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## **Report of the 8th Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies**

co-organized by the  
Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission  
and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

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# Report of the 8th Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The eighth meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE 8) was organized jointly by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Commission from 6 to 8 May 2009, in accordance with the recommendations of the seventh meeting of the AGEE. It was hosted by the European Commission.

The eighth AGEE meeting was attended by representatives from the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Zambia.

Representatives of the following United Nations entities also attended the meeting: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other international and regional organizations in attendance included the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission (EC-MIC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Green Cross International. Representatives from various institutions, associations, and academia were also in attendance, including, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and the Centro de Apoio Científico em Desastres (CENACID), as well as two independent environmental experts, Mr. Carl Bruch and Mr. Rolf Bakken and a guest speaker from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Ms. Debarati Guha-Sapir.

On the side of the AGEE meeting, the inaugural edition of the Green Star Awards for Excellence in Preventing, Preparing for, and Responding to, Environmental Emergencies, organized by OCHA, UNEP, and Green Cross International, took place on 7 May 2009. (See related website <http://www.unep.org/greenstar/>)

## II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Chris Dijkens, Head of Crisis Management of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment of the Netherlands and outgoing Chair of the AGEE, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to AGEE 8. He introduced Mr. Gerhard Putman-Cramer, Chief of the OCHA Emergency Services Branch and Deputy Director of OCHA Geneva; Mr. Hervé Martin, Head of Civil Protection of the European Commission; and Mr. Vladimir Sakharov, Chief, Emergency Preparedness Section and Deputy Chief, Emergency Services Branch.

On behalf of the European Commission (EC), Mr. Martin, Head of Unit of Civil Protection of the EC Directorate-General for the Environment, welcomed all participants to the meeting and introduced staff present from the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission (EC-MIC). He pointed out that the joint organization of AGEE 8 – the second time since AGEE 4 in 2000 – was a

political signal of the excellent cooperation between the EC-MIC and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (Joint Environment Unit) which was essential in light of ever-increasing impacts of environmental issues, including outside of the EU. In this regard, he emphasized the importance of the EC's engagement in preparedness and prevention measures and the benefits of collaboration between environmental and humanitarian response actors. Joint missions have taken place, inter alia, in response to the oil spills in the Kerch Strait, Ukraine and the Republic of Korea in November and December of 2007, respectively. He concluded by stating that in particular the latter was a success and could be used as a model of good cooperation in the field and could contribute to strengthening collaboration on preparedness issues.

Mr. Putman-Cramer welcomed participants on behalf of the Emergency Services Branch, OCHA, and on behalf of Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), who was unable to attend. Mr. Putman-Cramer thanked the EC-MIC for support in organizing the AGEE meeting, as well as in providing international response to environmental emergencies. He drew participants' attention to the fact that the Joint Environment Unit – a unique partnership within the UN for mobilizing and coordinating multilateral response activities for environmental emergencies – would celebrate its 15-year anniversary in 2009. While giving thanks for the continuing support of a number of donors, more countries were encouraged to actively engage in preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies, which was essential in light of growing evidence of increased and more destructive natural disasters.

Mr. Sakharov noted that the participants represented various civil, military, environmental, humanitarian, academic and diplomatic communities, making the AGEE a unique forum for sharing ideas. He introduced Mr. Rolf Bakken and Mr. Carl Bruch, two consultants of the Joint Environment Unit, Mr. Asif Zaidi, representing the UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB), as well as the staff of the Joint Environment Unit, which serves as secretariat to the AGEE.



*The AGEE is a unique forum bringing together academics, emergency responders and national policy makers in the field of environmental emergencies*

When the meeting was asked to adopt the Provisional Agenda (document EU/AG/49), the Swedish delegate proposed to add a joint presentation by Kenya and Sweden on secondary risk identification in Kenya. There were no objections to this proposal and the agenda was adopted with the additional presentation.

In his capacity as outgoing Chair of the AGEE, Mr. Dijkens took the opportunity to remind participants of the importance of AGEE 7, which launched the Rosersberg Initiative and set a five-year programme of work. He expressed his appreciation of the strong involvement of many countries, as well as the Joint Environment Unit for carrying out its secretariat function. He assured the meeting of the continuing support of the Netherlands, and congratulated in advance the future Chair and Vice-Chair.

Mr. Putman-Cramer thanked Mr. Dijkens for his dedicated service to the AGEE, and to serving the cause of environmental emergencies and human welfare. He urged him to remain active in the important work of the AGEE in the years to come.

The meeting then unanimously elected Ambassador Toni Frisch of Switzerland as Chair and Mr. Renan Alfonso Rojas Gutierrez of Colombia as Vice-Chair.

The Chair thanked the AGEE for his election and extended special thanks to the organizers for the preparations of the meeting, and to the EC-MIC in particular for hosting AGEE 8. He looked forward to continuing close collaboration between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit, in its capacity as secretariat of the AGEE. The Chair welcomed the continuing close collaboration between OCHA and UNEP, through the Joint Environment Unit, in the area of response to environmental emergencies. He

noted with satisfaction that the meeting would discuss, in particular, improving legal and operational aspects of environmental emergency preparedness and response, and expressed his hope that AGEE 8 would encourage more participants to become more active in supporting international efforts to prepare for and respond to environmental emergencies.

The Vice-Chair also thanked the meeting for his election and asserted that he was looking forward to working closely with the Chair and AGEE participants during the conference and in the years to come. He noted that cooperation was of particular importance given the nature of environmental emergencies, which often have transboundary impacts.

To set the scene for AGEE 8, Mr. Sakharov gave participants background information on the AGEE, which offers a forum for exchanging ideas, a means to promote international cooperation, as well as an opportunity to identify and examine challenges faced in providing international assistance. Furthermore, the AGEE oversees the functioning of the Joint Environment Unit. Mr. Sakharov stressed the excellent cooperation between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit, which he characterized as being informal, but very good and practical, thereby helping to avoid duplication. He made reference to successful joint missions, which were followed by lessons learned exercises. Among major developments in the humanitarian field, Mr. Sakharov noted the consolidation of the humanitarian reform which was launched to improve humanitarian response, and added that environment was included in the cluster approach as a cross-cutting issue. Attention was also drawn to the brochure *“Humanitarian Action and the Environment”* developed by the Joint Environment Unit and UNEP PCDMB. In the environmental field, UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy, covering the period from 2010 to 2013, was noteworthy. The strategy includes Disasters and Conflicts as one of six priorities, demonstrating the importance of AGEE activities. A recurring theme was climate change, which in combination with continuing environmental degradation, industrialization and urbanization would likely lead to an increase of environmental emergencies and would require the stepping up of preparedness activities. In this context, AGEE 7 had launched the Rosersberg Initiative to strengthen the international response to environmental emergencies. AGEE 8 would review the progress made and identify how to tackle remaining challenges, by (1) indicating how the AGEE wishes to cooperate and how the Joint Environment Unit can help; (2) ensuring continued momentum for joint efforts on the Rosersberg Initiative (2007- 2012); (3) contributing to an improved distribution of supporting countries; and (4) strengthening frameworks on governance.

### **Agenda item 1: Keynote address**

*Dr. Debarati Guha-Sapir, Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and Professor at University of Louvain School of Public Health, Brussels*



*Interlinkages between climate change, environmental emergencies and disease need to be explored further*

Dr. Guha-Sapir delivered a thought-provoking and stimulating opening address, drawing upon major trends and developments in natural disasters and environmental emergencies. She introduced the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) which has been set up to compare data between disasters to establish trends. Dr. Guha-Sapir put a particular emphasis on the link between health impacts of natural disasters, and stressed the importance of collecting data on extreme climate events and disease, while recognizing the long-term patterns of injury, trauma and death following acute natural disasters. She also reiterated the importance of ensuring the sustainability of capacity-building measures, such as introducing sound standard curriculum, which would in turn lead to improved disaster preparedness.

