

2013 ADVISORY GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES FORUM

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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2013 AGEE Forum Group Photo, Credit: UN Photo Violaine Martin, 15 May 2013

Geneva, Switzerland 15-17 May 2013

Conference Proceedings of the 2013 Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2013 Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) Forum was held from 15-17 May. More than 100 participants from 21 governments, including 4 regional organizations attended. Participants included policy makers, environmental experts and disaster managers from government ministries, academia, the UN, and NGOs who gathered to share experiences and promote cooperation.

The AGEE featured an inspiring keynote speech from Ms. Vandana Shiva, environmental activist. She highlighted the impacts of silent emergencies, such as drought, and eloquently expressed the link between seed biodiversity and increased resilience. Current global agricultural practices contribute to the potential for more environmental emergencies with its reliance on pesticides and fertilisers. She called for the UN to create an office of technological assessment and to ensure that public goods, such as seeds, remain in the public domain.

Mr. Randolph Kent, the founder of the Humanitarian Futures Programme at King's College, provoked participants to consider over-the-horizon risks, asking whether organizations are appropriately configured to adapt, innovate and engage in long-term strategic thinking. He suggested that humanitarians should engage with military planners and industry groups in consideration of future scenarios.

The Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC) was launched by UNEP and OCHA during the Forum. The EEC is an interactive on-line knowledge hub aimed at strengthening preparedness and response to environmental emergency preparedness through a platform for governments and responders to access guidelines, lessons-learned, advocacy tools, legal documents, interactive trainings and updates on current environmental emergencies. Four three-hour e-Learning modules are hosted on the EEC as well.

AGEE participants agreed to the following collective priorities, among others:

- Embed environmental emergencies into comprehensive disaster risk management frameworks; Support nationally- and regionally-led capacity development initiatives to improve preparedness for environmental emergencies.
- Enhance response mechanisms by providing resources (including experts and advisory services), through OCHA and UNEP, to support countries affected by environmental emergencies and encourage partners to join the network of providers to ensure a representative, diverse and sustainable network.
- Encourage OCHA and UNEP to establish interface arrangements with relevant international organizations and increase coordination between thematic regional governance frameworks for environmental emergency response.
- Advocate for consideration of the environment in humanitarian action (EHA) and demonstrate how this contributes to building resilience and sustainable development.
- Constitute an advisory group to identify future risks and priorities, advocate for increased support to environmental emergencies, and generate strategic partnerships and resources. Organize an open forum every two years to increase awareness, advocate for priorities and provide networking opportunities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The tenth meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) Forum was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from 15 to 17 May 2013. The meeting was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Participants included representatives from the following Member States: Argentina, Armenia, Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and Zambia.

Representatives of OCHA, UNEP, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and World Food Programme (WFP) also attended the meeting.

The following regional organizations, institutions, associations, civil society organizations and academia were also represented: the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), *Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central* (CEPREDENAC), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Green Cross International (GCI), Groupe URD, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), King's College, Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), the Kenya National Disaster Operation Centre (NDOC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Group on Chemical Accidents, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Shelter Centre, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Spiez Laboratory Switzerland, *Terre Des Hommes*, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and independent experts.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

DAY1 - Wednesday, 15 May 2013

Participants were welcomed by Ms. Amy Carroll, the 2013 AGEE facilitator. She introduced Ms. Vandana Shiva, environmental activist and the founder of Navdanya, a national movement to protect the diversity and resilience of living resources in India through a network of seed collectors. Ms. Shiva was awarded the Right Livelihood Award for placing women and ecology at the heart of development.

Ms. Shiva appealed to participants to remember the "silent emergencies"; those emergencies that are not headline sudden-onset disasters, but long-term disasters that have a major impact on populations and agricultural and economic productivity, such as droughts. She established the link between seed biodiversity and increased resilience. Current global agricultural practices are potential contributors to



Vandana Shiva, Credit : UN Photo, Violaine Martin

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increased risk of environmental emergencies due to the over-reliance on chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Ms. Shiva called for the UN to create an office of technological assessment and to ensure that common goods, such as seeds, remain in the public domain.

Video messages from the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos marked the official commencement of the 2013 AGEE Meeting.

Mr. Steiner noted that the Rio+20 Summit reaffirmed the importance of both environmental emergencies and disaster risk reduction to all UN agencies, funds and programmes. Strengthening long-term resilience and recovery contributes to the Sustainable Development Agenda. Mr. Steiner praised past successes and the important coordination through the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) and its role in responding to emergencies and needs of Member States. He appealed to participants to consider how to improve the use of resources across agencies and global actors beyond the UN system. Mr. Steiner concluded by bringing attention to the changes in the frequency and dimensions of extreme weather events in recent decades, which calls for an adjustment of response mechanisms.

In her video message, Ms. Amos expressed support to the AGEE. She highlighted the changing nature of emergencies and humanitarian relief work due to the increase in global urbanization and climate change. She underlined the need for all stakeholders- policy makers, emergency responders, humanitarian actors and others- to cooperate and improve prevention, preparedness and response capacities to environmental emergencies. She was particularly interested in the recommendations emanating from the AGEE on how to better integrate, or mainstream, environmental concerns into humanitarian action. Lastly, she stressed the need to link emergency work to longer term development to support recovery and improve resilience.

Mr. Rashid Khalikov, Director of OCHA Geneva advocated for more preparedness, coordination and cooperation between global actors to reduce the impact of environmental emergencies. UNEP's Governing Council Decision *Strengthening International Cooperation on the Environmental Aspects of Emergency Response and Preparedness* from 2011 is integral to engaging in constructive action with all global humanitarian actors. Making information and tools available and strengthening coordination mechanisms among humanitarian actors is a key component to improving response work globally.

Mr. Henrik Slotte, Chief of UNEP's Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in Geneva also highlighted that cooperation, expertise and resources are key components to provide assistance in environmental emergencies. The long standing cooperation between UNEP and OCHA is an exemplary joint effort of combining key expertise from different agencies to achieve best results. UNEP will raise awareness on technological and industrial disasters, especially in the follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action. Mr. Slotte concluded with a brief introduction to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and encouraged participants to attend.

Mr. Kjell Larsson, the current AGEE Chair and Advisor to the Swedish government provided an overview of the past two years of work in the AGEE under his leadership. He highlighted the implementation of the Roserberg initiative as detailed in the report on past activities, the development of the Environmental Emergencies Centre, finalisation and dissemination of the Disaster Waste Management guidelines and the new area of integrating environment in humanitarian action.

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❖ Improving Response to Environmental Emergencies

The Improving Response to Environmental Emergencies panel discussion covered three recent environmental emergencies that received considerable media attention- the fuel spill and fire in Kenya in October 2011, presented by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS); the Puyehue Volcano eruption in Argentina in July 2011, presented by the Argentina Civil Protection Agency and the munitions depot explosion in the Republic of Congo in March 2012, presented by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Central Africa. Panellists had direct involvement in the response to these disasters and compared differences and similarities of each event.

