



Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *2nd Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies*

3-4 October 1996, Geneva

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Minutes*

The meeting of the Advisory Group has as an objective to review the activities of UNEP/DHA, share experiences and discuss new approaches to environmental emergencies as well as bring forth recommendations on the implementation of its work programme.

The report on major activities of the Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit served as the basis for the deliberations and reflected the positive experiences of recipients and donors in different emergency situations encountered during 1995 and 1996. The report also provided an opportunity to express appreciation to donor countries and the Environmental Stand-by experts who responded to environmental emergencies during this period.

A synopsis of the main recommendations brought forth by the meeting follows:

- to further the improvement of the flow of information on environmental emergencies (information and situation reports), as well as to undertake a study of possibilities for making use of GIS and satellites,
- to further implementation of activities and services through the development of specific capabilities, especially brokerage, clearinghouse and assessment functions,
- to further the expansion and improvement of the National Focal Points, taking into account operational needs,
- to request countries to consider nominations of national experts to the roster of Environmental Stand-by Experts,
- to recommend that the *Guidelines for the Development of a National Environmental Contingency Plan* be disseminated to the National Focal Points and relevant national bodies for testing and evaluation of its use, and to request the Joint Unit to report on the experience at the 1997 Advisory Group Meeting,
- to recommend that the *Guidelines for Environmental Assessment Following Chemical Emergencies* be disseminated to the National Focal Points and relevant bodies for possible use.

The meeting expressed satisfaction and endorsed the constructive collaboration between UNEP and DHA in enhancing the ability of the United Nations to assist countries, particularly developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition, affected by environmental emergencies. Gratitude was expressed toward the DHA for making available its Emergency Cash Grants for immediate response needs in case of environmental emergencies.

Special appreciation was expressed to the Government of Switzerland and the European Union for financial support provided to the Unit as well as to the Russian Federation for its initial contribution to the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies. The meeting recommended that other countries contribute to the Trust Fund.

The meeting further recommends that UNEP allocates the necessary resources for the 1998/1999 biennium for the operations of the Joint Unit.