The Chair and several delegations thanked the keynote speaker for her opening address, as it would provide valuable food for thought for AGEE 8. The delegate from Honduras stressed the need to overcome the recent trend towards sectoralization. He said the work undertaken by CRED showed the need to re-integrate the environment in other sectors in order to avoid increased impacts caused by a lack of inter-sectorial cooperation.

The delegate of Nigeria pointed out that while data collection was essential, aggregation was problematic and could lead to the exaggeration of trends. Dr. Guha-Sapir agreed, stating that epidemiology could point to systemic failures and could help identify problems in order to avoid working with stereotypes. Data analysis in the post-disaster phase would certainly contribute to preparedness.

In response to the remark by the representative of the Philippines, Dr. Guha-Sapir said that there was no scientifically established link between greenhouse emissions and an increase in natural disasters. The representative of Green Cross International mentioned that human capacity to cope with disasters should be taken into account when analyzing data. For example, the population of developing countries and/or women were generally more vulnerable to disasters than others. Dr. Guha-Sapir concurred with this opinion, but pointed out in particular that a gender approach would be more beneficial than a purely women's approach.

Mr. Putman-Cramer pointed out that there was a need to raise awareness of slow-onset natural disasters such as floods which – in comparison to sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions – receive relatively little media attention. He further inquired regarding whether the data collected by EM-DAT pointed to any correlations between droughts and conflicts. Dr. Guha-Sapir affirmed this, stating that the relation was a rather intricate one in the sense that droughts could result in mass displacement that in turn could put pressure on host communities and in this way create tensions, possibly leading to conflicts.

## **Agenda item 2: Vision 2012: Options for Strengthening International Frameworks Governing Response to Environmental Emergencies**

*Mr. Carl Bruch, Senior Attorney, Co-Director of International Programs, Environmental Law Institute and independent consultant with the Joint Environment Unit & Mr. René Nijenhuis, Humanitarian Affairs Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*



*The year 2012 provides a once-in-a-decade opportunity to focus international attention on environmental emergencies*

Mr. Nijenhuis presented an overview of the study “Strengthening international governance systems to respond to environmental emergencies” undertaken by Mr. Bruch as part of Thematic Area 2 of the Rosersberg Initiative. This study – also referred to as the Bruch Report – is a baseline review to analyze the existing instruments, institutions and practice related to environmental emergency response. The Bruch Report compiles a review of 20 frameworks, conventions, and legal agreements, both bilateral and regional, as well as 15 water-course agreements, focusing on provisions related to notification and alert; request and offer; and provision of assistance. These were analyzed in order to draw lessons on where the system works, for whom it works and how. The Bruch Report concluded that an “organic evolution of subsystems (eg. for oil spills and forest fires) had led to the development of a patchwork of international instruments, guidance and institutions [...] with uneven implementation”. There is “no comprehensive system for notification, alert, request and provision (of assistance) [...]”. The report further noted that there is no commonly agreed upon definition of what constitutes an environmental emergency, and that there is a general lack of awareness regarding existence of instruments. Recommendations of the Bruch Report included operational, capacity building / awareness-raising, legal and policy measures.

In continuation, Mr. Nijenhuis presented Vision 2012 (EU/AG/50) which focuses on improving international frameworks for responding to environmental emergencies. The year 2012 provides a once-in-a-decade opportunity to focus international attention on environmental emergencies, as the next global environmental summit will most likely be held that year. It also marks the end of the five-year plan for implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative, as well as the end of the Medium Term Plan of the Millennium Development Goals and the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol. This opportunity to

strengthen international frameworks should be taken to address fragmentation and improve coordination. Additionally, improved governance frameworks could standardize and integrate notification and assistance procedures, making the processes more efficient and effective.

In order to strengthen the broad mandates of UNEP and OCHA to address environmental emergencies, several opportunities present themselves, including (1) a UNEP Governing Council Decision; (2) a UN General Assembly Resolution; or (3) a Ministerial Declaration. In terms of the scope of the mandate, Mr. Nijenhuis suggested that it should acknowledge the experience, success, and impact to date of efforts by UNEP and OCHA to respond to environmental emergencies, including progress of the Rosersberg Initiative. Furthermore, it should note with concern the projections for a growing number of environmental emergencies and growing severity; endorse the experience and approach taken by UNEP and OCHA in responding to environmental emergencies; and explicitly request that UNEP and OCHA continue to collaborate in providing assistance as requested in responding to environmental emergencies.

Mr. Bruch then presented procedural aspects of the different options the AGEE could consider. Advantages of a UNEP Governing Council Decision (UNEP GC Decision) include that environmental emergencies have been addressed in such instruments before, and UNEP's focus on "Conflicts and Disasters" as part of its Medium Term Strategy provides additional momentum. While a certain constraint is posed by the time that needs to be allotted for review before an adoption, the main limitation of a UNEP GC Decision would be the fact that UNEP's membership is far from being universal (58 members), and its decisions are not binding on other UN agencies. Mr. Bruch suggested that AGEE participants could use a UNEP GC Decision to lay the groundwork for a meeting of senior experts to iteratively develop medium-term strategies for responding to environmental emergencies.

Among the advantages of pursuing a UN General Assembly Resolution (UNGA Resolution) would be broad political, legal and moral support and legitimacy. Contrary to a UNEP GC Decision, it would be binding for all UN programmes. However, competition among different institutions could lead to a narrow directive. Hence, strong political support would have to be ensured in order for a UNGA Resolution to contribute to a strengthened mandate.

There are several types of ministerial declarations, such as those from global environmental summits, or ministerial declarations especially from the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF). All of these are rather political in nature, and there is no specific timeline or process. Ministerial declarations have a high degree of political and moral legitimacy, as they are a reflection of international consensus and they can provide a basis for subsequent technical and operational decisions. However, provisions included in ministerial declarations tend to be brief, and hence do not carry the full operational power of a UNGA Resolution or UNEP GC Decision.

Based on this overview, Mr. Nijenhuis and Mr. Bruch invited AGEE participants to consider and discuss whether they wished to use the momentum provided by the year 2012 to strengthen the frameworks for responding to environmental emergencies. If affirmative, the next issues to decide would be who should draft the decision/resolution/declaration, i.e. which participants should take the lead and whether and how the Joint Environment Unit should assist. It was also suggested that a dedicated working group could be established to drive the process.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair called on participants to take into account Mr. Bruch's baseline study and its recommendations, as well as to endorse the idea of exploring interest among countries to convene a political working group to identify and advise on the opportunities, constraints and options associated with raising the profile of environmental emergencies onto the global political agenda. He also suggested the Joint Environment Unit provide support to any countries interested in drafting and submitting a Decision for the next UNEP Governing Council or a UNGA Resolution.

Several delegations welcomed the Bruch Report as a valuable contribution to strengthening the international system for environmental emergency response. They affirmed that the year 2012 indeed provided a unique opportunity to raise the profile of environmental emergencies. They appreciated the

options presented as Vision 2012, and said that a UNEP GC Decision would most likely be the most realistic option to pursue. As an alternative, it was suggested to bring the matter to the attention of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

They also supported the idea of establishing a working group to drive the process towards Vision 2012, including deciding which option to pursue. The Jordanian delegate expressed interest in contributing to the working group, should the AGEE agree on its establishment.

It was suggested that a broad range of actors should be involved in the process, including governments, international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations and local communities to. The question was raised how OCHA could be engaged in the process of a UNEP GC Decision, in particular regarding implementation.

The representative of ASEAN suggested that positive examples of ASEAN's cooperation with UNEP and OCHA, such as in the context of the response to Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, be taken into account in the study.