The panel was chaired by Chris Dijkens, Director of the International Enforcement Cooperation, Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment in The Netherlands and President of the Conference of Parties of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Commission Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

Ms. Pamela Indiaka of KRCS presented the Kenya fuel spill and fire response, which reinforced the need to improve disaster management in Kenya, especially in areas that are undergoing rapid urbanization. This need applies to many African countries. Government agencies in the front-lines of disaster response should have up-to-date hazard maps that inform urban development plans. In September 2011, a fire devastated the Sinai slum, an informal settlement in Nairobi's industrial area, after a petroleum spill from a pipeline leak. During the response, agencies struggled to gain access due to poorly coordinated crowd control measures. Response could have been improved if coordination measures between the responders been in place. Strengthening response and coordination also depends upon adequate enforcement of relevant legislation. The key lesson from this incident is the importance of establishing cross-agency coordination measures and defining the tasks of involved authorities (i.e. police, first responders) prior to disasters to ensure adequate and timely response on the ground.



AGEE, 2013, Credit: JEU

Mr. Martin Lissarague of Argentina's Civil Protection Agency highlighted the use of risk assessment tools and community participation as crucial to strengthening response mechanisms, using the Puyehue Volcano eruption to support his argument. This disaster was complex; impacts of the volcanic eruption included lahars (volcanic mud flow), respiratory problems, potable water contamination, and consequences to agricultural productivity. The JEU provided assistance in obtaining relevant information and catalysing improved interagency teamwork throughout the process. Information sharing, coordination and learning from past experience are among the major lessons from the Puyehue Volcano eruption. Simulation exercises and training are essential components to prepare and test response tools before a disaster.

Ms. Josuane Flore Tchokodeu Tene from the IFRC Central Africa Region sees the need to continue improving response mechanisms. Inhabitants of Districts 5 and 6 of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, areas already vulnerable to flooding, were affected by a munitions depot explosion in 2012. The explosion negatively impacted the environment, threatening lives and livelihoods through soil and

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water pollution, infrastructure waste, and toxic gas emissions. The incident underlined the urgent need for the Republic of Congo to revise and maintain risk mapping and adjusting urban planning. The key lesson from the explosion is the need to better inform and prepare people living in potentially dangerous areas on potential hazards and how to deal with them. Past disasters expose vulnerabilities that need to be diligently addressed throughout the recovery process by relevant authorities to avoid the duplication of such mistakes in the future. This disaster exposed a lack of national strategy, coordination, contingency planning for IDPs, and support of public authorities.

The ensuing discussion centered around the importance of land use rights and legislation after disasters, the risks of oil pollution, awareness-raising at community and political levels, the lack of accessibility to disaster sites and the need for technical expertise and equipment. Most challenges faced during response and recovery phases of environmental emergencies are due to weak preparedness measures before a disaster strikes. Strengthening and continuously adjusting planning processes at the local level are key components to improving national response mechanisms. Information-sharing of disaster response mechanisms successfully used in previous disasters and coordination among partners were considered the most valuable lessons learned.

❖ **Three Priorities: Coordination, Coordination and Coordination**

Coordination brings challenges and opportunities. Without coordination, response to environmental emergencies is not as rapid or effective as it could be. Panellists in this session emphasized that coordination should start at the local level. Following the UNEP Governing Council Decision 26/15 in February 2011, the JEU and partners undertook a baseline assessment of the current roles and responsibilities between international organizations involved in environmental emergencies, identifying key gaps and opportunities. In the international arena of environmental emergency response, coordination takes place at many different levels. This parallel session distilled the drivers for increased coordination and what to do next.

The session chair Mr. Carl Bruch, Co-Director of International Programs and Senior Attorney at the Environmental Law Institute introduced the panel and briefly highlighted three main aspects of coordination: drivers, constraints and priorities.

Muralee Thummarakudy of the UNEP Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) described coordination mechanisms within the private sector as a good example for having clear guidelines, instructions and a high degree of regular information exchange. He recommended using these mechanisms as an example to improve coordination internally and between actors of global emergency response systems. Mr. Thummarakudy highlighted a major coordination challenge to systematically integrate environmental emergencies response into local and regional disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning mechanisms. He mentioned the UNEP Governing Council Decision 26/15, calling for improved coordination between the thematic and regional governance frameworks for environmental emergencies. The baseline report on strengthening existing coordination mechanisms, carried out by the JEU and partners, was to be finalised by the end of the year.

Mr. Orjan Karlsson from the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning said that willingness to participate beyond the response phase of environmental emergencies is a key requirement for successful coordination among stakeholders at every level. Intergovernmental and international organizations need to increase their efforts in collaboration. The efficient management of information is also essential.

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Mr. Nikolay Savov from the Environment Division of UNECE highlighted the importance of addressing preparedness and response to disasters and accidents with strong reference to land use policy. He agreed with earlier statements on the rapid growth in urbanization and industrialization that affect disaster planning as a whole. Political will and reluctance to share information, the lack of capacity at both local and regional level, the diversity in environmental and health standards (including between neighbouring countries) as well as challenging administrative/bureaucratic systems and inconsistencies in mandates are key challenges for cross-border emergency coordination. As environmental emergencies can affect more than one country, these issues need to be urgently addressed at both local and regional levels.

Mr. Piero Calvi-Pariseti from the Institute for International Political Studies at the Bocconi University in Italy highlighted the massive increase in the number and diversity of humanitarian relief actors over the past decades as a challenging factor for improved coordination. The variety in responsibilities, roles and understandings of response (sharing of information, strengthening capacities, direct assistance) within the global system itself further increases the challenge of adequate and efficient coordination.



AGEE 2013, Credit : UN Photo, Violaine Martin

Participants emphasized that the coordination of environmental emergencies should start at the local level. Mr. Urs Boesch from Switzerland stressed that the primary responsibility of coordinating disaster management and international response lies with national authorities. Therefore, the focus of international relief agencies should be centered around supporting the development of national and local capacity. In the long run, this focus will result in less need for international disaster support through national agencies. Mr. Mark Hailwood, from the

OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents, stressed the importance of having a reliable coordination mechanism already operational prior to the disaster. Sharing best practises, maintaining networks and ongoing communication are good tools to achieve this coordination mechanism. Mr. Majid Shafie-Pour-Moilagh from Iran stressed that establishing a permanent, well-liaised regional coordination model can also be useful tool to successful transboundary environmental emergency response and recovery, such as transboundary haze. Tackling internal coordination challenges through improved response coordination are the key lesson in Cote d'Ivoire, as expressed by Mr. Yao Bernard Koffi. The strengthening of capacity development initiatives is particularly relevant for the African region. Improved communication among national stakeholders and the affected communities is necessary to successfully influence policymakers on higher levels.

