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JOINT MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES AND THE APELL SENIOR-LEVEL EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP ON THE “PARTNERSHIP ON ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES”

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting was convened jointly by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in connection with the 5th meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies and the 8th meeting of the APELL Senior-Level Expert Advisory Group, in Geneva on 15 May 2003.
2. The participants recognized, with great appreciation, the benefits of a joint meeting with the participation of the two groups and other stakeholders in environmental emergencies.
3. The meeting was attended by participants from Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Colombia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United States of America, and Venezuela.
4. The meeting was also attended by participants from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNEP DEPI, Basel Convention, UNEP Chemicals, UNEP APELL, UNEP ROLAC, UNDP, UNITAR, UN Volunteers, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), European Commission (EC), Chemical and Allied Industries Association (CAIA), European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), CENTEK, CYPRES, Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), GTZ, International Civil Defense Organization (ICDO), International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), International Development Center (IDCR), International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA), INERIS, International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Green Cross International, Human Ecology and Environmental Research (EURA), IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Planning, Development and Partners Relations (PDPR), World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Merck, Petrobras, Grupo Apell Barranquilla, Luzenac Group, academia representatives from Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Mexico, United Kingdom, Zambia, Thailand, consultants from Argentina, Colombia, Jordan, Peru,

United States, Germany, Venezuela, France, Switzerland, and observers from Brazil, France, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.

Opening the meeting

5. Mr. Vladimir Sakharov, Deputy Chief, OCHA's Emergency Services Branch (ESB) and Chief, UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit opened the meeting, welcomed participants and stressed the importance of obtaining views and ideas on the Partnership in pursuit of a truly participatory approach in implementation of the Partnership. He stressed that ownership belongs to all participants who expressed support for the partnership and not to the two agencies that initiated the Partnership
6. The meeting unanimously elected Mr. David Speights (USA) as Chairman, and Mr. Johann G. Goldammer (Global Fire Monitoring Center) as Vice-Chairman.
7. The Chair, in his opening remarks, expressed appreciation of the opportunity provided for holding a joint meeting, allowing a broader stakeholder-based discussion on the Partnership and reflecting the further integration of the AGEE and APELL groups. Mr. Speights emphasized the need for participants to consider specific, practical outcomes from the meeting, while keeping in mind the necessity for individual partners to contribute with resources in pursuit of the common good. Mr. Speights then paid tribute in remembrance of Mr. Jim Makris, Director, Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office, US EPA, Mr. Janusz Zurek, Institute of Environmental Protection, Poland, and Mr. Roger Garret, US EPA who have passed away, since the last meeting of the two Advisory Groups. Mr. Speights also complimented Ms. Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Assistant Executive Director, UNEP and Mr. Wayne Bisset, Canada, Representative to the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accident, who have retired.
8. Mr. Sakharov provided a brief background on the Partnership, explaining how UNEP and OCHA had joined forces in launching a global initiative to strengthen environmental emergency management, at the Johannesburg World Summit of Sustainable Development (WSSD) in August 2002. Mr. Sakharov referred to the considerable support extended to the Partnership initiative by the 22nd UNEP Governing Council, and also by a broad range of partners and stakeholders, since its launch. Further, he stressed the aim of the Partnership to enhance networking and linkages between partners and other stakeholders, while seeking more integrated approaches to various aspects of the disaster management cycle. Finally, Mr. Sakharov underlined the timeliness of this first opportunity to discuss implementation of the partnership in greater details with partners and stakeholders.
9. Mr. Fritz Balkau, Head, Production and Consumption Branch, UNEP Division for Technology, Industry and Economics, reiterated the need for optimizing efficiency in emergency management through integrated approaches, and explained how the Partnership represents a rallying point for this effort. Subsequently, he outlined how the APELL Process, in that regard, provides a effective mechanism for building local level, integrated community emergency response plans through partnerships arrangements. In concluding his presentation, Mr. Balkau stressed the need for this Global Partnership to accommodate a multiple level approach in strengthening environmental emergency management. Hence, partnerships should be promoted at relevant levels, as a way to ensure integrated approaches to environmental emergency management.
10. Mr. Jarl Krausing, Consultant, Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, placed particular emphasis on the nature of the WSSD Partnership concept. Accordingly, the partnerships are to be regarded as a tool for linking better global policy deliberations with regional and national implementation mechanisms, through broadening of the stakeholder base and establishing more forceful linkages between the three pillars of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Further, Mr. Krausing summarized the outcome from the 11th Session of the Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD), which confirmed the importance of the Partnership concept, and the

intent to complement – not substitute – previous efforts by governments. Stressing the partnerships as a tool for ensuring participatory approaches, Mr. Krausing explained how the guiding principles of collectivism, relevance and complementarity are embedded in this Partnership on environmental emergencies.