Mr. Sakharov said it was important, in particular, to learn from regional organizations, including ASEAN and the EC, in order to strengthen the global system. At the same time, the local level would have to be taken into account. He reiterated that the primary responsibility for prevention, preparedness and response lies with national governments, while international organizations would only step in when so requested. While stating that pursuing a UNGA Resolution might indeed be difficult, he supported the Swiss delegate's suggestion of bringing environmental emergencies to the attention of ECOSOC by adding that ECOSOC's agenda has grown to include humanitarian and environmental issues.

Mr. Nijenhuis reiterated that it was up to AGEE participants to make use of the report and that there was no obligation to adopt it formally. He reassured participants that comments would be taken into account by the AGEE Steering Committee, to be created. He invited participants interested in collaborating within the Steering Committee to make their interest known to the Joint Environment Unit.

By way of a summary, the Chair repeated the options that the AGEE could pursue, and reiterated the need to involve stakeholders at the local level in the process. He noted that the proposal to establish a Steering Committee to further discuss the Bruch Report and Vision 2012 would be brought up again under Agenda item 11.

### **Agenda item 3: Expanding the Resource Network for Environmental Emergency Response**

*Mr. Matthew Conway, Programme Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*

Mr. Conway's presentation was based on the meeting document Expanding the Resource Network for Environmental Emergencies (EU/AG/51). He reiterated that there was a continued need for a strengthened system for environmental emergency response, including (1) a readily-available pool of diverse expertise; (2) equipment to support operations; (3) excellent bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as through mechanisms such as the EC-MIC; and (4) equal distribution of donor countries around the world.

In addition to clear allocation of responsibilities, Mr. Conway suggested that a pool of environmental experts should be created among the government agencies dealing with environmental emergencies at the national level. A mobilization procedure including the management of an expert roster, liaison with other governmental bodies, receipt and processing of requests for assistance from the Joint Environment Unit, identification and deployment of required experts/equipment, and mobilization of



*A strategy should be developed for a more equitable distribution of the donor network*

funds would be beneficial to the strengthening of the system. Sources of funding could be made available through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or through the government's international development agency.

Steps have been taken by the Joint Environment Unit to increase collaboration with the EC-MIC, the governments of France, the Netherlands and Sweden, ASEAN, UNDAC and GFMC. Mr. Conway stated that notable progress had been made, but capacity available for international deployments remained primarily within Europe. He stressed that response to a disaster in a certain country from within the same region was generally preferable, given that deployments could be expected to be faster, less expensive and there would be fewer linguistic and cultural issues to overcome. Focus would thus need to be on extending the resource base to Africa, Asia/Pacific and Latin America, in particular in the light of a likely rise in the number and intensity of environmental emergencies due to increased industrialization, trans-boundary effects of environmental emergencies, and climate change.

The Chair and several delegates expressed their appreciation to countries that have made their national resources available for multilateral response to environmental emergencies. It was suggested that countries interested in becoming more involved in international environmental emergency response discuss with those that have built rosters of expertise and established deployment procedures.

It was stressed that all countries – whether donors or recipients of assistance – and many other partners, such as NGOs, the private sector, and academia, have important roles to play in the provision of multilateral assistance. To this end, closer collaboration between the Joint Environment Unit and regional organizations, particularly those of Africa, Latin America, and the Asia/Pacific region was encouraged. Such partnerships could be modelled on the strong collaboration developed between the Joint Environment Unit and the EC-MIC.

It was also noted that UNDAC is a valuable system whose environmental expertise should be strengthened by the AGEE. Related hereto, the delegate of France informed participants that his government was funding the forthcoming UNDAC training in Bamako, Mali in order to increase franco-phone response capacity.

On behalf of Switzerland, the Chair underlined his country's willingness to contribute to expanding the resource network. He urged other countries to do the same.

#### **Agenda item 4: Environmental Emergencies Centre**

*Mr. Matthew Conway, Programme Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*

Summarizing the meeting document Environmental Emergencies Centre (EU/AG/52), Mr. Conway reminded participants of the fact that Thematic Area 1 of the Rosersberg Initiative focused on awareness raising, training and capacity building with the overall objective to increase availability of technical expertise internationally. While expertise exists, the question was how to make it available internationally, i.e. how to bridge the gap between the national level and the international level. An Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC) could fulfil this purpose.

Mr. Conway reminded participants that the Bruch Report outlined several options for such a Centre. It could (1) be established within an existing institution; (2) be integrated into an external institution; (3) consist of decentralized resource centres while strengthening the network among them; (4) use regional institutions as focal points; and/or (5) be a "virtual" online centre. While the need for such a centre has been confirmed through informal feedback, its exact extent remains to be analyzed. Therefore, Mr. Conway proposed that a survey of needs and existing initiatives be undertaken to identify specific gaps between international expertise and national capacity to respond to environmental emergencies.

The Vice-Chair stressed the need for increased awareness raising, training, information sharing, and technical assistance in the domain of environmental emergencies, and asked participants to give serious consideration to the role that an EEC could play. He asked AGEE 8 to endorse the proposal that the Joint

Environment Unit undertakes a survey to determine if there is a genuine need for such a Centre, and called on interested States to specify what kind of support they could lend.

Several delegations expressed their support for the establishment of an EEC. Suggestions for the purpose were diverse, ranging from an operational centre, to a facility for training and/or capacity building, documentation, and information sharing.

Regarding the format of the centre, the options of using existing decentralized regional centres and the establishment of a virtual centre found most support. Both were perceived as least costly. In particular, the latter could circumvent potential problems with visas or travel restrictions in case of a pandemic.

Given the diversity of suggestions, the proposal to undertake a survey on exact needs for a centre was adopted and it was suggested that the AGEE Steering Committee to be established for driving Vision 2012 could also take the idea of the EEC forward.

### **Agenda item 5: Publication on 15 Years of Environmental Emergency Response**

*Ms. Ingvill Tveite, Associate Expert of the Joint Environment Unit*

Ms. Tveite presented a proposal to publish a book on 15 Years of Environmental Emergency Response (see meeting document EU/AG/53). This year's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Joint Environment Unit provides an excellent opportunity to draw attention to successful cooperation in preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies, such as oil spills, industrial accidents and secondary environmental impacts from natural disasters and complex emergencies. The publication would recapitulate the history of environmental emergency response work, including the activities related to both preparedness and response, and thus feature case studies and best practices. Furthermore, major trends would be included, such as new technologies paving the way for more effective collaboration with regard to climate change and environmental preparedness. Lastly, lessons learned should be featured in order to be able to better prepare for future challenges.



*The 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Joint Environment Unit provides an excellent opportunity to draw attention to successful cooperation in preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies*

Ms. Tveite invited donors to propose inputs regarding substance and form, to contribute with interviews with individuals and organizations, as well as to pledge financial and/or in-kind contributions. Lastly, she specified that the Joint Environment Unit would drive the process and coordinate among the different actors.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the idea of a publication as a means of drawing attention to the danger of environmental emergencies and the important contributions that have been made by many States who have participated in international response, and stressed the importance to publish such a book to highlight response, countries' engagement, and the work of Joint Environment Unit.

Several delegations welcomed the initiative of publishing such a book and noted that it fit well within the recommendations of AGEE 7 to raise awareness of preparedness and response for environmental emergencies. It was noted that it would be important to focus on partnerships rather than distinguishing between donors and recipient countries. The Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland proposed to contribute financially and/or in-kind, depending on the actual needs, and said they would consult with the Joint Environment Unit. The representative of Ivory Coast expressed his willingness to provide input on toxic waste response as well as lessons learned for preparedness.

## **Agenda item 6: Environmental Assessment Module**

*Mr. Chris Dijkens, Head of the Department for Crisis Management, Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment*

Mr. Dijkens presented the Environmental Assessment Module (EAM), which was developed by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands, in close cooperation with the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), and launched in The Hague in August 2008.