The following recommendations were identified and discussed during the session:

- Establish a platform for virtual information exchange to learn from successes and failures
- Establish interface modalities between JEU and other organizations
- Review and revise the Guidelines for Environmental Emergencies to include international governance frameworks
- Conduct periodic meetings and exchange information to evaluate effectiveness of coordination mechanisms
- Support capacities for coordination at local, national and regional levels

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❖ Technical Session: Assessments

Mr. Leif Jönsson, Programme Officer with MSB-Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency briefly outlined the objectives of the session: information sharing through existing tools for conducting assessments, and the use and inter-operability of existing tools on how these tools can support the assessment of environmental impacts from disasters and complex emergencies. The coordination of assessments is crucial to ensuring solid inter-sectoral analysis during humanitarian crises, which can lead to improved decision-making, planning and ultimately prevention. Current tools such as Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA), Flash Environment Assessment Tool (FEAT) and RAPID-N (Rapid Natech Risk Assessment and Mapping Tool for Earthquakes) were presented to enable participants to know when and how to use them, and their inter-operability.

Ms. Loretta Hieber-Girardet, Chief of the Coordinated Assessments Support Section from OCHA presented the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), as a tool to help capture cross-sectoral issues, including environmental issues, provided an environmental expert is present on location to provide inputs. MIRA is used in sudden-onset emergencies- and is also being adapted to conflict situations- and seeks to identify priority needs in the earliest stages of an emergency. The international humanitarian community has been diligently working on strengthening joint post-disaster needs assessments and strategic planning prior to and during disasters. The Humanitarian Needs Overview guidance and a mobile data collection tool are currently under preparation and require integration of environmental considerations. Despite wide-spread agreements at the policy level to collaborate on assessments, field implementation is often challenged by a lack of capacity and adequate systems to support data collection and analysis. This is a particular challenge for cross-cutting issues such as the environment within multi-sectoral assessments. A recommendation would be to strengthen the alignment of joint assessment tools such as the MIRA and environment specific assessment tools and guidance.

Mr. Charles Kelly from ProAct Network underlined the challenge in coordinating datasets. Collecting and sharing sufficiently good secondary data can diminish the need for field assessments. It is therefore crucial to ensure that datasets are compiled reliably and effectively pre-disaster to have those readily available when a disaster occurs. This data should be made readily available for use by national and local authorities. Documenting and sharing successes as well as failures ensures improvement of existing mechanisms. Another recommendation is to look at assessing and addressing disaster costs from a business perspective, instead of an environmental one, which might increase the amount of funding for prevention and recovery.

Mr. Sjaak Seen, General Project Manager, Safety Region Rotterdam/The Netherlands stressed the adaptability of available tools to national level context. The FEAT assessment tool can be adapted to any national context by any agency to help identify acute environmental risks immediately following disasters.

Ms. Elizabeth Krausmann, Scientific Officer for the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, elaborated on the Rapid-N tool to help identify Natech-prone regions with a country. A new feature of the Rapid-N may include an alert function for agencies. The usability of the Rapid-N tool can be extended to other industrial facilities as well such as pipelines.

In addition to the tools presented, participants mentioned other assessment tools, including: the Handbook for Estimating the Socio-economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters

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(ECLAC/WB/UNDP), the Natural Hazards Assessment (Caribbean Development Bank) and the Post Conflict/Disaster Environmental Assessment (UNEP). Panellists agreed there is a need to compile information on existing tools and to integrate environmental aspects into them rather than to develop more tools. Vulnerability assessments should also be integrated as part of hazard identification. More detailed assessments should follow the basic ones, for example with the help of the tools above, and for the JEU to support these detailed assessments.

Participants noted that recent years have seen substantive progress in bridging the divide between disaster and environment managers. It was also noted that there are a number of good assessment tools available. With more efficient use and sharing of existing resources, the limited funding available for environmental issues can be used more effectively. Successes, as well as failures, must be documented and shared. Discussants encouraged adopting and utilizing FEAT at the national level and noted that a roll-out through the Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC) would provide a good platform for enhanced take-up of some of the environmental assessment tools. Several participants also noted the need to adapt tools to the national context. It was also noted that FEAT and the Rapid-N could be used to identify Natech-prone areas and assist in the development of early warning systems.

A summary of key needs established during the session discussion include:

- Adapt tools to a local context for use by national agencies
- Profile countries and make resulting information widely available
- Incorporate environmental issues into disaster response and preparedness plans, addressing both hazards and vulnerabilities
- Generate detailed technical assessments (e.g. sampling) following prior basic assessments
- Effectively connect humanitarian and development phases of disaster response (both regarding assessments, planning and financing); JEU has a role to play in this regard



AGEE 2013, Credit: JEU

DAY 2 - Thursday, 16 May 2013

Ms. Wendy Cue summarized the points of convergence discussed on the first day. Participants agreed on the need to tailor messages to specific audiences to raise awareness on environmental emergencies. Recent emergencies highlighted the need to strengthen political will for improved enforcement and implementation of policies and coordinate response mechanisms. In addition, more advocacy and awareness on the benefits of preparedness and prevention will help to diminish the impacts of emergencies. All actors and organizations should strive to improve coordination and communication and collaborate to improve risk mapping as well as environmental impact and humanitarian needs assessments.

❖ Coordinating capacities: Are governments prepared?

All countries face risks from natural and technological hazards, which together have the potential to severely harm the health and safety of individuals and communities. Preparing for such disasters requires the cooperation, expertise and resources from government agencies at local and national levels. Panellists examined various capacity development projects and spoke about the roles of governments and international organizations. It was requested that participants reflect upon their in-country needs and share good practices.

Mr. Fred Spielberg from UNICEF stressed that coherent coordination aligned with political support from respective governments is imperative to develop national plans for both preparedness and response. The mechanisms of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) can serve as an example for such common approach to strengthen capacity development for national preparedness. Such coherent approaches increase chances for resource mobilization due to their cross-cutting nature of combining humanitarian and development approaches. This provides an added benefit of linking development and humanitarian expertise in a cross-cutting manner. Gaps in separate funding and budgeting sources between developmental and humanitarian work would thus be overcome. Joint programming and funding proposals support coordinated solutions from multiple actors, develop credible plans for resource mobilization and promote government leadership. Awareness and advocacy needs to also be targeted towards the donor community that tends to focus on response operations rather than preparedness and resilience capacities.

