

23 February 2016

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Working Group on Implementation

Twenty-ninth meeting

Geneva, 30 November 2015

Minutes of the meeting

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. Members present:

Ms. Sandra Ashcroft (United Kingdom), Chair;
Mr. Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus);
Ms. Lina Buciene (Lithuania);
Mr. Hrvoje Buljan (Croatia);
Ms. Helena Fridh (Sweden);
Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany);
Mr. Martin Merkofer (Switzerland);
Ms. Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia), Vice-Chair;
Ms. Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation).

Absent:

Mr. Peter Westerbeek (Netherlands)

2. Secretariat:

The meeting was serviced by the secretariat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), represented by
Ms. Franziska Ilg-Hirsch,
Ms. Virginia Fusé,
Mr. Nikolay Savov.

3. The Working Group on Implementation (WGI) adopted the provisional agenda (CP.TEIA/2015/WGI.4/Agenda) without changes.

4. The Chair welcomed the new member representing the Russian Federation who participated for the first time. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the selection of Ms. Fusé, secretary of the Working Group on Implementation, for a three months temporary assignment in the UNECE Environment Division until end-February 2016. During her absence, the secretariat could assure the translation and processing of the national implementation reports and their transmission to the Working Group members, as well as the follow-up communication with Assistance Programme beneficiary countries.

II. Role of the Working Group on Implementation in the development of the Convention

(a) Compliance

5. The Chair recalled: (i) the decision by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting (CoP-8) that the Working Group on Development (WGD), with the WGI, consider whether to introduce a compliance mechanism and, in the affirmative, prepare a draft decision; (ii) previous discussions and conclusions in the WGI; (iii) discussions in the Bureau, and (iv) the presentation, which she was to deliver to the WGD.

6. WGI members considered the presentation to well reflect previous discussions of the WGI. Furthermore, they stressed that the changing the reporting period from every two to every four years be essential to engage in new work. Consequently, they supported introducing a compliance mechanism which would, among others, be a means to formalise and enhance the contacts by the WGI with countries and reiterated their agreement with such a recommendation to the WGD.

(b) Notification of hazardous activities to neighbouring countries and notification of accidents with possible transboundary effects

7. The Chair recalled the decision taken at the twenty-eighth meeting of the WGI on 30 June – 1 July 2015 to propose to the WGD not to amend Article 1 of the Convention on definitions to prevent misunderstanding between “notification of hazardous activities” and “notification of an industrial accident”. She summarised that, with the introduction of a compliance mechanism and enhanced contacts with countries, this issue be addressed.

ACTION ITEMS:

The WGI Chair to:

- Report back to the WGI on the discussions at the WGD

III. Implementation of the Convention

(a) Arrangements and timeline for the assessment of national implementation reports

8. The secretariat presented a proposed division of work for assessing the national reports on implementation, which countries needed to submit by the end of January 2016. The WGI agreed with the division of work, as indicated in the table below, and decided to share the assessments of the areas of work, the latest, one week before the next meeting.

Topic	WGI members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy for implementation of the Convention • Scientific and technological cooperation and exchange of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Sandra Ashcroft (United Kingdom) • Mr. Peter Westerbeek (Netherlands)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and notification of hazardous activities with the potential to cause transboundary effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia) • Ms. Lina Buciene (Lithuania)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of industrial accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Martin Merkofer (Switzerland) • Ms. Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency preparedness and response • Mutual assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus) • Ms. Helena Fridh (Sweden)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of the public • Decision-making on siting • Reporting on past industrial accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Hrvoje Buljan (Croatia) • Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany)

9. Mr. Baranovsky informed the colleagues that he was deployed by his country to Ukraine for six months during a mission under the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in the first half of 2016. Consequently, he could not ensure his availability for assessing the national reports. Ms. Fridh indicated that she could replace Mr. Baranovsky, if needed.

(b) Information about the presence of areas for follow-up – identified in the Seventh report on implementation – in the 2015-2016 workplan

10. The WGI postponed to a following meeting the discussion on an assessment about the presence of areas for follow-up identified in the Seventh report on implementation in the 2015-2016 workplan.

ACTION ITEMS:

The secretariat to:

- **Make available the national reports on implementation on the password-protected page as soon as available and arrange for translation of the Russian and French reports into English**
- **By mid-December 2015, inform the WGI of the number of reports received**
- **Send an invitation to Mr. Baranovsky to attend the thirtieth meeting of the WGI in April 2016**

The WGI to:

- **Send to the secretariat the content of the assessment of the national reports, at least one week before the next meeting (27-28 April 2016) i.e. by 18 April 2016 at the latest**

Ms. Milutinovic and the secretariat to:

- **Send to the WGI an assessment of how recommendations from the WGI/areas for follow-up identified in the 7th report for implementation are included in the workplan**

IV. Assistance Programme management

(a) Feedback on self-assessment and action plans received and future organization of work

11. The Chair recalled that four WGI members accepted to provide feedback to Albania and Uzbekistan on the documents part of the strategic approach. Mr. Buljan and Ms. Fridh reported on the self-assessment from Albania and Mr. Merkofer (in the absence of Peter Westerbeek) on the self-assessment and action plan from Uzbekistan.