*Major progress has been made in the guaranteed stand-by capacity for on site sampling and analysis during large-scale disasters*

The EAM is a mobile laboratory to support domestic and international response to environmental emergencies by sampling, field detection and undertaking analysis on site; integration and interpretation of data; and delivering assessments of exposure, effects, risks and counter-measures. The EAM is available for national as well as international deployments. It is a compact and flexible mobile laboratory, available 24/7, and thereby helps to assess the exposure of humans and environment to environmental risks as well as potential impacts and future risks, on the basis of which advice on follow-up action can be given.

The Chair, as well as several delegates, thanked the Dutch government for this invaluable contribution to expand the stand-by capacity for carrying out assessments at the national and international levels and welcomed the inclusion of a back-up system that ensures the provision of practical recommendations for response to emergencies and mitigation of impacts.

In response to comments and questions from the Chair and several delegates, Mr. Dijkens affirmed that the EAM could be deployed with an UNDAC team and that affected countries could request assistance through the Joint Environment Unit or the EC-MIC, or bilaterally from the Netherlands. Regarding capacity building and training, he referred participants to the Environmental Emergencies Training which is addressed to disaster responders who would be deployed on international missions through their countries. Mr. Dijkens also cautioned against excessive expectations regarding the deployability of the EAM, and suggested that the module should be duplicated in other regions of the world, possibly in the framework of structures similar to the IHP.

The representative of the EC-MIC referred to the technical framework for deployment of different modules and suggested that the EAM could be included and possibly serve as a model for the development of new modules.

Mr. Putman-Cramer and the Chair supported the suggestion that the EAM be replicated in other regions, for example in the framework of the Asia/Pacific Humanitarian Partnership and similarly in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Existing centres of excellence and/or universities could be valuable partners.

## **Agenda item 7: Major activities of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit 2007-2009**

*Ms. Mirja Peters, Associate Programme Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*

Ms. Peters provided AGEE participants with an overview of major activities undertaken by the Joint Environment Unit since AGEE 7 (for details, see meeting document EU/AG/54). In the past two years, the Joint Environment Unit has responded to 40 environmental emergencies, including stand-alone technological incidents as well as secondary environmental impacts of natural disasters or complex emergencies. The different requests for assistance show the wide variety of environmental impacts such emergencies can entail and the broad range of expertise that may be needed in response to them.

In the framework of the Environmental Emergencies Partnership, the Joint Environment Unit has recently undertaken a review of the guidelines developed upon recommendation of the AGEE. Ms. Peters stressed that the Joint Environment Unit, as secretariat to the AGEE, relies on its national partners for dissemination and use of its guidance material. She invited participants to integrate this guidance into workshops, trainings and other capacity-building measures as well as contingency planning activities at the national and local levels.

In supporting the implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative, the Joint Environment Unit undertook activities in all three Thematic Areas. Focusing on Thematic Area 1 – awareness raising, training and capacity building – Ms. Peters mentioned a wide variety of initiatives, including the Green Star Awards; the continued expansion of the resource network; and training initiatives, such as the Environmental Emergencies Training. Additionally, she referred to the Hazard Identification Tool (HIT); the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT); and the Environmental Assessment Module (EAM) – tools and services the Joint Environment Unit and its partners have finalized and streamlined into emergency response.

The Chair congratulated the Joint Environment Unit for its accomplishments since AGEE 7, especially for its continued successful mobilization and coordination of response assistance, and noted with appreciation the finalization and application of the HIT and the FEAT for response to natural disasters. He thanked the Governments of Sweden and the Netherlands for their initiative and support in the development of the first environmental emergencies training; encouraged countries to support such training of environmental experts for international emergency deployments; and urged countries to continue providing experts for emergency response missions.

The delegate of the Philippines formally and officially thanked the Joint Environment Unit for the timely and efficient dispatch of experts in response to the capsized ferry containing highly toxic pesticides, as well as for the professional coordination among the other agencies involved, including in particular the EC-MIC, the World Health Organization and the International Maritime Organization.

The representative of ASEAN expressed his organization's interest in working more closely with the Joint Environment Unit, in particular to explore possibilities of duplicating the EAM in the Asia/Pacific region.

The representative of Green Cross Australia encouraged the strengthening of regional hubs and enquired regarding potential involvement of the private sector in environmental emergency response.

### **Agenda item 8: Best Practices in Requesting, Receiving, Offering, and Providing Assistance in International Environmental Emergencies**

*Mr. Rolf Bakken, Consultant to the Joint Environment Unit*



*Adoption of the environmental emergency guidelines will facilitate improved provision of assistance*

Mr. Bakken presented the results of his study on Best Practices in Requesting, Receiving, Offering, and Providing Assistance in international environmental emergencies, including a Best Practices Guidelines (for details, see meeting document EU/AG/55). The study identified several challenges, including (1) the wide variety of procedures for the requests/offers and provision/receipt of assistance among States; (2) the lack of knowledge among States about services that could be provided through the Joint Environment Unit; and (3) the lack of a system of National Focal Points (NFPs) for environmental emergencies.

Given the fact that in different countries, differing national authorities are responsible for environmental emergencies, it is essential to clearly designate as NFP the government ministry or agency responsible for the management of international and/or national disaster response. Mr. Bakken added that closer cooperation with UNDAC and/or the International Search

and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) would be valuable. For Europe, the EC-MIC should remain the main focal point at regional level and, where appropriate, existing NFPs for the EC-MIC should also serve as the operational NFPs for environmental emergencies.

Regarding emergency alerts, Mr. Bakken recommended that information could be exchanged rapidly through web-based platforms, such as the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (V-OSOCC). Furthermore, the Joint Environment Unit should direct advocacy efforts towards OCHA Regional Offices. He furthermore recommended that requests for assistance should be channelled through the OCHA Emergency Duty Officer via the 24/7 emergency phone number.

In order to overcome obstacles related to entry of staff and import of equipment into a disaster-affected country, international and domestic legal instruments should be agreed upon. Additionally, detailed manifests of equipment imported and/or used in response to a disaster should be completed according to international standards. On provision of international assistance, best practices identified in the cooperation with the EC-MIC and UNDAC missions should be maintained, and donor countries facing challenges with internal organization should look to countries with which to compare themselves for practices that could be duplicated.

Building on existing procedures and recommendations drawn, Mr. Bakken developed guidelines for environmental emergencies response. He invited AGEE 8 to endorse the guidelines in the current draft and to update the technical annexes and tools with a view to contributing to an overall revision before AGEE 9.

The Vice-Chair encouraged countries to identify a NFP for environmental emergencies and to inform the Joint Environment Unit of this, noting that, when possible, these NFPs could be the same focal points as for UNDAC, INSARAG and/or the EC-MIC. He further recognized the utmost importance of the Joint Environment Unit to work closely with OCHA and UNEP regional offices to mainstream awareness about environmental emergencies and services that could be provided. The Vice-Chair also called on AGEE 8 to endorse the non-binding guidelines on “Best Practices in Requesting, Receiving, Offering and Providing Assistance” in environmental emergencies, and invited the Joint Environment Unit to promote and disseminate the guidelines as widely as possible.

Several delegates joined the Vice-Chair in his appreciation of the study and the draft guidelines. Note was taken of minor language edits suggested. A few delegations added they would provide additional comments by electronic mail.

The representatives of several participating States of the EC-MIC affirmed their commitment to the civil protection mechanism of the European Community and stressed that their EC-MIC focal points should also be used for environmental emergencies. The representative of the EC-MIC was grateful for the recognition of the EC-MIC’s role, and stressed the importance of focusing on efficiency and non-duplication. He said the EC-MIC was fully prepared to work closely with the Joint Environment Unit to improve the international system while respecting the roles and mandates existing, well-working regional systems.

From experience with the Swiss national 24/7 duty system, it was pointed out that NFPs could be of dual use for both offer and receipt of international assistance. It was also pointed out that there was a need to address the obstacles that were often encountered with importing equipment, as well as the potential exporting of samples and used equipment. In this context, it was suggested that a tracking mechanism be implemented on how equipment is used in an affected country, and how (if at all) materials are disposed of.