Mr. Jonathan Kertich from Kenya's National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC) described his agency's roles and responsibilities within Kenya's national response system as such a common approach to strengthen capacity development. Across African nations, there is an urgent and ongoing need to strengthen national capacity and advertise existing tools that mitigate impacts of disasters. Such tools would entail monitoring the enforcement of building codes or fire safety zoning measures in densely populated areas. Many urban high-risk areas lack infrastructure and enforcement of infrastructures (e.g. building codes, zoning laws and pedestrian traffic control) that would strengthen coordinating capacities during a disaster. Some avoidable challenges are a result of non-compliance, a lack of awareness on the local level and little government enforcement capacity. This example demonstrates the urgent need for awareness raising on all levels in communities on preparedness, strengthening self-help capacities and reducing dependency on national authorities and organizations. No single international agency has the capacity to respond to all of a country's needs alone. For that reason, cooperation with several partners is paramount to responding to demands from multiple angles. Governments, institutions and individuals must pull resources together in order

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to respond to disasters. A linkage needs to be established from a basic level among individuals, through organizations and up to the government level.

Mr. Arthur Vardanyan, the Head of the Crisis Management Center in Armenia iterated the need for a common framework, at national and regional levels, and stressed the importance of flexibility within such frameworks to adapt to changing environments. Strengthening the self-help capacities and coordination mechanisms within a country will improve relations with global stakeholders, such as establishing local/sub-local disaster management centres as part of a national coordination mechanism in Armenia. Taking such measures on the national level helps in reaching out to local communities in disaster situations. Moreover, establishing systems for electronic information sharing is paramount for better national coordination. If countries have limited access to resources, it should be possible to establish such systems with the help of global stakeholders.

Mr. Jönsson from MSB noted that hazard identification of chemicals and other hazardous materials in Kenya is ongoing with the support of JEU and MSB. Integrating such data and tools into national preparedness systems is beneficial to strengthening information availability in the case of a disaster. Such datasets are vital for national responders such as fire-fighters and should be included in response databases for use in emergencies. Time-consuming on-site assessments prior to dispersing response funds can be a major challenge to receiving immediate funding after disasters. This supports the importance of seeking funding throughout the cycle for preparedness rather than only after disaster strikes.

Other expressed needs included better coordination and cooperation between civil and military sectors; information sharing, especially involving the management of hazardous materials and good preparedness models (e.g. the Caribbean); the supply of hardware, software and other equipment to middle- to low-income high-risk areas and structural flexibility. Availability of adequate resources is a constant constraint. One suggested preparedness capacity-builder was to seek out funding on a regular basis instead of at the eve of a disaster.

❖ Launch of the Environmental Emergencies Centre

The Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC) is an online knowledge hub designed to strengthen the capacity of national responders to environmental emergencies. The EEC builds on their own mechanisms and draws on the resources and services of EEC partners. This session was the official soft launch of the EEC and the online training series it offers.



*Henrik Slotte (UNEP) and Rashid Khalikov
(IOCHA), AGEE 2013, Credit : JEU*

Ms. Wendy Cue reinforced the importance of countries being adequately equipped and prepared for environmental emergencies. Secondary impacts of disasters can severely implicate the health of local populations and foster the destruction of ecosystems and wildlife. Industrial development of many countries has outrun the governments' ability to develop and maintain an infrastructure and related services required to cope with industrial disasters. Mostly, it is the poorest and most vulnerable countries that are disproportionately affected by

disasters. These long-term devastating impacts are mainly due to the lack of sufficient resources,

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preparedness measures and technical capacities before and after a disaster struck. These insufficiencies include identifying potential environmental risks, developing preparedness and response plans and conduct real-time simulation exercises.

The EEC is an interactive online knowledge hub with open access to guidelines, discussion forums, advocacy tools, legal documents, interactive training courses and updates on current environmental emergencies. Currently, three e-Learning modules are hosted in multiple languages on the EEC including *“Beyond Response: better preparedness for environmental emergencies”*, *“Introduction to Industrial Accidents: prevention, preparedness and response”* as well as *“Disaster Waste Management: best practices and tools”*.

Participants welcomed the launch of the EEC as the demand for web-based preparedness and response tools continues to increase. While the primary audience for the EEC is national responders and governments, all resources, including on-line training, are accessible to anyone. As requested by participants, the EEC will serve as a centre of excellence and community of practice.

Mr. Rudolf Müller, Chief of the Environmental Services Branch and Deputy Director for OCHA Geneva, welcomed everyone to this official launch and highlighted the importance of such a platform for the work that disaster responders do. A high level of cooperation has helped to achieve this common goal since identifying its need at the AGEE Forum in 2007. The EEC has triggered strong interest even before its official launch. This indicates a tremendous global demand and need in the functions of the EEC, which is a main source of inspiration.

Mr. Henrik Slotte highlighted the strong collaboration and dedication by all stakeholders and donors involved throughout the six years of developing the EEC, which he considers successful accomplishment in itself. It is important to carry the EEC to the next level with the help of international disaster agencies. Thus, the EEC will truly become the main source of useful information for disaster responders, governments and everyone working on or interested in the subject.

The website link is www.eecentre.org

❖ Regional Partnerships for Environmental Emergency Preparedness

Representatives of regional organizations outlined their strategies for successful models of improved preparedness and shared lessons. The session included a regional breakout session where participants split into regional groups- West Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia and the Caribbean and Latin America- in order to establish regional needs and how EEC activities (e.g trainings, guidelines and tools) can be utilized to address regional needs.

Mr. Rudolf Müller welcomed the participants and briefly elaborated on the objective of this session: to share successful models of improved preparedness of various regional organizations and identify priority EEC activities related to various regional needs and contexts.

Mr. Pierluigi Soddu, Executive Director of the Italian Civil Protection, spoke to his experiences with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made Disasters (PPRD South). For a programme to remain sustainable and for countries to feel ownership and commitment, it was important to have a demand-driven approach.

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Advocacy for high-level support from the right government officials to both play an important role in programme activities and to express influence is another important key aspect to foster long term success of transboundary programmes such as PPRD South. Such regional programmes need to develop strategies to cope with different language and working practices in multi-cultural programmes. Civil protection models are flexible and complex, so there is a need for support with fast communication networks at the national and regional level. The roles, risks and challenges of volunteerism and volunteers in civil protection during disaster response as well as information sharing with media need to be addressed according to the context.

Mr. Raman Letchumanan, Head of Environment of the ASEAN Secretariat stressed the importance of global legal frameworks, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), that address preparedness and policy frameworks on regional and national levels. The ASEAN's Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (ADMER) was developed through existing frameworks under HFA. Global frameworks are useful to mobilise support and raise awareness among government officials to develop region-specific and national frameworks. Within the ASEAN region, capacity development and building political will are considered regional goals for the coming years. The ASEAN Environmental Emergencies workshop in September 2012 identified a series of agreed priorities to achieve those goals (outlined in below regional group priorities).