Dialogue with stakeholders – national, industry and NGO perspectives

11. The Chair emphasized the need for the participants to air their constructive views and ideas on the Partnership concept and implementation, which could assist UNEP, OCHA and partners in taking the Partnership forward in a manner that would meet the needs and expectations by stakeholders.
12. In the presentation by Dr. Alberto Maturana Palacios, Director, National Emergency Office, Chile, an accident in connection with a derailed transport of chemical substances in Chile, was referred to. The incident demonstrated a need for strengthening various aspects of the national environmental disaster management cycle. A particular challenge related to the fact that many industries as well as the transport sector manage self-auditing systems in the absence of independent verification of prevention and preparedness parameters. On the response side, the train accident had helped highlighting the consequences of an absent national emergency notification system, putting pressure on efficiency and effectiveness of response interventions. Given the Partnership's potential for supporting the strengthening of national environmental emergency management systems and structures, the participant from Chile welcomed and expressed strong support to the Partnership, while underlining the need to provide also Spanish language outreach and guidance material.
13. The participant from CEFIC, Ms. Mara Caboara, International Affairs and ICCA Manager, European Chemical Industry Council, referred to the Seveso and Bhopal accidents as a background for the strong commitment by the chemical industry to participate in, and contribute to, the development of appropriate prevention, preparedness and response capabilities in relation to chemical accidents. Ms. Caboara furthermore explained how the 'Responsible Care Program' had been established and embraced by the industry. This program had helped ensure a formal commitment by senior management through a set of management codes and guidance tools, and through the provision and appliance of a number of performance indicators. Finally, Ms. Caboara conveyed the support of CEFIC to the Partnership, while offering to share views and experiences on chemical emergency management aspect and further investigate ways in which to enlarge the Partnership. She noted that CEFIC would further assess how they may best support the initiative.
14. Dr. Bertrand Charrier, Executive Director, Green Cross International, introduced the meeting participants to the activities of Green Cross International in relation to industrial accidents, natural disasters and post conflict rehabilitation, and subsequently called for increased industry transfer of technology between developed and developing countries. Stronger initiatives by respective industries to help build capacities in developing countries would be both appropriate and desirable. In relation to the partnership, Dr. Charrier strongly encouraged a more integrated approach, through stressing more clearly the social and economic consequences of environmental disasters. Further, he proposed that the Partnership should consider elaborating a set of ethical principles for enhanced industry collaboration in areas of prevention, preparedness and response, through identification and sharing of lessons learned, and technology transfer. Dr. Charrier also highlighted the need to differentiate between natural disasters and industrial accidents, given the very differing interpretation of responsibilities. In addition to also calling for a more regionalized approach, Dr. Charrier reiterated the need to facilitate transfer of knowledge and information along the South-South axis, as a complement to the more predominant North-South channeling.

Regional, sub-regional and national Partnerships

15. The Chair introduced the second part of the agenda, intended for the presentation of national and regional partnership arrangement as a background for discussing implementation aspects of the Partnership on environmental emergencies.
16. Ms. Barbara Pollack, Advisor to the Head, KG PSP, Poland, presented the achievements and experiences obtained within the EURO-BALTIC Programme for Civil Protection Cooperation, for possible replication under the Partnership. While seeking to apply uniform approaches in environmental emergency management within the Euro-Baltic sub-region, the programme had resulted in various joint exercises and workshops regarding emergency notification and transboundary effects of major accidents and natural disasters. A particularly useful experience had been the distribution of lead roles to member countries for specific areas of the partnership to ensure effective promotion, initiation, co-ordination and monitoring of such relevant themes or aspects. As such the regional approach had provided a very effective way to establish a cross-border and needs-based approaches, at systemic and thematic levels. While the 2003 programme of the Euro-Baltic Partnership emphasizes joint actions in relation to oil-spill preparedness, SEVESO II implementation and identification and destruction of World War II ammunition, the 2004-2006 programme will emphasize the safety dimension of spatial planning, cooperation with non-state actors, transnational capacity building and the introduction of better information and decision support systems.
17. Mr. Ulf Bjurmann, Head of Department, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, outlined how a partnership approach had been applied in the Nordic – Russian region, including also the establishment of an APELL-based framework for cooperation in relation to the energy sector. The regional cooperation is being facilitated through a series of thematic workshops, exercises and case studies, which will continue in the coming years, while it is also envisaged to establish an APELL Center to further consolidate the collaboration.
18. On behalf of the participant from CYPRÈS, Southern France, Mr. Michel Sacher, Ms. Ruth Coutto of the UNEP APELL Secretariat, briefly outlined a sub-national partnership, which has been established with the active participation by local authorities, communities and local industries in the region of Provence, France. This partnership seeks strengthening of prevention and preparedness aspects of environmental emergencies through awareness raising and risk-mapping.
19. The representative of the United Nations Volunteers, Mr. Edmundo Werna, Urban Development Specialist, Program Development & Operations Group, explained how UNV supports and strengthens voluntarism as a mechanism for development, and hence is supporting implementation of partnerships between stakeholders. Mr. Werna then outlined a number of tangible services by UNV, and ongoing projects, where synergies could be potentially identified with immediate effect. Among these, were several local-level based urban and environment-related projects, and distinctive mechanism whereby UNVs could be fielded without costs. UNV expertise can furthermore be provided off-site, and environmental emergency aspects could be integrated into various existing UNV outreach tools. In addition, Mr. Werna expressed the commitment by UNV to support the Partnership through development of joint project proposals and the placement of new UNVs where possible.
20. The Chairman briefly summarized the discussion and main points, as reflected in the aggregated list of conclusions and recommendations outlined, at the end of this document.