Several delegates supported the suggestion to further develop and review the guidelines in a working group (or Steering Committee). The Chair encouraged seeing the guidelines as a living document that would be constantly updated according to experience. The guidelines were subsequently endorsed, in principle, with an agreement to be reviewed within the coming 1-2 years.

### **Agenda item 9: Roll-out Strategy for the Environmental Emergencies Training**

*Mr. René Nijenhuis, Humanitarian Affairs Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*

Mr. Nijenhuis gave participants a brief overview of the development of the pilot course of the Environmental Emergencies Training (EET), its course contents, as well as the proposed roll-out strategy. Based on a new type of partnering arrangement, the Netherlands and Sweden agreed to support the Joint Environment Unit in developing a training course for international environmental emergency responders. With the aim to prepare national experts to perform well in international disaster settings, a Steering Committee and a Project Team developed the curriculum of the pilot course that was held in The Hague from 18 to 22 August 2008.

The development of the EET was based on the UNDAC training methodology, and a modular approach was taken, including sessions on safety and security, information management, media training, stress management, HIT, FEAT, EAM, etc. (for details on course contents, see document EU/AG/56). Based on the feedback of participants, an evaluation of the course was undertaken by the Steering Committee, resulting in the roll-out proposal presented by Mr. Nijenhuis.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the EET be rolled-out as a United Nations course with the Joint Environment Unit as the custodian. The focus would be on multilateral response, as opposed to national capacity-building measures. Hence, the target audience would be deployable experts. NFPs and a national structure for deployment (see Agenda item 8) would have to be in place before experts would be trained. The modular approach would allow for the trainings to be demand-driven, making the course adaptable to the needs of the country in question. Costs and responsibilities would have to be borne by the country(ies) hosting the training course.



*Training of experts for international deployments is a vital component in emergency response work*

The Chair commended the joint Dutch/Swedish initiative to pilot the EET. He expressed support of the training opportunities provided by the EC-MIC, and encouraged EC member states to train environmental experts in the Technical Expert course. He encouraged countries to volunteer to host an EET course in their country, and/or in collaboration with other countries, and called on AGEE 8 to endorse the proposal for the roll-out of the EET for interested supporting countries, including the proposed training curriculum. He reiterated that the EET is for responders, focusing on deployable experts. While he recognized the need for training of national staff of developing countries, he noted that capacity building was not included in the EET.

The representative of the United States of America said that the US would be interested in hosting the EET to train a core of experts to make available for international deployments.

Several delegates confirmed the lack of a pool of trained people for environmental emergencies response, both at the international and national/local levels. Additionally, in order for affected countries to be able to call upon their neighbours for assistance, regional trainings were of utmost importance.

As suggested by the Chair, the proposal for roll-out of the EET was endorsed.

### **Agenda item 10: UNEP Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies**

*Mr. Vladimir Sakharov, Chief, Emergency Preparedness Section*

Mr. Sakharov presented a proposal to revive the UNEP Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies, established by UNEP Governing Council decision 19/9 in 1997 (see also meeting document EU/AG/57). The Trust Fund has the purpose to receive and account for contributions from various sources and to finance or co-finance activities and projects in the field of environmental emergencies. It is administered

by UNEP, and not only available to the Joint Environment Unit, but also to other UNEP entities. Given the fact that the Trust Fund would be more suitable for longer-term projects, rather than operational emergency response, it would serve as a complementary funding mechanism, not replacing existing ones.

Given that at present the Trust Fund is practically empty, Mr. Sakharov invited AGEE participants to pledge contributions – on a purely voluntary basis. In order to start the discussion on projects the Trust Fund could possibly be used for, he gave several preliminary examples: (1) the development of an electronic awareness training on environmental emergencies; (2) awareness and capacity-building workshops for aid-recipient countries; or (3) a review of monitoring activities by the overall environmental emergency coordination system.

The Chair thanked UNEP for the establishment and management of the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies since its inception. He encouraged the Joint Environment Unit to prepare detailed project proposals for the consideration of countries, in particular in the fields of capacity building, training, support to developing countries, and outreach activities, and invited the AGEE to suggest projects which would be taken into account by the Joint Environment Unit.

The delegate of the Netherlands welcomed the proposed revival of the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies as a great opportunity, and proposed that the Steering Committee (to be established by AGEE 8) should develop a strategy for fundraising to increase the Trust Fund.

The Swiss representative added that the Trust Fund could also be used for training initiatives – for example, funding the participation of environmental experts in UNDAC trainings. He further declared that – pending contributions from other donors – Switzerland would consider contributing to the Trust Fund as well.

### **Agenda item 11: Steering Committee for Environmental Emergencies and Date for AGEE 9**

*Proposal by Mr. Chris Dijkens, Outgoing AGEE 7 Chair*



*Participants pledged to provide strategic direction and impetus to the Rosersberg Initiative*

In his capacity as outgoing AGEE Chair, Mr. Dijkens proposed that an AGEE Steering Committee be created. The Steering Committee could provide guidance and advice to the Joint Environment Unit and AGEE participants with implementing the AGEE's recommendations, thereby driving the process in between AGEE meetings. Guidance could be provided on overall strategic direction and main activities related to environmental emergencies, by identifying major trends and opportunities, and by contributing to further engagement of countries and organizations in the AGEE.

As concrete tasks, the AGEE Steering Committee could develop a strategy for implementing Vision 2012 (see EU/AG/50); drive the process of reviewing the 'Best Practices Guidelines' (see EU/AG/55); and devise a fundraising strategy for the Trust Fund (see EU/AG/57). It should move forward outstanding issues of the Rosersberg Initiative, including the survey on the Environmental Emergencies Centre (see EU/AG/52). In addition to supporting individual or partnership projects, the Steering Committee could also provide the Joint Environment Unit with concrete guidance on its work plan. Mr. Dijkens suggested that the Steering Committee should consist of about ten members, with representation from all geographical regions. He insisted that the work of the Steering Committee should be practical, with a strong focus on outcomes. In response to a comment from the Japanese delegate, Mr. Dijkens clarified that the Steering Committee should be composed of participants at a similar level as those attending the AGEE, and would probably meet once or twice per year.

The Chair expressed support for the proposal of establishing a Steering Committee, and suggested that

its Chair should be elected by AGEE 8 participants. In order to allow for participants to consult with their governments regarding representation on the Steering Committee, the composition of the Steering Committee as well as the Vice-Chair would be announced in June. Similarly, the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee would be finalized based on AGEE 8 discussions and circulated at a later stage.

This proposal found agreement, and the representatives of France, Norway and Sweden expressed their interest in being members of the AGEE Steering Committee. Following a nomination by the representative of the Philippines, Mr. Dijkens was elected as Chair of the Steering Committee.

Mr. Dijkens accepted the nomination and said he was looking forward to working with all AGEE participants. As a first step he would – together with the members of the Steering Committee – develop a work plan with clear objectives and timelines.

Mr. Dijkens further argued that AGEE 9 should be held in 2011. This would allow for the AGEE to give guidance to the Steering Committee and the Joint Environment Unit in preparation for 2012 (see Agenda item 2), among other issues. Several delegations supported the proposal to hold AGEE 9 in 2011. The representative of Switzerland offered to host AGEE 9 in Switzerland, and to assist countries (that may need it) in order to participate. Given that there were no objections, the proposal to hold AGEE 9 in Switzerland in 2011 was adopted.

#### **Agenda item 12: Environmental Emergency Response to the ‘Hebei Spirit’ Oil Spill, South Korea**

*Mr. Gwang-Su Choi, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, and Mr. Won Joon Shim, Researcher at the South Sea Institute of the Korean Ocean Research and Development Institute*

The presenters briefed AGEE participants on the response measures taken in response to the “Hebei Spirit” Oil Spill in December 2008. A collision between a barge and an oil tanker caused the release of an estimated 12,547 tons of light crude oil into the Yellow Sea off the west coast of the Republic of Korea on 7 December 2007. More than 150 km of coastline were affected.