During the discussion, lessons were shared. These include the benefits of establishing processes to engage beneficiary countries at an early stage to collect information and assess countries' needs. In order to strengthen the national-level advocacy of environmental emergency preparedness, panellists jointly identified a key requirement for upcoming years: stronger awareness-raising and sensitization; targeted towards policy makers and high-level politicians and environment officials. Creating a network of national environmental champions, such as the Green Star Award winners, will be an asset to regional-level advocacy engagement.



AGEE 2013, Credit: JEU

Mr. Ndenneh Nying from the National Environment Agency in The Gambia underlined the importance of effective regional preparedness mechanisms and of working towards common regional frameworks. Since preparedness starts at the local level, a first regional priority is to enhance local capacities and built community resilience as a bottom-up approach. Regional priorities in West Africa are to establish synergies to regionalize response mechanisms among West African states and to bring together all relevant subregional environmental agencies to set up a regional platform for raising awareness and discussion on preparedness and response. The private sector needs to be involved from the onset and have clearly identified responsibilities and roles, especially looking at hazardous industries.

The panel offered additional recommendations to participants to regionalize priorities and response mechanisms. Those include: building on existing mechanisms that reach beyond the regional level, which will also lead to improved communication towards the global level; enhance environmental emergency preparedness capacity and assess synergies that support establishing a regionalized response mechanism; mainstreaming of environment into DRR frameworks; establish a platform that

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links sub-regional environmental agencies together, identify the role and responsibilities of private sector industries and identify roles and mechanisms related to the transboundary movement of hazardous materials.

Participants joined breakout groups to identify region-specific priority needs and ways in which they could engage with EEC in order to address such needs. The following priorities and needs were identified in the context of each breakout region:

West Africa

- Strengthen waste management capacity development, particularly addressing hazardous waste. Increase awareness of hazardous waste management and best practice guidelines.
- Develop a Training of Trainers on Disaster Waste Management in the region to ensure sustainability and self-capacity.
- Enhance cooperation and commitment of various government organizations (e.g. disaster management agencies and ministries of environment) to integrate environmental considerations into humanitarian action effectively.
- Organize and maintain a regional forum that connects relevant actors and initiates dialogue and working relationships that address environmental emergency response.

Eastern and Southern Africa

- Develop substantive capacity building and training at sub-national and local levels that can be adapted to remote areas.
- Provide guidance on implementation of the available tools and awareness about how and why to use them. Publicize available tools and guidelines and market their value.
- Address transboundary issues from a regional approach with partner involvement.
- Strengthen environmental emergency preparedness capacity through hazard mapping that provides information on potential threats to human and environmental health. Encourage communities to undertake local hazard mapping.

Asia

- Deliver useful tools and training for those tools, like the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) and Disaster Waste Management Guidelines.
- Develop a self-assessment tool/methodology for environmental emergency risk identification.
- Conduct pilot testing of aforementioned tool in two or three ASEAN Member States on a voluntary basis.
- Organize an ASEAN workshop on environmental emergencies awareness for high-level senior officials (e.g. representatives of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management/Haze Committee). The Singapore Civil Defense Force indicated an interest to host such a workshop.
- Conduct a training workshop on sampling and laboratory analysis standards, possibly with the support of international partner laboratories, such as the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment Netherlands and Spiez laboratory Switzerland.

Europe

- Commit to information sharing both nationally and regionally.
- Develop national-level advocacy and awareness raising programmes that utilize a common language framework.

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- Arrange a roundtable platform with key European and UN actors and representatives of industrial associations to discuss opportunities for education, awareness and information sharing.

The Middle East and Central Asia

- Develop and support governance frameworks regarding transboundary environmental emergencies (e.g. accidental river pollution and earthquakes with spillover effects).
- Model potential environmental emergency impacts.
- Share tools and guidelines that strengthen preparedness.
- Conduct joint fact-finding and support missions

Caribbean and Latin America

- Adopt and adapt existing tools in order to avoid duplication and inefficient resource use.
- Translate EEC and its information into Spanish in order to enhance the effectiveness of the website throughout the region.
- Improve communication among focal points at the national and regional levels via existing structures.
- Consider private sector initiatives and their technologies, expertise and networks in a consolidated and effective way.
- Develop environmental preparedness capacities (e.g. transboundary movement of hazardous chemicals and hurricane debris fires).

❖ Saving lives, livelihoods, ecosystems... and future generations

Proactively addressing environmental issues in humanitarian response is imperative to rebuild resilient livelihoods and reduce the risk for further disaster. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Real Time Evaluations find that cross-cutting issues, including the environment, are neglected and not yet adequately integrated into humanitarian responses, despite the clear evaluation outcome that considering environmental aspects can improve the quality of humanitarian assistance. Various humanitarian leaders provided insight on the challenges of implementing environment into humanitarian action and offered potential solutions from the perspectives of people in field, donors and implementing agencies.

Mr. Neil Buhne, Director of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery Geneva Liaison Office, welcomed participants and briefly elaborated the objective of this session: exploring achievements and challenges of integrating environment into humanitarian action while adequately addressing environmental considerations; elaborating strategies of how to rebuild resilient livelihoods integrating the environment while reducing the risk for further disasters.

Mr. Manuel Bessler, Head of the Humanitarian Aid Domain of the Swiss Development Cooperation SDC showcased the environmental challenges currently facing the Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan. Traditionally, the major environmental challenges in camps relate to natural resource management, domestic energy challenges and maintenance of livelihoods. The refugee camp in northern Jordan is one of the largest in the world and is in a country that already suffers from chronic water scarcity. Even though humanitarian actors increasingly wish to consider environmental aspects to promote resilience in refugee camps, there is limited awareness on on-hands strategies to do so. This shows the urgent need for environmental trainings and sharing of lessons among humanitarian responders. Environmental impacts of decisions taken in refugee camps, by their inhabitants and humanitarian

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staff, should not be understated. Full consideration should be given to environmental aspects prior to any step of camp management. For example, merely the establishment of a refugee or displaced-persons camp can have severe impacts on the near future availability of natural resources. In this case, undertaking environmental baseline assessments of the suggested locality and infrastructure needs are a possible option to analyse environmental impacts. Competition over limited natural resources can lead to potential conflicts with local communities, ultimately aggravating environmental impacts and the root causes of a conflict. Lack of adequate infrastructure, including water treatment and waste management, adds to the stress on the environment and tensions between refugees and local communities.

Two key reasons why integrating environment into humanitarian action is important:

- Direct environmental impacts from conflicts and disasters can cause acute threats to human life and health and result in the destruction of ecosystems.
- Natural resources, such as forests, pastures, soils and wetlands are integral to post-disaster recovery, support livelihoods and security, and the resilience of affected populations.

