



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)



**Report of
7th Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental
Emergencies
in association with the Awareness and Preparedness at
Local Level programme**

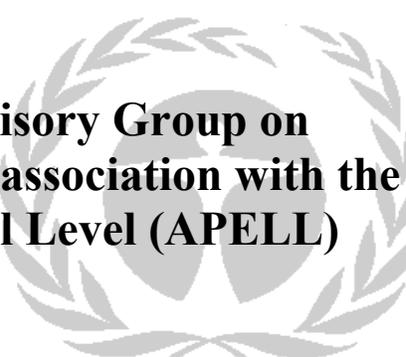


Rosersberg, Sweden, 13-15 June 2007

July 2007



UNITED NATIONS



Report of the 7th meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) in association with the Awareness and Preparedness at Local Level (APELL) Programme

EU/AG/48
July 2007
English only

Climate change is increasingly expected to trigger the causes behind natural disasters. This, in turn, might lead to environmental emergencies much larger in scope, and much more complex, than we have experienced so far.

Her Excellency Gunilla Carlsson, Minister of International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, on June 13, 2007, at the 7th Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies

This document is divided into three parts:

- Introduction
- Summary of discussions
- Conclusions and recommendations

I. INTRODUCTION

The seventh meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) was convened jointly by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in association with the UNEP Awareness and Preparedness at Local Level (APELL) programme, between 13-15 June 2007, in accordance with the recommendations of the sixth meeting of the AGEE. It was hosted by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) at Rosersberg College in Rosersberg, Sweden

The seventh AGEE meeting was attended by representatives from the following countries: Argentina, Cameroon, Canada, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Denmark, Commonwealth of Dominica, Egypt, Estonia, France, Gambia, Republic of Georgia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru Philippines, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Representatives of the following United Nations entities also attended the meeting: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and World Health Organization (WHO). Other international organizations in attendance included the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission, Green Cross International, Greenpeace, the International Civil Defence Organization, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Representatives from various institutions, associations, academia and the private sector were also in attendance, including Asociacion Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI), the Colombian Safety Council, DOW Chemicals, BASF, Institut National de l'Environnement Industriel et des Risques (INERIS), University of Cluj-Napoca, University of Mahidol, and VEOLIA Environmental Services.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Kjell Larsson, Head of the International Department of the SRSA and the outgoing Chair of the AGEE, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to Sweden and Rosersberg College. He introduced Her Excellency Gunilla Carlsson, Minister of International Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. He informed the meeting of the initiative of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (Joint Environment Unit) and the SRSA to reduce the carbon emissions of the AGEE through a number of measures: hosting the meeting at Rosersberg College, an ISO1401 certified building, organizing the official dinner at SÅnga SÅby, which was carbon neutral, and off-setting the emission of greenhouse gases produced by the travel of participants to the meeting through the purchase of credits that helped support a bio-fuels project in India.

Mr. Gerhard Putman-Cramer, Chief of the Emergency Services Branch and Deputy Director of OCHA-Geneva, read a joint welcome letter from Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP. In the letter, Messrs. Holmes and Steiner noted the important role the AGEE plays in shaping the global framework for environmental emergencies. They also congratulated the Joint Environment Unit and UNEP-APELL programme for their accomplishments of the previous two years. They noted, in particular, that the impacts of climate change are already having humanitarian consequences and the guidance and advice of the AGEE are essential to ensuring that the global framework is capable of dealing with these new challenges.

Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation of UNEP, welcomed participants on behalf of UNEP and OCHA. He offered the regards of Ms. Sylvie Lemmet, Director of the Division of Technology Industry and Economics, and her regrets for not being able to attend the meeting. Mr. Thiaw stated that there would be more environmental emergencies in the future, not less, with climate change being the most significant challenge. He noted that high expectations were placed on the international community in dealing with environmental emergencies and that more cooperation and partnerships were needed. He welcomed the leadership of the Joint Environment Unit and the SRSA in undertaking the carbon reduction initiative.

Mr. Vladimir Sakharov of the Chief, Joint Environment Unit and Deputy Chief of the Emergency Services Branch, introduced participants of the meeting as well as staff from the SRSA, UNEP-APELL and the Joint Environment Unit.

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda, document EU/AG/43.

With the completion of Mr. Larsson's term as Chair of the AGEE, Mr. Putman-Cramer thanked Mr. Larsson for his work and dedication.



There was a strong high-level commitment to the outcomes of the meeting

The meeting unanimously elected Mr. Chris Dijkens (the Netherlands) as Chair and Mr. Krishan Chand Gupta (India) as Vice-Chair.

The Chair thanked the meeting for his election. He also thanked the SRSA for hosting the AGEE and expressed his appreciation for the partnership between the Joint Environment Unit and UNEP-APELL in jointly convening the AGEE. He welcomed the close cooperation of UNEP and OCHA through the Joint Environment Unit and pledged the Netherlands' continued support. He said the AGEE is a unique forum and asked those in attendance for their strong participation in the discussions following the agenda items. He then gave the floor to Minister Carlsson.