12. The WGI discussed the reports and decided the following:

(i) For Albania: to write to the country and (i) to include the previous version of the self-assessment, (ii) to explain that the old version contained more elements than the recent one and (iii) to suggest that Albania update the old version with information on two or three main topics

(ii) For Uzbekistan: to write (i) acknowledging the documents received, stating that it included only minor updates compared to the previous self-assessments; (ii) reiterating its previous recommendation that a capacity-building workshop be held in Uzbekistan; (iii) encouraging to nominate a focal point. The WGI further considered that the Chair report to the Bureau on the identified need for a capacity-building activity in

Uzbekistan so that the Bureau could engage in ensuring the availability of resources for such an activity.

13. The WGI requested the secretariat to receive copies of the letters sent by the secretariat to communicate the recommendations by the WGI.

14. The secretariat informed the WGI about new self-assessments and action plans received from Armenia and Serbia. Ms. Milutinovic briefly informed the meeting that Serbia had updated the self-assessment and action plan according to the three tables of the strategic approach included in the new user-friendly version.¹

15. Ms. Fridh and Ms. Buciene agreed to provide feedback to Armenia, and Mr. Iberl and Mr. Merkofer to Serbia. WGI members would receive feedback on both countries by preferably May 2016.

(b) Discussion on follow-up to the communication with Georgia

16. The Chair recalled (i) the teleconference with the focal point from Georgia at the meeting in June-July 2015 and (ii) the Georgian action plan on Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence (CBRND) sent to the WGI after the teleconference. The WGI considered points (i) and (ii) and that the representative from Georgia expressed concern that completing the documents for the strategic approach may be seen as a partial duplication of work, seen the efforts put in the CBRND action plan, and would not be in line with current resource capacities.

17. The WGI considered that it would be important to maintain Georgia's engagement in the Assistance Programme and with reference to its previous discussion on the complexity of the tools under the Strategic Approach, recognized the need to consider a more flexible implementation of the tools developed. It concluded that several areas of the CBRND action plan were overlapping with the strategic approach, in particular with regard to the identification of hazardous activities. Therefore, it agreed that Georgia be a first test case in which the country: (i) could make use of another action plan, in this case the CBRND plan, in place of the strategic approach's action plan; (ii) could be encouraged to prepare and submit a project proposal on the basis of this action plan, providing further background, with reference to the respective area in the self-assessment, when elaborating the project proposal.

18. The WGI requested the secretariat to write to the country on the above. The communication should also contain an encouragement for the country to continue its involvement in the Convention's Assistance Programme.

(c) Other items for discussion on the Assistance Programme

19. The Chair recalled (i) the mandate by CoP-8 (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014) to carry out an analytical review to determine whether the information available was sufficient to document and assess the Assistance Programme's effectiveness; (ii) discussions during previous meetings.

20. The secretariat presented the research on some of the quantitative data available. The WGI members agreed to look into the documents and discuss them at a further meeting, after finalising the overall implementation report. The Chair and Mr. Iberl agreed to review the availability of information on the basis of identified indicators for three selected countries which, considering balance in terms of geographical spread, Parties/non-Parties, and information availability, could be Belarus (or alternatively Armenia), Kyrgyzstan and Serbia.

¹ Available from : <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/ap/tools.html>, see *User-friendly version of the Benchmarks for the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and Word version of tables to submit self-assessment and action plan*

21. The WGI decided to postpone the discussion on other items under the Assistance Programme to its meeting in June 2016.

ACTION ITEMS:

The secretariat to:

- **Communicate the WGI's conclusions to Albania, Uzbekistan and Georgia**
- **Send to the Chair and Mr. Iberl available documents on Belarus (or Armenia), Kyrgyzstan and Serbia**

The WGI to:

- **Volunteers to share their feedback sent to Armenia and Serbia with WGI members by May 2016**
- **Review the research on possible quantitative data, as distributed by the secretariat, and provide feedback before the next meeting**
- **The Chair and Mr. Iberl to share their views on the usefulness of current indicators to assess the effectiveness of the Assistance Programme by looking at the cases of Belarus (or Armenia), Kyrgyzstan and Serbia**
- **Further discuss other aspects of the Assistance Programme at its June 2016 meeting**

V. Schedule of meetings

22. The WGI decided to meet:

- (a) On 27-28 April 2016 for assessing the implementation of the Convention
- (b) On 16-17 June to discuss the Assistance Programme and to finalise the preparation of documents to be presented to the Bureau in preparation of the Conference of the Parties.

VI. Closing of the meeting

23. The Chair thanked the secretariat and members of the body for their support in advance of and during the meeting, before closing the meeting on 30 November 2015.