Authorities of the Republic of Korea, led by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and the Korean Coast Guard, acted swiftly in responding to the emergency. After having established a coordination centre at the national level, led by the Korean Coast Guard and including ministries, the military, fire brigades and local authorities, all possible national response sources were mobilized. Additionally, the Government of the Republic of Korea accepted international (multi- and bilateral) assistance in the form of technical advice and response equipment offered by several institutions and authorities.

A joint UN/EC (Joint Environment Unit and EC-MIC) assessment team was deployed to the Republic of Korea from 15 to 22 December 2007. The team was tasked to assess needs for international assistance to aid with clean-up operations. While the team determined that no international assistance was required to aid clean-up operations already underway, it recommended several follow up activities. Subsequently, the Government of Canada sent a team to the Republic of Korea on 27 December 2007, to provide Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique training. Furthermore, UNEP and the EC External Relations Directorate-General began preparing to collaborate on a “Post Disaster Needs Assessment”, scheduled to take place in early 2008.



*Optimal cooperation and coordination was achieved between the United Nations and the European Commission in response to the “Hebei Spirit” Oil Spill in the Re-*

The presenters summarized the lessons learned from the oil spill response and reiterated that the international assistance provided was very timely and also very valuable for dealing with the media. Duplication of efforts could be further diminished by integrating actors into one team, and the establishment of a focal point to manage request/offer and provision/receipt of assistance would be beneficial.

The representative of Canada thanked the Korean delegates for the hospitality provided to the Canadian team deployed in response to the oil spill, and the Joint Environment Unit for its coordination efforts. He described the mission as a win-win situation in the sense that not only had Environment Canada provided assistance, but it had at the same time learned many valuable lessons from the response and now finds itself to be better equipped to provide even stronger support in the future.

Mr. Sakharov, who had acted as team leader of the UN/EC assessment team, said that the request/offer of assistance had been effected in an extraordinarily efficient manner, allowing for an expeditious deployment. He added that it would not have been possible to respond in such a way without the tremendous support provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea. The representative of the EC-MIC added that the joint UN/EC mission undertaken in response to the “Hebei Spirit” Oil Spill could be seen as “the” model mission of cooperation between the Joint Environment Unit and the EC-MIC.

### **Agenda item 13: Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit Proposed Activities**

*Mr. Rene Nijenhuis, Humanitarian Affairs Officer of the Joint Environment Unit*

On behalf of the Joint Environment Unit, Mr. Nijenhuis gave an overview of the proposed activities for the next two years (see meeting document EU/AG/58 for details). While emergency response activities would remain the main priority, activities of the Joint Environment Unit to support the implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative and response preparedness measures were fully integrated into the work plan.

The work plan consists of four main pillars, including (1) emergency response; (2) advocacy and increased capacity; (3) governance systems; and (4) improvement of operational aspects. Emergency response activities would continue to include monitoring; hazard identification to assist early responders; and mobilization and coordination of assistance as per established practice.

In the area of advocacy and increasing capacity, activities proposed included: awareness-raising activities such as the major publication on 15 years of Environmental Emergency Response; the roll-out of the Environmental Emergencies Training and continued support of the NATO/Partnership for Peace course on environmental disaster operations; continuing efforts to expand the resource network; the survey on the Environmental Emergencies Centre; strengthening collaboration with regional organizations; and integration into UNEP through the Medium-Term Strategy and the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies.



*Over the last two years the Joint Environment Unit was involved in 40 different environmental emergencies*

Regarding governance systems, the Joint Environment Unit would further promote the opportunities of Vision 2012 and support response preparedness activities, for example in the framework of UNDAC. On operational aspects, the dissemination of guidelines would be supported in collaboration with the Steering Committee. Furthermore, the establishment of a NFP system would be pursued following recommendations from Mr. Bakken, and a study on monitoring of environmental emergencies was suggested.

Comments from delegates included that the work plan was very comprehensive and at the same time realistic. Upon an enquiry whether needs for capacity building in the regions were sufficiently reflected in the work plan, Mr. Nijenhuis said that this issue would be addressed in the survey on the Environmental Emergencies Centre. He further reminded participants of the Environmental Emergencies Partnership website which could be used for exchanging information on activities undertaken.

It was suggested that environment should continue to be integrated into all humanitarian activities as a cross-cutting issue and that other processes (driven by UNDP and other actors) should be taken into account as well. The representative of ASEAN reiterated the offer to intensify collaboration with the Joint Environment Unit, in particular with regard to setting up response systems at the regional level.

The representative of Ivory Coast reiterated the importance of partnerships in cooperation, and suggested that the work plan should include the development of a strategy on resource mobilization.

Given the discussions, the Chair noted the full support of participants for the proposed work plan and declared it to be endorsed. He encouraged countries to provide in-kind and/or financial support to the Joint Environment Unit in achieving this work plan.

## **Any Other Business**

### **Identification of secondary environmental risks – HIT pilot mission to Kenya**

*Mr. Moses Gitari, Senior Deputy Secretary, Ministry of State for Special Programmes, Office of the President & Mr. Leif Jönsson, Head of Regional Desk, Western, Eastern & Southern Africa, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)*

Mr. Gitari of Kenya and Mr. Jönsson of Sweden debriefed participants of the joint mission to identify secondary environmental risks in Kenya that was undertaken in December 2008. The Hazard Identification Tool (HIT) was developed to identify “big and obvious” secondary environmental risks in the context of natural disasters. Given the need to validate the HIT, Kenya and Sweden agreed to field test the tool. As a first phase, a mission was undertaken from 1 to 10 December 2008 to Kenya to assess the ability of the HIT to identify “big and obvious” secondary environmental risks in Kenya, i.e. to verify the information compiled in the HIT and to identify additional sites that might not have been found during desk research. In close collaboration with relevant partners, including the Office of the President, as well as Nairobi-based UNEP and OCHA colleagues, visits were undertaken to representative facilities (such as airports, cement production, mining, oil and gas production) in Nairobi, Mombasa and part of the Rift Valley. The comparison with the HIT list confirmed that the HIT is a valuable response tool to identify hazards, as it identified the vast majority of “big and obvious facilities” in Kenya.

The product of a second phase would be a map of the country, indicating all facilities and installations that could pose environmental risks. In preparation for this exercise, all relevant sites should be previously identified in order to facilitate the collection of geographical positioning system (GPS) data.

This initiative would be a first step in using the HIT methodology for preparedness measures, thereby increasing possibilities for rapid response and further detailed assessments. It could be envisioned to expand the exercise to other countries, and the AGEE was invited to propose additional countries to be mapped based on the Kenyan experience. In order to ensure funding, the partnership initiative as the one between Kenya and Sweden could be used as a model. Several delegations expressed great interest in the extension of the exercise to identify secondary environmental risks and shared their own past or on-going experience with secondary risk identification.

### **Civil Protection Mechanism in Cameroon**

*Dr. Jean Pierre Nana, Director of the Department of Civil Protection, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation*

Cameroon is exposed to a variety of disasters, including toxic gas emissions, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, landslides, fires, epidemics and invasion by locusts. Dr. Nana put particular focus on the release of carbon gases at Lake Nyos. Within this context, the Government of Cameroon is developing a strategy to strengthen the links between prevention, preparedness and contingency planning, response and (early) recovery, before, during and after disasters. Part of this strategy

is the National Disaster Prevention and Management Programme which was developed with the financial assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1998.

Dr. Nana gave an overview of the objectives of this programme. At a general level, it focuses on managerial, material and logistical capacity building of the government in disaster planning, prevention and management. More specifically, it aims to improve mechanisms relating to disaster prevention and management; to draw up national as well as sectorial plans on disaster prevention and management; and to update legislative and statutory instruments. It further foresees capacity building of staff of the services involved in disaster prevention and management, as well as the sensitization, education and mobilization of local communities. Additionally, a regional civil protection centre is being set up with the purposes of education and capacity building in civil protection.