Agenda item 1: Opening address - H.E. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister of International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden



Climate change is a major concern for the international community

In her opening address to the AGEE, Minister Carlsson welcomed all participants to Sweden. She reminded them that global warming is an emergency requiring a multifaceted approach. The environment has long been a pillar of Swedish foreign policy and is a key priority for the Minister and for Swedish international development efforts. Although climate change is the most pressing environmental issue, the Minister said it was not the only one. Unplanned urbanization and poorly built infrastructure are exposing people to risks in cities.

The Minister also emphasized the importance of risk reduction and preparedness. The poorest parts of the world and the poorest people in the world are often the most vulnerable to floods, soil erosion and hurricanes. It is essential that efforts are made to reduce the impact that these events can have in order to ensure the safety of the people living in these areas, but also to make sure that progress made through development initiatives is not lost. One of the lessons learned from the 2004 tsunami, she noted, was that the first responders are always local. It is important therefore, she said, to support local disaster preparedness capacity. She stated that the SRSA, which has the full support of the Swedish government, has been commissioned by the government to coordinate the national disaster risk reduction platform.

There are two specific challenges related to climate change, the Minister stated. The first is the connection between global warming and natural disasters. She said that global warming is increasingly expected to trigger the causes behind natural disasters, which in turn could lead to environmental emergencies much larger in scope and much more complex. The other concern, the Minister stated, were security issues. Natural disasters can lead to increased poverty and migration. Furthermore, the loss of natural resources due to disasters and other events can lead to conflict, as competing factions seeking to control the remaining resources. The Minister announced the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs decision to contribute 3.2 million euro (4.3 million USD) to support the work of the UNEP Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch.

Agenda item 2: Climate Change, Vulnerability and Environmental Emergencies, - Mr. Tom Hedlund, Principle Secretary of the Swedish Commission on Climate and Vulnerability

Mr. Hedlund briefly described the Swedish Commission on Climate and Vulnerability, which is responsible for reporting to the Swedish government on specific issues: identifying Sweden's vulnerability to climate change, determining the costs of climate change within Sweden, and proposing measures to increase the Sweden's preparedness to deal with global warming. Its work has been to compile the science conducted investigating the effects of climate change in Sweden, but the commission has also been evolving to include more work on adaptation. Its conclusions will be published in October 2007. He explained that the methodology the Commission used was to observe specific factors, such as snow pack and vegetation seasons. There were 20 working groups established under the Commission involving 160 people from all sectors of Swedish society.

He provided participants with a brief summary of the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): the climate is warming and climate change is unequivocal. Observed temperatures are going up on all continents. Warming this century is forecasted to rise between 1.8 and 4.0 degrees Celsius. In the previous century, the planet warmed by 0.6 degrees Celsius. It is expected that warming will be greater in the future. Mr. Hedlund explained that the IPCC has concluded that the world is warming because of greenhouse gas emissions. He also summarized the impact the IPCC believes will follow as a result of the warming. The world has already experienced more heat waves, with the last 11 of the past 12 years being the hottest recorded, and this trend will continue. There will be an increase in the frequency of precipitation, droughts, cyclone activity, and river run-off. The impact on humanity will be seen in increased malnutrition, more disease vectors and more natural disasters and environmental emergencies.

Mr. Hedlund also highlighted some of the observed and predicted impacts of climate change in Sweden. Temperatures are rising faster at higher altitudes with the biggest change being in the winter months. Spring flooding in the north of Sweden caused by the melting snow pack will be less due to a loss of snow in the region. There will be, however, an increase in winter precipitation in other parts of the country. As a result, floods in those areas will occur more frequently, leading to changes in erosion, increased landslides and the possible contamination of drinking water. Mr. Hedlund concluded by stating that climate change is a threat to Sweden and it, like other countries, must start devising and implementing adaptation measures.

Several delegations sought advice on how to distill the scientific information into practical advice and tools for citizens of their countries. The delegates from the Philippines and Indonesia said their countries are experiencing the effects of climate change now and would be interested in receiving advice on measures that the populations of the two countries could use while their governments are developing national strategies.

Similarly, the representative from Zimbabwe said his country is experiencing more droughts in some areas and increased precipitation due to cyclones in others. He said that legislation lags behind the creation of new measures and that scientific advice is useful in increasing the speed of legislative progress.

Mr. Hedlund agreed, stating that these are the reasons work on adaptation measures is crucial. He said local authorities and the general population are key actors in the work that needs to be done. As media interest has increased and public knowledge about the issue has risen, climate change has become a “mainstream” issue and the solution for some of the questions surrounding climate change has to be integrated into all sectors of a society.

The delegate from Malaysia asked Mr. Hedlund to clarify his statement that climate change is unequivocal. He asked if there was empirical evidence supporting this statement or if it was based on observations alone. Mr. Hedlund responded by saying that the warming trend is certain. Debate had previously existed in the scientific community on whether greenhouse gases were responsible. However, now the IPCC is 90 percent certain that greenhouse gases are the cause of the increased warming.

The Nigerian representative stated that although the political debate will continue, the science is real. For many countries, climate change is one of a number of priorities. He said that it is the convergence of climate change and other priorities that countries struggle with and asked about the costs of climate change.