Discussion Forum: The way forward

21. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Johann G. Goldammer recalled how the Partnership between the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit and the Global Fire Monitoring Center had evolved over recent years from the onset of severe forest fires in Indonesia in 1997, and stressed the more effective

approaches that could be achieved by stakeholders, when operating on the basis of adequate information sharing and coordination. With reference to the integrated approach of the Partnership, Mr. Goldammer directed the attention of the meeting participants to the creeping disasters that evolve as a consequence of degradation of vegetation cover due to inappropriate land use, land occupation or wildfires, increasing both the vulnerability of populations and risk of secondary disasters. Integrated strategies for reducing local disaster risk and exposure of people therefore must pay more attention to preventive measures. Strengthening of preparedness must include the development of locally applicable early warning systems. Mr. Goldammer concluded by encouraging meeting participants to express their needs and come up with ideas for the partnership.

22. Introducing the Discussion Forum, Mr. Jarl Krausing presented what UNEP and OCHA had observed as gaps in current environmental emergency management arrangements, at local and national, and at international and global levels; the often fragmental and compartmentalized efforts in prevention, preparedness for, and response to emergencies, suffer from limited stakeholder involvement and weak coordination between agencies and relevant programmes. Mr. Krausing also singled out the absence of a global platform, for sharing of information and knowledge across topologies of environmental emergencies, and in between geographical levels. Measured against this reality, he described, comparative advantages of the Partnership, which however will depend on the will and resources committed by stakeholders towards its implementation. Among other advantages, the Partnership will enhance coordination, dialogue and networking in addition to building better linkages between global strategies and national/regional implementation. Further, Mr. Krausing outlined how a participatory approach is being pursued under the Partnership, in addition to this meeting, by proposing to undertake a more thorough survey among stakeholders of current efforts, expectations and resources; by inclusion of interested AGEE members in a core-group, which could help further develop the Partnership concept; through launching of an electronic newsletter to keep interested parties informed of progress, and; by establishing a web-site for sharing of information, knowledge and partner profiles.
23. In the discussion that followed, support to the further development and implementation of the Partnership was expressed by all speakers.
24. Several participants, including participants from Pakistan, Thailand, ADPC and PAHO, encouraged the Partnership to address the need for strengthening of national institutions and legislative frameworks, in aspects of both capacity building and enforcement of relevant regulations. The delegation from Chile stressed the particular need for promoting stability in the institutional structures, since national mandates appears to be very fluctuating according to fast staff turnover and frequent changes in governmental structures. The Chilean delegate also highlighted the fact that often resources devoted to environmental emergency management were not being channelled further down to sub-governmental levels, which hampered the ability by such levels to ensure adequate preparedness and linkage between national and community preparedness. The delegate of Pakistan furthermore suggested that the Partnership should promote the call for environmental impact assessments in larger infrastructure and industry projects, when developing global standards and undertaking efforts to enhance national legislation related to environmental emergency management.
25. Many participants expressed the expectations that the Partnership should emphasize linkages between international and national efforts to improve environmental emergency management aspects, and the promotion of more proactive approaches at these levels. While recognizing that a more clear focus for the Partnership should be established, the participant from Thailand highlighted the fact that it may not necessarily be resource availability, but rather efficient use of available resources, that needs strengthening. Hence, a dual approach was proposed whereby some countries could be assisted with resources, while others could be assisted in aspects of enforcement of environmental emergency management regulations.