Ms. Luiza Carvalho, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in the Philippines provided an example of how to integrate environmental issues into humanitarian response through the use of local natural resources, if they are available and can be used sustainably. During the Typhoon Bopha in the Philippines, local response authorities, in collaboration with the UN, rebuilt houses using local coconut and recycled lumber debris. This strategy provided an additional benefit by reducing input costs to source new building material. She also noted the challenges of political and social fragility in countries affected by disasters and how politics can impede and affect disaster relief work. Lastly, she stated that donor fatigue as well as internal competitiveness can be a potential future challenges from within the humanitarian community itself.



AGEE 2013, Credit: JEU

Ms. Patricia McIlveary, Senior Director of InterAction, noted that most environmental impacts can be mitigated through proper planning and integration of environmental concerns from the onset of the planning stages. Environmental advisors should be involved in the planning phase to ensure environmental impacts are considered before the location of a refugee or displaced-persons camp is determined. The IASC decision to consider environment a cross-cutting issue has not necessarily simplified environmental mainstreaming into the cluster system. This could be because even now integrating environmental aspects into humanitarian work on the ground is considered an expensive additional proposition. This again exemplifies the urgent need for environmental trainings given to humanitarian workers to further sensitize the latter on relevant issues and more so, the benefits.

Mr. Steve Corliss, Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management from UNHCR, noted that environmental degradation and conflicts over natural resources have become drivers for population displacement. Yet, improved integration of environmental issues could be better prioritised within the humanitarian sector. Such prioritization would ensure appropriate information

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is given to governments and decision-making bodies. The need to include environmental concerns from the early contingency planning stages to ensure maximum benefits in the long-run should not be considered an extra tool to humanitarian work, but rather as an integral tool as part of every operation. The likely future limitations in funding and the consequential impacts for humanitarian actors may further impede addressing environmental issues as an integral part of humanitarian operations. Therefore, a realistic assessment of the limitations of financing, analyses of synergies and assessing impacts need to be considered. Major long-term concerns to actors on the ground are discrepancies between the exit strategy, camp clean-up and the cyclical displacement of refugees. The restoration of camps is a challenging undertaking in the event that refugees return. Here, there is an opportunity to advocate for integrating environmental issues from the onset, as the objective of environmental issues is long-term sustainable preservation of natural resources possibly beyond the existence of a camp.

Mr. Altan Butt from UNEP Sudan presented the Environment Marker as good practice to measure inclusion of environmental considerations in humanitarian programming. The marker provides criteria for assessing environmental impacts of humanitarian projects, allowing project managers and donors to mitigate actions. Another good practice cited was the landmark resolution, where environmental issues were included in the Security Council resolution that established the stabilisation mission in Mali. This is the first time the Security Council called for appropriate consideration of environmental impacts in peacekeeping operations. Ms. Katarina Runeberg from MSB highlighted ongoing work on integrating environmental aspects within peacekeeping missions due to recognition of the potentially negative impacts on the environment.

❖ Technical Session: Open source trainings

Conflict and disasters impact the environment in ways that may threaten lives, livelihoods and security. Failure to address these environmental risks can cause increased vulnerability to future shocks. Humanitarian actors can take action by knowing how to better integrate the environment into humanitarian response and early recovery. This parallel session showcased several training initiatives on environment in humanitarian action and explored the potential of increasing collaboration, reducing replication and ensuring greater accountability by measuring the impact of creating and implementing such trainings.

Ms. Cue presented the objective of the session: to showcase several training initiatives on environment in humanitarian action; explore ways in which to increase collaboration, and to ensure greater accountability through the impact of such trainings.

Ms. Blanche Renaudin from Groupe URD introduced the training for partners/responders to minimize direct and indirect impact of conflicts and natural disaster to the environment. There has been a high demand for such training from the international community as well as from donors and is expected to increase. Trainings should be tailored to national needs and to diverse target groups in different contexts, by understanding the core needs of each actor. These can be major challenges and need to be considered more strongly when developing different modules.

Ms. Anita Van Breda, Director of Humanitarian Partnerships with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) provided an overview of WWF's "Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit" done in partnership with multiple agencies. Compiling guidelines, trainings and tools for environment in humanitarian

action in one single hosting source such as the EEC is considered a vital step towards easier accessibility. Coordination with a variety of diverse partners during the development of training is an effective way to bring innovative aspects into trainings.

Mr. Amare Gebre Egziabher, Senior Environmental Coordinator with UNHCR, noted that challenges beyond the training perspective need to be more considered, such as sensitive diplomatic approaches to domestic energy challenges in refugee camps. The need for domestic energy within camps is a major challenge, given the potential for conflict with local communities over access to energy. Some successful approaches have been identified, such as dissemination of cooking stoves or small portable solar technologies and these should be formally integrated into the camp coordination and planning phase. There is also a need to include successful approaches into training materials.

Humanitarian actors, governments and local communities can better strengthen preparedness and awareness if available training materials, guidelines and tools are compiled in one easily and rapidly accessible centralized source, sorted by relevance and usability. One such potential hosting source is the EEC. A global knowledge hub could also provide analyses and prioritisation of regions, nations and communities that require more in-depth training and awareness-raising on environmental emergencies.

Ms. Renee Christensen from the JEU introduced the eLearning modules on the EEC website and the plans for modules currently under development. Hosting trainings from various sources is another function the EEC could play also in providing access to publically-available training courses to governments and relevant actors worldwide. Partnerships for trainings should be stable, flexible, permanent and well-managed in advance rather than as a response to disasters.

Mr. Jönsson from MSB stressed that reaching out to the local communities with eLearning materials requires integration of communities' local expertise. On this aspect, tailoring trainings to local needs remains a challenge despite the enormous demand. Ms. Anita Van Breda from WWF outlined the value and importance of cooperation on using collective resources such as pooling available trainings in one hosting source. Specific trainings to reach out to senior leadership levels are also required to inspire change and sensitize those with decision-making power.

❖ Innovations

Mr. Rene Nijenhuis from JEU presented the objective of the session, which was to present new innovative tools and technologies for assessing disaster impacts and how these can be applied to environmental impacts and emergencies to improve humanitarian decision-making techniques.



AGEE 2013, Credit: JEU

Mr. Andrew Bredenkamp from *Translators Without Borders* presented on the work and achievements of the network of volunteer professional translators to help humanitarian actors communicate more effectively with aid recipients. Substantive impacts could be achieved by translating French information into Creole following disasters in Haiti, translations that helped diffuse potentially violent outbreaks following the elections in Kenya and translating information into Arabic for Syrian refugees. As more people die from the lack of information

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than from the lack of medicine, translation of information into local languages helps to achieve effective results and workable feedback by reaching out to local communities. Translation information into “easier English”, done in collaboration with WikiMedia, already goes a long way in making communication more efficient.