Mr. Hedlund expressed sympathy for countries that face this challenge. Climate change, he said, does have significant costs and cited the Stern Report, authored by Nicholas Stern, the former Chief Economist



Global warming increases the vulnerability to environmental emergencies

of the World Bank, for the government of the United Kingdom. That report concluded that the future costs of not acting to address climate change are greater than the costs of mitigation that would have to be undertaken now. The costs derived from responding to unexpected events are larger than the costs of learning how to take actions now to minimize the frequency and intensity of larger events. Resources are needed now to deal with the changes, but many countries already have these resources. It is hard, he said, to deal with but it is best to start the effort early and be it can then be done gradually.

The representative of WHO stated that there has been considerable discussion about climate change but more scientific analysis needs to be done about impacts and their consequences. He gave as an example the issue of sea-level rise and the result of a sea touching sediment that has never been touched by seawater before. The result of this impact on the soil and the seawater needs to be understood.

Mr. Hedlund agreed, saying that more research is required on these important and specific issues. There is a challenge, however, in applying global models locally.

Mr. Putman-Cramer said that climate change is not an issue for tomorrow but for today as it is happening now and we need to deal with the impacts. The world's poorest are the most affected and the international community must lead by example. For OCHA and the Joint Environment Unit, it means being ready to respond to more requests for assistance. It also means countries have to be better prepared for disasters and accidents.

Agenda item 3: From civil protection to climate change: A road map for SRSA environmental concerns in disaster response and capacity development – Mr. Leif Jönsson, Programme Officer, Capacity and Recovery Section, SRSA



The link between environmental emergency and humanitarian response work needs to be strengthened

Mr. Jönsson began his presentation by giving a brief description of SRSA's history and past roles in environmental emergency and humanitarian response work. In 2005, the Swedish government decided to expand the mandate of SRSA to include early recovery and disaster risk reduction and preparedness work. While underscoring the agency's strong commitment to environmental issues, disaster response and preparedness, Mr. Jönsson described how SRSA is developing a more strategic approach for its involvement in environmental emergencies, and environmental management. For the former, SRSA is defining an ability to provide stand-by support for the Joint Environment Unit and the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) of the European Commission; it is developing operational abilities in assessments, containment and decontamination; and it plans to assist with building a knowledge base and tools. As for the latter, SRSA has identified three areas that it will develop: control of response operations, waste management and sanitation. He reiterated that SRSA was eager for input and comments from the AGEE and support from partners.

The delegate from the Philippines asked about environmental management and why, given the importance of the issue, a cluster on environment does not exist in the United Nations cluster system.

Mr. Jönsson replied that environment was a cross-cutting issue and was to be applied to the work of all clusters.

Mr. Roy Brooke of the Joint Environment Unit provided a brief description of clusters, explained the importance of accountability to the cluster approach, and the role of environment as a cross-cutting issue within clusters. He informed the meeting of the cooperation between the Joint Environment Unit and UNEP-Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in drafting a guidance note for cluster leads to help them integrate environment into the work of clusters.

The Zambian representative asked about the experience SRSA has with local authorities on disaster risk reduction. Mr. Jönsson said that the mandate for SRSA, which includes disaster risk reduction, is fairly new and therefore he could not offer any reflections based on experience. He did say that the capacity building projects SRSA has devised are all aimed at local authorities. Mr. Jönsson added that the SRSA is currently working on several projects addressing community capacity building at the local level, in cooperation with the UNEP APELL Programme, and also with the Swedish Red Cross.

Ms. Ruth do Coutto of UNEP APELL added that the core aim of the UNEP APELL programme is to address local communities' needs for emergency preparedness. The representative from Egypt made a comment on the need of establishing an APELL sub-center in the Arabian region.

The representative from WHO suggested it would be important, given SRSA's interest in the relief camp model, that SRSA should communicate with the clusters.

The representative from Malaysia asked at what time in the response phase is it best to include environmental issues. Mr. Jönsson replied that the priority is always to save lives. If countries are better prepared for environmental emergencies, however, more lives can be saved. The second priority is to minimize impacts, which is why disaster risk reduction initiatives are important.

Agenda item 4: Strengthening the International System for Environmental Emergency Response – Dr. Piero Calvi-Pariseti, Professor of Emergencies and Humanitarian Action, Bocconi University, Italy and independent consultant with the Joint Environment Unit

Mr. Sakharov introduced this item by referring to the mandate of the AGEE. He noted that only one of the four aspects of the mandate refers specifically to examining the functioning of the Joint Environment Unit. The other three deal with the AGEE's role as a forum to exchange ideas, a means to promote international cooperation and an opportunity to identify and examine the challenges faced in providing international assistance. He explained that the study conducted by Dr. Calvi-Pariseti was an attempt to look into the future and offer pragmatic and focused recommendations towards further developing environmental emergency response in the next five years. He said that *elements* of a global system exist, for example bilateral assistance and multilateral assistance, as well as numerous individual actors. He asked the meeting to consider, however, whether an overall system could be said to exist. He also asked delegates to remember that resources are limited.



Major elements of a global system of response to environmental emergencies already exist

Dr. Calvi-Pariseti said that the study (document EU/AG/44) is a product of the AGEE, since it was through interviews with various countries and organizations of the AGEE that issues were identified and upon which the recommendations were based.

The study focused on nine thematic areas: Environmental awareness and integration; Sources of support; Risk identification, alert and early notification; Assessment of environmental impacts and risks; Expertise; Specialized assessment and assistance; Humanitarian activities and early recovery; Standardization of international response; and Capacity for the Joint Environment Unit.