26. A number of participants encouraged the Partnership to place more emphasis on state or sub-national levels, rather than predominantly national and local levels, since existing capacities often were placed on sub-national levels. The participant from Brazil furthermore encouraged the Partnership to liaise closer with global networks of sub-national structures, and to provide a more specific focus on facilitating access to international experiences and ensure a better dialogue between national and international agencies. It was a general view that an important aspect of the partnership is to support the development of national strategies for emergency management, and supporting the development of local level institutions to implement these national strategies.
27. Several participants called for the Partnership to act as a “clearinghouse” for environmental emergency management information and knowledge, and for the facilitation of contacts/linkages between partners, stakeholders and existing networks – in addition to providing a global platform for dialogue between relevant entities
28. In line with others, the participant from Morocco underlined the need for providing local and national stakeholders with educational material and training opportunities, for which the establishment of a web site would constitute an important step to allow for sharing of information and experiences. In supporting the idea of a regional approach, the participant referred to progress in relation to marine accidents, which could be used as a model for regional cooperation in case of environmental emergencies other than marine. She encouraged the partnership to strengthen South-South networking and collaboration through supporting regional workshops and meetings. The Partnership should address aspects of both policy development, legislative infrastructures and management of emergency situations.
29. The participant from Indonesia pointed towards the lack of knowledge about the environmental emergency management requirements, at the grassroots and local community levels, and why the Partnership should pay particular attention to the need for assisting governments to develop and implement national awareness-raising strategies.
30. The participant from ADPC encouraged the Partnership to apply a comprehensive multi-hazard, disaster risk management approach, assisting in development of coherent planning tools and associated institutions. The participant also encouraged a sharpened focus for the Partnership, i.e. development and consolidation of environmental emergency systems. This would entail training programmes in relation to which APDC offered its assistance and integration into its own efforts, and offered to host a demonstration project that could pilot this approach at the field level. The need for comprehensive approaches was also mirrored in the call by the Pakistan delegation, encouraging a framework approach including all relevant stakeholders, coupled with effective means of coordination at the national level.
31. Many participants emphasised the need to uphold a regional approach given differing conditions and needs in regions. In doing so, the Swedish participants referred to current approaches by the European Union, which helped ensure uniformity in approach. It would, according to several participants be the role of UNEP and OCHA (and the Partnership) to document, coordinate and disseminate commonalities across regions. The participants also underlined the need to strike appropriate balances between efforts to enhance prevention, preparedness and response, and to clearly distribute responsibilities among governments and industries. The participant from Sweden encouraged the Partnership to maintain focus on environmental accidents and to consider hidden disasters, but not including chronic pollution, which is being addressed elsewhere.
32. Several participants, including from the United States of America, the Russian Federation and Sweden, expressed the need for the partnership to add value to existing efforts through simplifying ways in which assistance is being provided and received in developing countries, i.e. applying a ‘one-window-approach’. The US participants also emphasized the need for the Partnership to establish

clear goals and performance indicators, and to develop tools for measuring progress towards reaching specific goals at the country level. The US participants finally encouraged stakeholders to think beyond what is already being done and supported the idea of using AGEE core-group mechanisms to help taking the Partnership forward.

33. Consequently, and in line with other participants, the PAHO representative stressed the need for the Partnership to acknowledge the very diverse mechanisms associated with each elements of prevention, preparedness and response, involving differing stakeholders, which is why a particular effort should be invested into defining overall national focal points – or committees – that at the national level could help bridge approaches and interests, and trickle coordination down towards sub-national levels. For this, support through the Partnership in the development of model tools and agreements for regional, national and local level partnership would be desirable, including the establishment of regional focal point functions.
34. Several participants called for the Partnership to seek better coordination of programmes promoted by the international community, relevant to developing capacities in disaster and emergency management in developing countries. More coherent approaches are required in addition to enhancing accountability aspects in follow-up to disasters.
35. While recognizing the participatory approach pursued under the Partnership, participants encouraged UNEP and OCHA to show leadership under the Partnership to ensure tangible outcomes in areas of information sharing, guidance and capacity building through training at global and regional levels.
36. A number of participants, among others, from the Netherlands and the United States of America, encouraged the partnership to profit from existing efforts to compile and document lessons learned. The participant from Sweden proposed that linkages be established with the “Swedish National Centre for Lessons Learned from Accidents”, Karlskoga, Sweden, which provides a platform for gathering information, analysis and dissemination of lessons learned from accidents and near-accidents. The participant from the Netherlands referred to the extensive knowledge and information embedded in several national environmental protection agency web-sites, and proposed that the Partnership change the terminology towards ‘lessons indicated’, since it is not known whether lessons are applicable in a new setting before actually applying them. The participant from Poland referred to lessons learned embedded with OECD and AIEA.
37. Some participants stressed the need for the Partnership to first create conditions for funding, i.e. clearly identifying needs and mechanisms for enhancing efforts to improve environmental emergency management at respective levels. The Swedish participant, like several others, stressed the potential for UNEP and OCHA to provide the necessary coordinating role in this regard – not just in relation to efforts by partners under the partnership, but also in liaising with other relevant programmes and Partnerships.
38. The UNECE representative confirmed the support of the UNECE to the Partnership in pursuit of better coordination and increased efficiency in environmental emergency management, through promoting ownership by stakeholders, at the levels of countries, the international community and relevant international secretariats. The representative expressed a readiness and interest in working with the Partnership in seeking synergies between existing and new efforts to capacity build, and with regard to extending continued strong support to the APELL Process.
39. The UNITAR representative stressed that the promotion of good governance at governmental and corporate levels was the key to sustainable development, which is why capacity building should target these elements, while also nurturing more long-term commitments from stakeholders. In supporting the Partnership, UNITAR offered to share its experiences with development of methodologies for self-evaluation of governmental and corporate capacities and the establishment of multi-stakeholder