Mr. Einar Bjorgo, Manager of UNITAR’s Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), demonstrated the importance of satellite imagery analysis, mapping and capacity development for immediate response relief work and environmental impacts. Satellite imagery technology was one of the first applications used for incorporating environmental data (such as information on deforestation, desertification, etc.) into humanitarian work. Satellite imagery can provide information about what is happening right after an event and can be analysed quickly. Trends can even be analysed through depending on the availability of archive data. Therefore, archiving and maintaining databases is important also to prevention and preparedness through analysis of past and future trends. Some examples of applied satellite imagery analysis are the explosion at the munitions depot in Brazzaville, where UNOSAT-generated maps showed destroyed and damaged homes. Satellite imagery provided during the fuel spill in Nairobi substantially contributed to providing an objective view of the damage resulting from the spill. Such technology is available as UN-ASIGN, an application developed by UNOSAT and its partner AnsuR Technologies for tablets and smartphones. This tool allows people to upload photos with geo-locations from their smart phones during a crisis or disaster, helping to make analyses for relief work much quicker. Another useful tool UNOSAT uses is the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that are sent out in dangerous, inaccessible or physically difficult site, like waste dumping surveys in Haiti.

Mr. Vincent Annoni REACH Coordinator, a joint initiative through IMPACT Initiatives, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and UNOSAT, seeks to enhance aid effectiveness by facilitating the collection, organization and dissemination of key information among aid actors. REACH looks at crises from an environmental perspective to fill gaps between information supply and demand. For example, in the Philippines Typhoon Bopha, from the very onset, environmental indicators were included using satellite analysis, remote sensing geographic information systems, mobile data collection. That successfully expanded the capacity of information gathering from an environmental perspective. Most information on REACH is available online as open source.

Information sharing will increase the effectiveness of tools, but will not reach maximum effectiveness unless information is updated and is easily accessible. A major concern is language; especially the translation of information and a required change of mindset where information is not translated into languages that effectively reach the affected population. Another platform for sharing information, the Shelter Centre (<http://sheltercentre.org/library>), hosts a digital library with open discussions to assist those in the field by providing an information sharing hub. The possibility to share local information on EEC was also mentioned.

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Mr. Muller summarized the key points of the previous day's session on regional partnerships. Partnerships need to be demand-driven, flexible yet strong mechanisms to be sustainable in the long run and ensure high-level political support. Global legal frameworks can be useful for regional entities and governments to develop frameworks tailored to their region. It is also useful to identify synergies to create regional response mechanisms adapted from the local level. Mr. Nijenhuis summarised the innovations session, noting that new tools can substantially help bridge the divide between information management and policy makers for better communication at all levels. This requires building capacity among humanitarian actors to utilize information effectively. New technologies such as crowd-funding could assist the "new technology-savvy humanitarians" in times of resource constraints. Ms. Cue summarised the session on open-source trainings. Key components to make collaborative and interactive tools are the dissemination of information, guidelines and trainings coupled with active advocacy and marketing. This can be achieved through on-going, flexible and collaborative partnerships to jointly conduct open source trainings at all levels in affected countries.

❖ **Future risks and priorities**

Looking at challenges from a futurist and risk management perspective, Mr. Randolph Kent, the founder of the Humanitarian Futures Programme at King's College, inspired participants to think about how humanitarian organisations need to adapt to be fit for new challenges in the future.



AGEE 2013, Credit: JEU

The objective of the session was to look at future risks and to analyse whether international humanitarian organizations are appropriately configured to adapt, innovate and engage in long-term strategic thinking. A recommendation to humanitarians would be stronger engagement with military planners and industry groups in consideration of future humanitarian risk scenarios. Future complex disasters could include electronic fallouts, dam failure triggering floods or the emergence of chemical war remnants. Such complex disasters exemplify the new dimensions of emergencies with

major consequences, to which the current humanitarian system has challenges responding.

Mr. Kent used a possible scenario to illustrate these risks, showing that transboundary issues will likely to be major challenges taking into account that disasters will likely occur at increasing rates and intensities across regions. In addition, humanitarian systems require realistic analysis of whether they are adequately prepared to cope with simultaneous disasters of similar dimensions in different locations.

These fundamental changes in the nature, dynamics and dimensions of cascading disasters underline the urgent need for improved cooperation on the international level to cope with future global disasters. This demonstrates the concomitant need for humanitarian organizations in the 21st century to anticipate, adapt, and innovate and to have strategic and visionary leaders to adequately adapt to these new disasters.

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The importance of creating an enabling and thriving environment for such changes, and for cross-divisional collaboration within agencies at multiple levels, was stressed in order to achieve positive change. Participants agreed on the necessity of establishing stronger partnerships and collaboration with academia and scientists to translate relevant science and innovations into policies and regulations on the national and community level. Furthermore, improving partnerships with the private sector and professional organizations, institutions and labour unions holding valuable expertise was iterated.

The representative from Greenpeace International remarked that they have been exploring cooperation with military operations due to their knowledge and data management capacities. Further, she stressed that despite having adequate leadership for change, this brings about the challenge of penetrating the change down to all levels in an organization. A recommendation is cross-sectoral interagency teams within organizations to ensure integration of a maximum of aspects for inspiring change. Ms. Birgitta Lilledahl from the Swedish Defense Research Agency noted they undertake such workshops on scenarios in combination with new technologies for various target audiences (military, politicians, police etc.) and encouraged humanitarian actors to attend the workshops to merge the humanitarian and the governmental communities for improved cooperation. Further, Green Cross International (GCI) drew the participants' attention to exemplify very real current threats in such workshops instead of theoretical scenarios; real threats such as dams and Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) on seismic faults in the Himalayas or Central Asia. Against this background, Mr. Mark Hailewood, Chair of the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents, stressed the importance of building resilient systems for the future rather than prevention referring to the long-term impacts of past disasters such as Bophal. Mr. Hailewood also mentioned the close partnerships with academia, professional organizations and institutions as well as private sector industries under UNEP's "Flexible Framework" programme, which has been very successful. Dr. Jean-Pierre Nana from Cameroon noted the chance to adjust direction and leadership following the assessment of the MDGs in 2015. Against the background of a recent publication describing the 50 biggest (and emerging) global risks, setting up a global humanitarian task force to look at emerging risks, adequate response mechanisms and required adaptation from within the humanitarian system could be a timely and strategic approach.

❖ Proposal for the Future

The JEU presented a proposal for the transition of both the AGEE and the Steering Committee to adapt to changes in the humanitarian landscape and the international emergency response systems.

Ms. Wendy Cue and Mr. Kjell Larsson, outgoing AGEE Chair, reflected on the numerous achievements of the AGEE in the past years, particularly those instrumental in gaining more ground for the environmental agenda within the humanitarian system. The increased number and variety of operational humanitarian organizations and new approaches to cooperation and synergies were considered challenges for the future. A proposal to address these challenges was presented to the Steering Committee in a meeting in November 2012. The proposal entails broadening the scope of the current AGEE to an Environmental Emergencies Forum (EEF), which would be an open platform organized as a conference to raise awareness, advocate for action and create partnerships across stakeholder groups. The current Steering Committee will be replaced by a smaller Strategic Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (SAGEE).