*Regional cooperation must be enhanced to better deal with preparedness and response to environmental emergencies*

Mr. Sakharov thanked the Cameroonian delegation for the presentation, and assured them of the availability of the Joint Environment Unit in case further assistance would be needed.

The Nigerian representative pointed out that in the event a future disaster would affect his country, he hoped that the cooperation between the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria would improve in order to join efforts in prevention, preparedness and contingency planning. In particular, technical information would be helpful.

In response to these remarks, Dr. Nana said the report of the mission undertaken by the European Commission would be shared with Nigerian counterparts when it was available. He further hoped for support by the Joint Environment Unit in the establishment of the regional centre.

### **Concluding Remarks**

By way of concluding remarks, the Chair thanked the European Commission for its generosity in hosting and organizing AGEE 8. Mr. Frisch congratulated the Joint Environment Unit for carrying out its mandate in a very effective, professional and dedicated way; noted with appreciation the contributions made by countries to the work of the Joint Environment Unit; and welcomed the continued cooperation between UNEP and OCHA. He reiterated that the future held many additional challenges, including those related to climate change, and pointed out the need for continued strong support as well as the importance of collaboration with regional organizations. He welcomed the decision of the AGEE to establish a Steering Committee, which would help advance issues discussed at AGEE 8.

The Spanish delegate said that her government was planning to participate more actively in the activities of the AGEE. Details of this engagement would still have to be explored.

The representative of Peru stressed the importance of enhancing partnerships among AGEE participants, in particular in terms of south-south cooperation.

The delegate of Ivory Coast expressed his country's interest in being a member of the Steering Committee. Similarly, the representative of Green Cross Australia wished to explore possibilities of her organization becoming involved in the work of the Steering Committee.

The representatives of Oman and Mozambique declared that they would return to their countries to share the knowledge gained at the AGEE meeting not only with their own national authorities, but also with those of the other countries of the respective regions, i.e. the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), respectively.

Ms. Pia Bucella (Director of Directorate A: Communication, Legal Affairs & Civil Protection, EC Directorate General for the Environment) also made some brief closing remarks on behalf of the European Commission. She expressed hope to be able to continue the collaboration between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit through joint missions, lessons learned exercises and training initiatives. The cooperation could be seen as a model for the interaction between the UN and a regional organization, in particular in the pragmatic approach that was built on existing structures, thereby avoiding duplication.

Mr. Sakharov reiterated the appreciation of the commitment that outgoing AGEE Chair Mr. Dijkens had shown and how this had contributed to significant progress between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> AGEE meetings. He further stressed the increasing importance of cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level.



*The Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission, the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, and respective partners, will continue to collaborate through joint missions, lessons-learned exercises and joint training activities*

Mr. Putman-Cramer commended the participants, the Chair and the organizers of AGEE 8 for a very successful conference that was rich in context. On behalf of OCHA, he thanked the EC-MIC for hosting the meeting and UNEP for the continued partnership with OCHA through the Joint Environment Unit.

The Chair concluded the meeting by reiterating his gratefulness to the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit for having organized and hosted AGEE 8. He said he was looking forward to working closely with the Vice-Chair, and to continuing cooperation with Mr. Putman-Cramer within UNDAC.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **The Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies:**

- Thanks the European Commission, and specifically the Monitoring and Information Centre (EC-MIC), for generously co-organizing and hosting AGEE 8;
- Welcomes the continuing cooperation of OCHA and UNEP through the Joint Environment Unit, and thanks the Senior Management of both organizations for the in-kind and financial support to the Unit, and for the financial support for organizing the meeting;
- Congratulates the Joint Environment Unit for carrying out its mandate to mobilize and coordinate the international response to environmental emergencies and strengthen the international frameworks that govern environmental emergencies with efficiency, professionalism and dedication;
- Thanks the European Commission, and specifically the EC-MIC, for its cooperation with the Joint Environment Unit, which has led to successful missions and practical achievements;
- Recognizes the importance of collaboration with regional organizations and encourages the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit to continue working together, specifically through joint missions, lessons-learned exercises and joint training activities;
- Reiterates that the Joint Environment Unit should continue to be utilized as the UN system's principle response mechanism for environmental emergencies;
- Invites countries and organizations to support activities that will ensure the implementation of AGEE 8 recommendations, and in this regard welcomes the establishment of the AGEE Steering Committee;
- Notes with appreciation the progress made by countries and the Joint Environment Unit on the implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative, and calls on the AGEE Steering Committee to ensure that remaining tasks are implemented;
- Recognizes with gratitude the long-standing support of many countries to the Joint Environment

- Unit, including in the implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative;
- Reiterates the importance of close collaboration between the Joint Environment Unit with regional offices of OCHA and UNEP;
- Congratulates UNEP for its prioritisation of conflicts and disasters in their Medium Term Strategy and welcomes the continued support of UNEP to the UNDAC system;
- Takes note of OCHA's continued efforts in emergency preparedness, and the inclusion of environmental emergencies in these efforts;
- Acknowledges the need for broader donor support to ensure geographic and linguistic diversity in the international response framework;
- Welcomes the continued cooperation between the Joint Environment Unit and the UNDAC system, in particular the further integration of environment into humanitarian response through the development of supporting tools and services, including the HIT, the FEAT, and the EAM;
- Recognizes the utmost importance of strengthening environmental emergencies governance systems;
- Recognizes the necessity of allocating appropriate resources and adequate financing for the activities of the Joint Environment Unit, including for the implementation of the recommendations of AGE 8;

**Agenda item 2: Vision 2012: Options for Strengthening International Frameworks Governing Response to Environmental Emergencies**

- Notes with satisfaction the comprehensive baseline review of international governance systems that has been undertaken by Mr. Bruch, on behalf of the Joint Environment Unit;
- Expresses concerns over the gaps and fragmentation that exist in the global systems that govern environmental emergency response;
- Invites OCHA and UNEP to take note of the challenges presented in the *Bruch Report* and take, where possible, appropriate action to address them;
- Recognizes that there is an imperative to further strengthen the international regime for governing environmental emergencies, also due to increasing challenges stemming from human-induced climate change;
- Takes note of the conclusions and recommendations in the paper *Strengthening International Governance Systems to Respond to Environmental Emergencies, A Baseline Review of Instruments, Institutions, and Practice* by Mr. Bruch;
- Acknowledges the once-in-a-decade opportunities to raise international attention to environmental emergencies provided in the year 2012, described in the meeting document "Vision 2012";
- Invites the Steering Committee to develop a strategy to implement Vision 2012 while considering different options (including bringing the matter to the attention of the UNEP Governing Council; the UN General Assembly; the next Global Summit; ECOSOC);
- Requests the Joint Environment Unit to provide support to the Steering Committee and countries interested in the aforementioned efforts;

**Agenda item 3: Expanding the Resource Network for Environmental Emergency Response**

- Appreciates the efforts of individual countries in making their national resources available for international response to environmental emergencies;
- Notes the efforts of the Joint Environment Unit in continuously improving international response through the development of tools, services and training;
- Recognizes the fundamental importance of a more diverse and equal geographical distribution of the donor network;
- Recognizes that all countries and many other partners, such as NGOs, private sector and academia, have important roles to play in the provision of multilateral assistance;
- Encourages closer collaboration between the Joint Environment Unit and regional organizations and initiatives in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, building on the positive ex-

- periences to date with the European Commission and the International Humanitarian Partnership;
- Welcomes countries – in particular from Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific regions – to put their national response resources at the disposal of affected countries in times of need, and to join in international response efforts;
  - Invites the Steering Committee to develop strategies for establishing a more equitable distribution of the donor network, such as regional networks as the informal International Humanitarian Partnership;

**Agenda item 4: Environmental Emergencies Centre**

- Acknowledges the need for increased awareness raising and training, sharing of information and technical assistance, and the possible role that the establishment of an Environmental Emergencies Centre could play;
- Welcomes the further study of options and scope of an Environmental Emergencies Centre;
- Requests the Joint Environment Unit to undertake a survey of similar centres at national, regional and/or international level, and analyze their geographic and thematic scope, objectives, target audience, methodology, set-up, staff and resources required;
- Invites the Steering Committee to take the matter forward while considering the outcomes of the aforementioned survey;

**Agenda item 5: Publication on 15 years of Environmental Emergencies**

- Welcomes the idea of a publication on 15 years of international response to environmental emergencies as a means of emphasizing important contributions made by various donor and recipient governments, organizations, and individuals, as part of the *Rosersberg Initiative's* focus on advocacy and awareness raising, and as a means for sharing lessons learned and best practices;
- Invites AGEE participants to provide inputs to the development of this book;

**Agenda item 7: Major Activities of the Joint Environment Unit 2007-2009**

- Congratulates the Joint Environment Unit for its accomplishments since AGEE 7, especially for its continued successful mobilization and coordination of response assistance, in particular its joint responses with the EC-MIC in Korea, the Philippines, and the Ukraine;
- Notes with appreciation the finalization and the application of the HIT and the FEAT for the response to natural disasters;
- Thanks the Governments of Sweden and the Netherlands for their initiative and support in the development of the first Environmental Emergencies Training;
- Thanks the Government of the Netherlands for their support in developing a guaranteed response capacity for onsite sampling and analysis through their mobile laboratory – the EAM, under the auspices of the IHP;
- Congratulates OCHA, Green Cross International and UNEP on the launch of the tripartite Green Star Awards for excellence in preventing, preparing for, and responding to environmental emergencies;
- Welcomes the strong collaboration between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit in the response to environmental emergencies, and the efforts of both entities to avoid the risk of duplication by making best use of existing resources;
- Encourages the continued collaboration between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit by, and where possible, deploying joint missions during emergencies, and in other areas, including training, as part of preparedness efforts;
- Encourages countries to support environmental experts to be trained for international emergency deployments, and to continue providing experts and equipment for emergency response missions;

**Agenda item 8: Best Practices in Requesting, Receiving, Offering and Providing Assistance in International Environmental Emergencies**

- Thanks the Joint Environment Unit, and the consultant Rolf Bakken, for a thorough study of operational aspects of existing response mechanisms and the development of ‘Best Practice Guidelines’ for environmental emergency response;
- Endorses, in principle, the voluntary guidelines on “Best Practices in Requesting, Receiving, Offering and Providing Assistance” in environmental emergencies;
- Encourages countries to identify a NFP for environmental emergencies, and to inform the Joint Environment Unit of this. When possible, these NFPs could be the same as those for UNDAC and INSARAG. For the 30 countries participating in the European Community Civil Protection Mechanism, recommends that the MIC remains the main focal point at regional level and that, where feasible, the existing NFPs for the EC-MIC should also serve as the operational NFPs for environmental emergencies;
- Encourages the Joint Environment Unit to continue working closely with OCHA and UNEP regional offices to mainstream awareness about environmental emergencies and the services that could be provided through the Joint Environment Unit;
- Invites the Joint Environment Unit to promote and disseminate the ‘Best Practices Guidelines’ as widely as possible;
- Invites countries to apply the ‘Best Practices Guidelines’, as appropriate;
- Invites the Steering Committee to drive the process of reviewing the ‘Best Practices Guidelines’ before AGEE 9;

**Agenda item 9: Roll-out Strategy for the Environmental Emergencies Training**

- Strongly supports the environmental emergencies training initiative based on the experience gained with the first pilot training developed by the Netherlands and Sweden as part of the Rosersberg Initiative;
- Recognizes the utmost importance of this training to strengthening the capacities of countries that will deploy their environmental experts on international response missions;
- Endorses the proposal for the roll-out of the Environmental Emergencies Training for interested supporting countries, including the proposed training curriculum;
- Supports training opportunities provided by the EC-MIC and encourages EC-MIC participating States to train environmental experts in the EC-MIC’s Technical Expert course;
- Highlights the importance of developing a well-prepared cadre of trained experts worldwide;
- Encourages countries to volunteer to host an Environmental Emergencies Training course in their country, and/or in collaboration with other countries;

**Agenda item 10: Proposal for the UNEP Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies**

- Thanks UNEP for the establishment and management of the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies since its inception;
- Appreciates the efforts of the Joint Environment Unit in identifying suitable options for countries to support the multilateral response to environmental emergencies;
- Requests the Joint Environment Unit to prepare detailed project proposals for the consideration of countries, in particular in the fields of capacity building, training, support to developing countries, and outreach activities;
- Invites the Steering Committee to develop strategies for fundraising and use of the Trust Fund;

**Agenda item 11: AGEE Steering Committee and AGEE 9**

- Thanks the outgoing Chair for practical proposals to establish an AGEE Steering Committee;
- Congratulates Mr. Chris Dijkens for having been elected as Chair of the Steering Committee, and notes the important role the Steering Committee will play in the support and implementation of activities of the Rosersberg Initiative and the proposed activities of the Joint Environ-

- ment Unit;
- Agrees with the proposed terms of reference for the Steering Committee;
- Agrees with the proposal to organize the next Advisory Group in the year 2011, to be able to prepare for the momentous year 2012 which will coincide with the 5 year term of the Rosersberg Initiative, and most likely the next global environmental summit;
- Welcomes the generous offer of Switzerland to host AGEE 9 in Switzerland;

**Agenda item 13: Joint Environment Unit proposed activities**

- Endorses the work plan of the Joint Environment Unit for the biennium of 2009-2011, taking into account the comments made during the AGEE meeting;
- Encourages countries to provide in-kind and/or financial support to the Joint Environment Unit in achieving this work plan;

Specifically,

- Requests the Joint Environment Unit to provide support to interested countries to seize the once-in-a-decade opportunity to raise international attention to environmental emergencies likely to be provided in the year 2012;
- Encourages closer collaboration between the Joint Environment Unit and regional organizations and countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, building on the positive experiences to date with the European Commission and the IHP;
- Welcomes the further study of options and scope of an Environmental Emergencies Centre;
- Welcomes the idea of a publication on 15 years of international response to environmental emergencies as a means of emphasizing important contributions made by various donor and recipient governments, organizations, and individuals, as part of the Rosersberg Initiative's focus on advocacy and awareness raising;
- Encourages the continued collaboration between the EC-MIC and the Joint Environment Unit by, and where possible, deploying joint missions during emergencies and other areas, including training, as part of preparedness efforts;
- Invites the Joint Environment Unit to promote and disseminate the 'Best Practices Guidelines' as widely as possible;
- Encourages countries to volunteer to host an Environmental Emergencies Training course in their country, and/or in collaboration with other countries;
- Encourages the Joint Environment Unit to prepare detailed project proposals for the consideration of countries, in particular in the fields of capacity building, training, support to developing countries, and outreach activities;

**Any other business**

- Thanks Kenya and Sweden for their interesting initiative and collaboration on hazard mapping for environmental emergencies in Kenya;
- Thanks Cameroon sharing their experience in setting up national mechanisms to better prevent and to respond to environmental emergencies;

**General:**

- Requests the Senior Management of UNEP and OCHA to allocate, at the earliest practical time, the necessary resources for the administration and operation of the Joint Environment Unit;
- Requests the Joint Environment Unit to inform the Senior Management of both organizations on major outcomes, conclusions and recommendations of AGEE 8;
- Requests that AGEE 8 participants channel relevant information and statements from this meeting to their respective Permanent Missions and Ministries;
- Asks the Senior Management of UNEP to bring this report to the attention of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, and to inform the forthcoming Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council on major outcomes of AGEE 8.