The study included recommendations on how to improve awareness about environmental impacts from natural disasters. It examined ways to increase the understanding of potential donating countries of what is expected of them and of countries that may require assistance. The study found that an examination is required on how the various entities that respond to environmental emergencies monitor for emergencies and notify their constituencies. It identified a necessity to expand the donor base of the Joint Environment Unit when it came to experts, equipment and other resources.

The representative from the USA stated that three types of arrangements need to be in place for environmental emergency response: experts, finance and mobilization procedures. He also supported the

suggestion made in Dr. Calvi-Parisetti's report that there was a stronger need for regional distribution of the experts.

Mr. Mark Hailwood, an independent expert observing the AGEE, suggested that when it comes to natural disasters, it is often not a means of responding to or determining the largest hazard, but also identifying the small risks. He suggested there was a need for scenario planning, which would take into account small-scale facilities, in particular during flood situations. Dr. Calvi-Parisetti agreed that there is a need to move beyond what are perceived as the biggest threats and referred to the added value that the APELL programme could provide in such situations.



Major opportunities to improve the international system were identified

Dr. Calvi-Parisetti stated that from the point of view of the study, based on the prevailing opinion of the AGEE, there is no difference between an environmental emergency resulting from a natural disaster or an industrial accident after the WHO delegate asked for clarification on the term environmental emergency. The cause was irrelevant to the response that was required to an environmental emergency.

The delegate from Madagascar intervened to suggest the creation of an international contingency fund with investments from donor countries to support training and capacity building in developing countries.

The Green Cross International representative stated that natural disasters and industrial accidents receive considerable media attention and public interest when they first happen, but that attention fades quickly. He continued by stating that 'today's disaster becomes tomorrow's memory' and there was a need for a continuous awareness and media attention to environmental emergencies. He called for the development of a public relations campaign focused on the international response efforts to increase awareness about environmental emergencies.

Mr. Jon Waddell, a consultant to the Joint Environment Unit, then informed participants of a proposal developed by the Joint Environment Unit to use the Environmental Emergencies Partnership, in consultation with a number of partners, as a platform to build an inclusive campaign to raise public awareness about environmental emergencies. It would recognize efforts of international and national organizations in supporting environmental emergency assistance missions. It would also recognize countries that have made significant improvements to their abilities to cope with environmental emergencies. By focusing on specific events and efforts, it would allow for an opportunity to inform the public – and governments – about larger issues, such as the connection between environmental emergencies and humanitarian tragedies. The proposal was for consideration by the AGEE and could be included in the final conclusions and recommendations of the meeting.

The representative of Zimbabwe shared experiences currently ongoing in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) where the need was identified to have a full understanding of the available resources for emergency response and assistance in their region. The SADC has now embarked on an emergency response inventory, listing all available resources and their location.

The representative of BASF stated that the company was willing to provide expertise and experts to international response efforts to environmental emergencies and suggested providing an entry into a number of associations of chemical industries that they formed part of.

Mr. Ulf Bjurman from Sweden took the floor and recalled that the Monitoring and Information Center of the European Commission was originally based on the 'OCHA model' for a multi-purpose system and, while APELL is focusing on environment, it also serves other purposes such as community awareness raising. He continued with calling for a more unified and coherent system, making best use of existing resources and complimented the Joint Environment Unit and APELL for striving to achieve this cooperative effort.

The delegate from Egypt suggested that UNEP's Governing Council should consider adopting a resolution on disaster management.

The delegate of Côte d'Ivoire suggested that more consideration is needed on how to improve the speed with which international assistance can be delivered to an affected country. Due to a lack of visibility of some events, aid can be slow in arriving. He suggested a more flexible system is required so that once an emergency has been identified and information provided, the international community can move quickly to assist a country.

The Greenpeace representative said that his organization has a pool of experts that it can deploy quickly to the field and also has access to political expertise from an NGO perspective and offers this to the international environmental emergency community.

Ms. Birgitta Liljedahl of the Swedish Defense Research Unit shared with the audience their experience with Environmental Intelligence gathering and offered their cooperation on the Environmental Risk Identification – ERI (formerly known as the Profile of Potential Environmental Risks - PPER).

Mr. Basel Al-Yousfi from UNEP-Regional Office of West Asia (ROWA) stated that the West Asia office would benefit from a tool, such as the GIS hazard risk-mapping tool developed by FOI Swedish defense research agency.

Mr. Hailwood also stressed the usefulness of promoting environmental intelligence, through the use of the same type of GIS tools.

Malaysia's representative suggested it might be worth developing standard operating procedures on response as Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has done regionally.

The Chair then introduced an initial proposal of how to accomplish some of the recommendations proposed in the study by creating a task force with three working groups. He then asked Mr. Brooke to provide more details.

The proposal was to have a task force under the auspices of the AGEE, chaired by the Chair and Vice-chair of the 7th AGEE meeting, to oversee the work of three working groups: Awareness and Preparedness - examining ways to increase the awareness of environmental emergencies and preparedness for countries to participate in missions; Governance and Systems – investigating what systems exist in other response organizations that could be used as models to improve areas of monitoring and notification of emergencies; and Operational aspects of assistance – defining the responsibilities and expectations of donating and receiving countries.



The meeting agreed with a strategic approach for the coming years

Many countries, including Denmark, Sweden, Malaysia, Kenya, Switzerland and Indonesia supported the proposal and began volunteering to participate in each of the groups.

There were a number of countries that made specific comments on the proposal.

Malaysia suggested the need to narrow the proposal to specific projects and expressed the view that the effort should not overlap the Hyogo Framework.

The Kenyan delegate suggested that the five-year timeline indicated in the study should be shortened. He said that five years was too much time and asked if there was not some way of implementing the recommendations in two years.

The Chair suggested that it would be useful to have a separate meeting with certain countries at the end of the day's session to begin narrowing the scope of the proposal. The product of the meeting would then be shown to the AGEE meeting the following day. The meeting agreed with the arrangement.

Agenda item 5: Environmental Emergency Response to Hurricane Katrina – Mr. Dave Wright, Director, Environmental Response Team, United States of America Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Mr. Wright presented a video detailing the efforts of the EPA during the response to Hurricane Katrina and explained the conclusions the EPA had drawn from its involvement. He said the EPA teams were involved in search and rescue operations because they had boats, but that they were also able to carry out their environmental duties, including taking over 400,000 samples. In the short term, they also had responsibility for drinking water quality waste water systems and spills. Debris management, hazardous waste, monitoring and continued assessments were the EPA's longer-term tasks. Four specific challenges they identified were the initial inability to understand the scope of the disaster, debris management, communicating over very busy telecommunications and radio networks, and the logistics of supporting teams in the field when typical logistics support was unavailable.



Lessons learnt from previous disasters should always be considered

Mr. Wright said that the agency had defined a way forward to improve EPA capacity. This strategy entails developing an agency-specific response plan and a health and safety module, including medical screening for response personnel. It also requires the improvement of information management tools, information and risk communications, logistics management and training, in particular, on the incident command system. Finally, the EPA is developing a response support corps, which would identify and register experts within the agency that could assist with emergency when a surge of personnel is needed.

In response to a question from the delegate from Suriname, Mr. Wright said that the estimated cost for environmental clean up from Hurricane Katrina alone is \$78 million (USD).

When asked by the Indonesian delegate about undertaking environmental work during the response phase, Mr. Wright responded that it was the experience of the EPA that environmental work could, and sometimes must, occur concurrently with other response and humanitarian work. They were overwhelmed at first, Mr. Wright explained, not understanding how many people were actually needed as the scope of environmental emergencies was not immediately clear. The number of people assigned to the disaster steadily increased as EPA staff from other sections of the agency were assigned to assist with the disaster. At the height of the response, 1500 staff was needed for the response to the environmental component of the natural disaster.

The delegate from Zimbabwe stated there was an impression, derived from the news coverage at the time, that there was a certain amount of confusion on the ground and asked if it was a challenge to remain focused on specific tasks. Mr. Wright agreed that there was confusion initially and that it was very easy to become distracted, or to have "mission creep" occur. In particular, the priority setting proved to be a challenging task. He said the method the EPA found to solve this issue was training senior environmental managers who were not necessarily familiar with response work on the incident command system to ensure they understood the chain of command and how tasks were prioritized and assigned.

When asked by the Nigerian delegate what the challenges are for the AGEE in establishing an environmental emergency response system, Mr. Wright said communications are very important, but added that if there is some form of incident command system, communication tends to be quite good.

Mr. Sakharov interjected to say that there are many aspects and lessons that countries can learn from the EPA experience with Hurricane Katrina. He said there are many elements that countries could replicate in their national organizations, including the notion of training senior managers.

Kenya complimented the US EPA with their response to Hurricane Katrina and asked if the EPA had developed contingency plans to deal with another dam breach, given the vulnerable position of New Orleans. Mr. Wright stated that he was not personally aware of contingency plans in New Orleans to deal with another dam collapse as the EPA is not the lead agency. He also said that the EPA now considers pre-deployment of resources as a valuable preparedness option.

Mr. Hailwood asked about the small-scale hazardous wastes. Mr. Wright said that the biggest challenge stemmed from having to deal with the larger volumes of small quantity household hazardous wastes from homes and retail facilities, like hardware stores.

Mr. Leo Heileman of UNEP-APELL asked if information on lessons learned from addressing the Katrina disaster were available on the USEPA website, particularly the ones regarding information on the resources and equipment used. Mr. Wright replied that some information is available on the website, but EPA will be able to share with UNEP some more information on those issues, if required. He said that lessons learnt have also resulted in the development of some very simple procedures that may be shared with UNEP.

The Dow Chemicals representative asked what the role of industry was during the response and recovery phases. Mr. Wright replied that many of the large industries, including the oil and gas industry present in the affected area, were well-prepared before the hurricane made landfall. For example, large storage tanks were filled up to prevent them from being blown over. Again, he stressed the importance of communications and establishing a dialogue between local authorities and the companies.

Mr. Thiaw asked delegates to the AGEE to remember the importance of prevention and risk reduction. He remarked that there had been considerable discussion about response, but that there were many good examples of how good environmental practices and ecosystems can make a difference in mitigating the threat to people and communities and reducing the impact of a disaster or accident.

Agenda item 6: APELL from 2001 to 2007 and the way ahead – Mr. Leo Heileman, Head, Implementation Unit, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, UNEP; Ms. Ruth do Coutto, Programme Officer, APELL

Mr. Heileman began by noting that emergency management is a cooperative effort and recognized that preparedness is becoming more important in disaster management. He spoke of the significance of the community-based approach and of the impact on communities when economic opportunities are lost due to disasters and accidents. He also underlined the impact that small accidents can have on communities. Mr. Heileman stressed the importance of the work of APELL and informed the meeting of UNEP DTIE's review of the strategy for the APELL Programme that is currently underway to bring it in line with global challenges and needs. He pledged that APELL would continue to work with communities to improve their preparedness activities and to honour the partnerships APELL has with many organizations.



Preparedness starts at the community level

Ms. do Coutto then reviewed the activities of APELL since 2001 and the intentions of the programme as it moves forward. She summarized current and completed projects in many countries around the world. She emphasized the importance of partnerships to the success of APELL and thanked the delegates from countries who have worked with the programme and SRSA for its continued support. She described two new tools that

APELL has developed: the Community Risk Profile and the APELL Training Kit.

A representative from Suriname asked for an explanation on the model for the APELL partnerships. Ms. do Coutto stated that the intention of the APELL programme is to find and promote strong partnerships allowing for the programme to be expanded in each country after the conclusion of pilot projects.

The representative from the Philippines asked what a country should do to institutionalize APELL at the national level. Ms. do Coutto referred to the successful cases of India and Sri Lanka, where APELL has been institutionalized and integrated in national regulations.

The representative from Pakistan stated that progress in APELL implementation in her country is slow and asked how to work with UNEP to improve implementation in the future. Ms. do Coutto explained that a formal request to UNEP was required.

The representative from Romania commented on recent APELL achievements in the country, and informed participants of further planned activities for outreach in the Balkans region.

The representative from Dow Chemicals made several comments on the implementation side of the APELL process. His suggestions included sharing lessons learned, the need to create an APELL experts network, and to develop new self-assessment tools to be used in the beginning of the APELL process.

Agenda item 7: Major activities of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit 2005 – 2007 – René Nijenhuis, Programme Officer, Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

Mr. Nijenhuis stated that the Joint Environment Unit responded to more than 25 incidents since the last AGEE meeting. Rather than detailing all of them he singled out four: the South Asia Earthquake in 2005, the Yogyakarta earthquake in 2006, the Lebanon crisis in 2006 and Cote d'Ivoire in 2006. He also highlighted the important role the Joint Environment Unit plays in acting as a broker.

The Joint Environment Unit also participated in various training assignments, including the NATO Partnership for Peace programme together with SRSA, and a training session for UNEP staff in Paris. Through the NATO courses, approximately 60 emergency managers have undergone a two-week training in environmental emergency response in the past two years. In addition, the Joint Environment Unit ensures that all UNDAC members receive training in the mechanisms at their disposal during the UNDAC Induction course. In the past two years, approximately 120 UNDAC members were trained. The Joint Environment Unit undertook three response preparedness missions to Yemen, Iran and Turkey since the last AGEE. Mr. Nijenhuis then turned the floor over to the participants encouraging them to share their experiences of the Joint Environment Unit's work.



The Joint Environment Unit responded to more than 25 emergencies in the past two years

The delegate from Indonesia expressed gratitude for the Joint Environment Unit's assistance provided during the earthquake, the follow-up mission to investigate the stability of four dams in the earthquake affected area and the mission to assist with a hot mud volcano. He suggested there should be a roster of experts in the region that could assist with regional responses to environmental emergencies and offered to cooperate with the Joint Environment Unit.

The representative of Turkey noted with appreciation the Joint Environment Unit role in leading a national workshop in January of 2007, which provided results and practical knowledge to the national authorities. The recommendations of the mission have been incorporated into the national disaster plan including a notification system, guidelines and a contingency plan.

The delegate from Pakistan thanked the Joint Environment Unit for their work during the earthquake. She asked if there was some mechanism to make receiving countries accountable for implementing the recommendations of experts provided through international assistance. Mr. Nijenhuis responded that

since the Joint Environment Unit responds to requests from countries for international assistance, neither it, nor the UN is in a position to enforce the recommendations. It is important, he said, to remember that the reason UNEP and other UN agencies stay involved in a country is to assist with recovery and implementing recommendations.

Agenda item 8: “BOT-mi” Integrated support to environmental emergency response in the Netherlands – Chris Dijkens, Director, Crisis Management Department, Inspectorate of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands

Mr. Dijkens presented BOT-mi, a virtual crisis management tool for national and international emergencies. It coordinates 6 ministries and 10 scientific institutes in order to provide advice through a secured website to local and national teams responding to disasters and accidents. Through the generosity of the government of the Netherlands, the tool has been made available to three UNDAC missions in 2006 and will be available to future UN missions that include Dutch participants. BOT-mi, available seven days a week and 24 hours a day, ensures that all experts who are being asked for advice work from the same information and data, including when the information is updated from the field.



Countries can learn from shared experiences

Mr. Dijkens also informed the meeting that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment are supporting an environmental module for the International Humanitarian Partnership, which is a group of countries providing international, operational support to OCHA and other UN humanitarian agencies. The National Institute will develop the module for Public Health and the Environment of the Netherlands. It will be designed on a two missions per year concept and will include 3 experts deployed for two weeks at a time. It will contain sampling and analysis equipment for use in the field. It will also include personal protective equipment, a vehicle, and a generator. The module will be flexible, compatible within the UN system and other modules and supported by BOT-mi. It will be available by 2008.

Mr. Hailwood asked if people involved with BOT-mi had the ability to make decisions without the tool, if, for example, power was lost and communications interrupted. Mr. Dijkens responded that there are generalists on scene capable of making decisions and providing advice if BOT-mi were inaccessible, but he added that diesel generators are provided with mobile labs and other scenarios allowing for power to be supplied when larger power sources have been damaged.

The representative from Dow Chemical was interested to know which Ministry would own the environmental module of the IHP. Mr. Dijkens responded that the module would be the property of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment. The National Institute of Public Health and Environmental will maintain it.

The French delegation raised two questions. The first was whether the experts provided advice independently or through the institute or ministry they work for and if this distinction in reporting to the BOT-mi system changed their advice. Mr. Dijkens replied that each agency is responsible for the work they contribute to BOT-mi through the expert, but that the advice does not change if the expert provides it directly to BOT-mi or if it were provided internally to the institute or Ministry. The second question was how BOT-mi deals with analysis, advice and responses from different sources. Mr. Dijkens explained that each time the tool is activated, a team leader is assigned who asks the requesting authorities what they need and expect.

The representative from Indonesia asked who is in charge of BOT-mi. He also asked if there was some method or protocol for bilateral cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia if Indonesian authorities were to send samples to the Netherlands for analysis. Mr. Dijkens said that the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment has overall responsibility of the tool, but that operational management of BOT-mi rests with himself. Mr. Dijkens indicated that so far BOT-mi has operated inside

the United Nations response framework but a different approach could be possible depending on emergencies.

The representative from Nigeria noted that BOT-mi was a very interesting tool and asked how it deals with information that is updated during an emergency. Mr. Dijkens said that each ministry or institute is responsible for their work, including ensuring that it reflects any updated information from the field.

Agenda item 9: UNEP Strategic Framework for Risk Reduction, Emergency Response and Recovery – Henrik Slotte, Chief, Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, UNEP

Mr. Thiaw introduced Mr. Slotte who presented the discussion paper on developing a new UNEP strategic framework for risk reduction, emergency response and recovery. He noted the need to revise the 2001 UNEP Strategic framework on emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, response and mitigation, given the major changes that have taken place at the international level to improve the UN's approach to conflict and disaster operations. He invited participants to provide comments and technical advice on the discussion paper.

The representative from Egypt was interested to know whether UNEP faced any political pressure while intervening in conflict areas. Mr. Slotte said that political pressure was always a factor in the work of the branch, but that people respected the findings of reports because the work was carried out in a neutral, analytical and scientific manner.



The representative from Senegal asked whether UNEP could integrate more elements of prevention and preparedness work into the strategy. Mr. Slotte agreed and mentioned that disaster risk reduction was in place in the strategy. Mr. Thiaw added that prevention, especially when the means to intervene after an event are modest, is essential. It is also important when dealing with competition for natural resources. Mr. Thiaw said that the international response to Sudan cannot only be a military one, but must also include lasting solutions to questions concerning access to land, water and natural resources. He further added that more work must be done on prevention, as it must be done on adapting to climate change.

There is a continued need to link response, preparedness and disaster risk reduction

The representative from Kenya asked what UNEP was doing about environmental degradation and climate change when it came to harvesting in the Congo and Amazon rain forests. Mr. Thiaw said that this issue in particular is complicated and challenging. Although it is important to maintain good forest cover and have good land-use planning to avoid deforestation, conservation activities can impact upon economic opportunities for smaller communities. There are many questions for science and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but UNEP was concentrating on raising awareness of these issues around the world. A delegate from Greenpeace indicated if overharvesting in these forests in particular continues, it could make the countries in these regions net emitters, which they currently are not.

Agenda item 10: Future activities of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit in 2007-2009 – Mr. Roy Brooke, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

Mr. Brooke introduced the proposed work plan of the Joint Environment Unit for the period 2007-2009. After a brief description of the document, EU/AG/46, he then turned his presentation to the document developed during the AGEE prompted by the discussion on the study of Dr. Calvi-Pariseti.

The plan developed and modified based on AGEE participants' input, was to have one working group – Coordination and Implementation AGEE Working Group - chaired by the Chair and Vice-chair of the 7th AGEE to work in collaboration with the Joint Environment Unit. It would have three



The Rosersberg initiative aims to strengthen the international environmental emergency response system

thematic areas: Advocacy and strengthened international response capacity, Improving international governance structure, and Operational aspects of assistance. (For more details, please see The Rosersberg Initiative paper.)

Many countries expressed strong support for this plan and the initiative. Some delegations raised specific points.

The Swedish delegation suggested that it could be useful to review the group's work after six months, if needed. The Malaysia representative stated that experts in the three thematic areas should be engaged in the discussion of each area to provide advice. The delegate from Switzerland proposed using the Virtual Operations Coordination Centre (Virtual OSOCC) as a means of communicating the group's work. Nigeria stated that it is important for the group to have strong reporting structures. The Philippines suggested that it would be important for the group to inform the cluster system of its work. Germany offered to host a meeting between German ministries and members of the Joint Environment Unit aimed at building support within the German government.