action plans. UNITAR could also support the development of a capacity building website, similar to their own INFOCAP-site, and sharing of relevant information, in addition to suggesting closer linkages with another partnership for the harmonization of chemical classification systems, currently implemented with ILO and OECD

40. Upon reiterating the support of the ISDR Secretariat to the Partnership, the representative from ISDR furthermore highlighted the obvious relevance of the ISDR programme for the Partnership, but in particular referred to the Second Integrated Early Warning Conference, scheduled for October 2003 (and 4 preparatory regional conferences in June 2003), which is aiming to support the integration of early warning of natural disasters into public policy. The expected outcome includes development of indicators, identification of best practices and guiding principles. The delegate also referred to the Partnership related to Resilient Communities, being coordinated by International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which works with local governments to develop risk assessment tools for local use. The ISDR is furthermore involved in the development of a conceptual framework for integrated risk management benchmarks, which has obvious relevance for the Partnership.

Conclusions and recommendations

41. During the meeting and in concluding the Discussion Forum the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and representatives from UNEP and OCHA expressed their appreciation for the fruitful discussions and outlined a number of points and recommendations for consideration by partners and stakeholders:
42. The meeting
 - *Commended* UNEP and OCHA for their useful initiative in providing the meeting the opportunity of the two advisory groups and other key stakeholders to exchange views on the Partnership
 - *Encouraged* the development of a more clear scope for the Partnership, while maintaining a comprehensive environmental emergency management approach
 - *Invited* partners to focus the Partnership on the need for strengthening national networks and institutions, and mechanisms for sharing of information and knowledge at - and between - regional and global levels
 - *Encouraged* the Partnership to retain a multi-level approach, whereby local, sub-governmental, national, regional and global level networks and structures are being considered /addressed as appropriate and feasible
 - *Encouraged* UNEP and OCHA to establish an inventory of current efforts by the international community to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in developing / exploring sound environmental emergency management practices
 - *Invited* UNEP and OCHA to facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge by developing a web-based site on the Internet for use by partners and stakeholders.
 - *Invited* partners to strengthen the environmental emergency knowledgebase, through compilation, analysis and dissemination of Best Practices in sound environmental emergency management
 - *Welcomed* an idea of establishing a Partnership Core Group, made up by interested partners and stakeholders as well as representatives from UNEP and OCHA, under the

auspices of the AGEE, in close consultation with APELL, in order to facilitate a participatory based framework for the development and implementation of the Partnership

- *Encouraged* industry associations and the private sector to explore the role of the industry in the Partnership, and consider ways in which increased responsibility within and between industries can be promoted between donors and beneficiaries
- *Encouraged* partners and stakeholders to catalyze new, or enhance existing measures to build environmental emergency management capacities at local and national levels
- *Encouraged* AGEE/APELL meeting participants to promote the Partnership among governments, industries, corporate world and NGO/IGO communities
- *Requested* the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit to report annually on progress, with the view to keeping partners and other interested stakeholders informed about the status of Partnership implementation
- *Encouraged* partners and stakeholders, including UNEP and OCHA, to elaborate and submit specific project proposals to potential donors, including industry, corporate world and interest groups, to consider possibilities for funding of the implementation of the partnership
- *Invited* donors (governments and industry in particular) to consider supporting the implementation of this Partnership in accordance with guidelines and principles of the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD), i.e. through providing additional resources, while not substituting existing efforts.