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The EEF will be an open forum, not invitation-only, and serve as a platform for information exchange, networking and a catalyst to establish partnerships in the field of Environmental Emergencies. The Forum will be held every two years. On the basis of recommendations, the EEF will reach out to academia and students, youth and professional organizations as well as private sector industries. Key objectives of the EEF will include identifying priorities in the field of environmental emergencies and facilitating partnerships to achieve these priorities. Coordination support will be provided by the JEU, while participants and stakeholders may organise sessions.

In 1995, the UNEP Governing Council noted the establishment of an advisory group on environmental emergencies which would review the work of the Joint Unit and advise the Executive Director of UNEP and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The proposed Strategic Advisory Group, with a smaller and more focused membership, will still fulfil this role. The SAGEE will, inter alia:

- Identify future trends, risks, and opportunities
- Advocate for increased support to JEU on environmental emergencies
- Generate strategic partnerships
- Mobilize resources to support identified priorities
- Ensure appropriate consultation with constituents of the EEF

Mr. Larsson stressed the importance of clearly defining different roles and responsibilities. Mr. Dijkens enquired whether the new structure allows for relationships to be strengthened and functional as had been the case previously. Vladimir Sakharov from GCI welcomed the thoughts on transition to adjust to a changing humanitarian landscape and further recommended close involvement with industries and also the diplomatic sector, potentially even before the first SAGEE.

Other recommendations included to ensure regional and structural representation both in the EEF and the SAGEE; to ensure inclusion of representatives of vulnerable countries, academia and development agencies; maintaining the current mandate, functions and processes; intense cooperation with members especially in the first phase after the transition to gather feedback on functionality; broader inclusion to take more account of local and regional economic communities.

❖ Networking Reception

Ms. Carroll facilitated a networking cocktail in which participants were asked to list their requests and offers. This activity allowed for participants to get to know each other better, seek out potential partnerships, and learn about the background, capacities, and skills available through the conference.

❖ Closing Ceremony

During the Closing Ceremony, Ms. Wendy Cue provided an overview of the priority actions decided during the AGEE Forum. The strong and geographically broad participation in this 2013 AGEE Forum is a considerable achievement to build upon. The Green Star Awards Ceremony was announced for early September 2013. The first EEF Forum is scheduled for 2015 with location and donor country to be announced.

III. MAJOR OUTCOMES

Participants agreed to the following collective priorities as a result of the thematic sessions and discussions on the way forward:

❖ Improving Preparedness for Environmental Emergencies:

1. Embed preparedness for environmental emergencies into comprehensive disaster risk management frameworks that build resilience.
2. Support nationally- and regionally-led capacity development initiatives aimed at increasing preparedness for environmental emergencies, and commit to seek out synergies and establish partnerships to this end.
3. Commit to further develop the EEC and advocate for its use in capacity development.
 - Expand sharing of tools, further adapted for use at the regional, national and local levels.
 - Promote continuous learning, from successes and failures; communicate and collaborate on good practices.
 - Anchor EEC throughout regions through regional organizations and partnerships.
4. Generate and support industrial hazard mapping.
5. Identify secondary and multi-hazard risks and address these risks as part of regional, national and local preparedness including risk assessments, early warning systems, contingency planning and response mechanisms.
6. Raise awareness about environmental emergencies, at both community and political levels.
 - Ensure adequate political commitment to enforce legislation.

❖ Enhancing Response to Environmental Emergencies:

7. Enhance response mechanisms by providing resources, including experts and advisory services through OCHA and UNEP, to support countries affected by environmental emergencies.
 - Expand the network of providers to ensure a representative, diverse, and sustainable network.
 - Encourage membership from Latin America, Asia and Africa, and from the private sector and non-governmental partners.
8. Revise the voluntary Guidelines on Environmental Emergencies to reflect updated cooperation modalities and promote the use of these voluntary guidelines to improve national- and international-level environmental emergency response.

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❖ Improving Coordination:

9. Encourage OCHA and UNEP to establish interface arrangements with relevant international organizations and increase coordination between thematic regional governance frameworks for environmental emergency response.
 - Promote coordination among thematic regional governance frameworks to prevent information gaps and prevent duplication of activities.
10. Recognize that national agencies and governments should be at the centre of coordination efforts; international agencies should support capacity development for coordination.
11. Convene periodic review to assess effectiveness of coordination efforts and recommend subsequent measures to improve coordination.

❖ Mainstreaming Environment into Humanitarian Action:

12. Advocate for consideration of the environment in humanitarian action, demonstrate how this contributes to building resilience and sustainable development.
13. Develop collaborative approaches to link environmental aspects of humanitarian and development action, ensuring synergies, and reducing gaps.
14. Outline how to best integrate environment into humanitarian action and to provide the specialized expertise necessary to reach effective outcomes.
 - Identify and share practical steps that the international community, donors, and project managers can take to integrate environmental considerations into humanitarian action, including roles and responsibilities.
15. Identify and prioritize critical short-term life-saving and medium to long-term livelihood saving actions with an environmental sustainability perspective. Identify and address priority negative impacts of humanitarian actions.
 - These approaches may include building an “Environmental Community of Practice” to share best practices and lesson-learned.
16. Integrate environmental impact assessments into humanitarian needs assessment.

❖ Advisory Group and Forum:

17. Constitute a strategic advisory group on environmental emergencies to identify future risks and priorities, advocate for increased support to environmental emergencies and generate strategic partnerships and resource hubs.
18. Organize an open forum every two years to increase awareness, advocate for priorities and provide networking opportunities.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGEE	Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ADMER	Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
AHA Centre	ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
CAPRADE	Comité Andino para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEPREDENAC	Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central
EAM	Environmental Assessment Module
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EC-MIC	European Commission Monitoring and Information Centre
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	Environmental Emergencies Centre
EEF	Environmental Emergencies Forum
EHA	Environment in Humanitarian Action
ESB	Emergency Services Branch (OCHA)
FEAT	Flash Environment Assessment Tool
GCI	Green Cross International
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
GFMC	Global Fire Monitoring Centre
GPDRR	Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
HFA	Humanitarian Field Advisor
HIT	Hazard Identification Tool
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JEU	Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit
KRCS	Kenya Red Cross Society
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MIRA	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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NDOC	National Disaster Operations Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCDMB	Post-Conflict & Disaster Management Branch (UNEP)
PPRD South	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made Disasters
REA	Rapid Environmental Assessment
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGEE	Strategic Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies
SCDF	Singapore Civil Defence Force
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP GC	UNEP Governing Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOSAT	United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR)
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue Teams
V-OSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund