (a.m.) January 2015 jointly with the Bureau; and on 29 (p.m.) and 30 January 2015 meeting of the Working Group on Implementation only.

6. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

The WGI reviewed the decisions taken at the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting on 3 July 2014.