Mr. Thiaw said he was very pleased to see the commitment of so many countries and suggested that the work plan of the Joint Environment Unit be revised to reflect the work it will have to undertake to support the Coordination and Implementation AGEE Working Group.

Mr. Sakharov said that the Virtual OSOCC could be used and would require each participant to have a password.

**Agenda item 11: APELL experience in Sri Lanka, Morocco, India and Thailand –
Mr. Jayavilal Fernando, Central Environmental Authority of Sri Lanka; Mr. Hafid El Oualja, Ministry of Territory development, Water and Environment of Morocco; Mr. K.C. Gupta, National Safety Council of India; Ms. Chatchadaporn Boonyavaha, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) of Thailand**

Mr. Fernando, from Sri Lanka, made a presentation on the status of the APELL Project in Sri Lanka, which was initiated in October 2005. The aim of the project was to minimize casualties, property and environmental damages from (selected) industrial and man-made disasters by organizing the public, private sector industries and the local communities to respond to emergencies based on the technical guidelines developed by UNEP under the APELL program. The Local Coordination Groups have developed Integrated Emergency Preparedness Plans (IEPPs) through a consultative process with local stakeholders. These plans will be tested within mock drills that are scheduled for June and July 2007.



The preparedness of the international community to deal with an increased number and intensity of environmental emergencies should be enhanced

Mr. El Oualja, from Morocco, made a presentation on the status of the APELL Project in Mohammedia, which started in January 2006. The 18-month long project aims to implement the APELL process Mohammedia. It will reinforce the capacities of the communities and local authorities to prevent risks to the populations by using APELL material to set up an emergency plan in collaboration with local populations. It will also raise the awareness of local populations to the risks to which they are exposed.

Mr. Gupta, from India, made a presentation on the status of the implementation of APELL activities in Kannyiakumari. Like the presentation by Ms. Boonyavaha, of Thailand, that followed, these efforts are part of the APELL project on Disaster Risk Reduction in Tourism Destinations. The overall objectives of this project are to increase the disaster management operational capacity of the main disaster and tourism stakeholders in three tsunami-affected tourism destinations in India and Thailand.

A representative from Nigeria asked what importance was given to flood prevention in the implementation of the APELL process in Sri Lanka. The representative from Sri Lanka answered that flood prevention and raising awareness of flood risks are an important national issue.

The representative from Cote D'Ivoire asked for information on the overall cost of project implementation in Sri Lanka. The representative from Sri Lanka informed him that the overall cost of the project was around 46,000 USD.

Given that he would not be attending the meeting the next day, Mr. Putman-Cramer congratulated all participants for developing the future activities of the AGEE and noted that there was a tremendous unity of views between UNEP and OCHA. He noted the importance of APELL's involvement. He asked delegations to recommend to their governments that the Joint Environment Unit get the required resources to implement its additional duties related to the Rosersberg Initiative. He said he would be reporting to Mr. Holmes, the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs on the considerable success of the meeting.

Agenda item 12: "FEAT" Flash Environmental Assessment Tool for Disasters – Sander van Dijk Crisis Coordinator, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) - Crisis Management Department of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands

Mr. van Dijk presented the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT), which was developed on the recommendation of the 6th AGEE meeting.

The FEAT methodology aims to identify acute environmental impacts resulting from disasters. It is organized into three modules that assess for risks moving from a larger perspective to a narrower perspective.



Structural improvements to enhance the global regime for environmental emergency response and preparedness should be made

Currently, consultations on the prototype are ongoing and RIVM would welcome feedback from the AGEE. The next step will be field testing in a sudden onset disaster. Once tested in a real emergency, the FEAT methodology will be incorporated into training sessions for emergency managers and environmental generalists who will be deployed with UNDAC teams.

A number of delegations welcomed the concept of the FEAT and asked if it would be available to countries. The representative from Colombia asked if this tool would be made available in Spanish to be used in Latin-American countries. Also, the representative from Pakistan asked if the FEAT methodology could be used in preparedness activities. Mr. van Dijk responded that the purpose of the

FEAT is to provide a rapid assessment and this tool is intended for emergency responders such as UNDAC teams. However, linkages will be made with pre-assessment through the further development of the Environmental Risk Identification - ERI (formerly known as the Profile of Potential Environmental Risks - PPER).

Mr. Hailwood stressed the importance of acknowledging the potential risks posed by the hazards that cannot be easily seen or identified in the field within the scope of a rapid assessment. If a tool becomes too simplistic it may fail to provide its user with useful information. Mr. van Dijk replied that an optimum tool for a flash assessment would always have to be based on a balance between simplicity and usefulness.

Mr. Heileman commented on the fact that people will need to be properly trained on identification and estimation of quantities of potential hazardous substances present on the field.

The delegate from Cote d'Ivoire asked how the result of the assessment would be shared with a local population, and the delegate from USA asked how the information and data resulting from the FEAT would be transferred to decision makers. Mr. van Dijk explained that no guidance or instructions on communicating the result of the FEAT have been developed so far.

The Joint Environment Unit encouraged delegations to provide comments on the FEAT methodology to ensure ongoing development of the tool.

Any Other Business

Cote d'Ivoire experience - Bernard Koffi, Director Environment Quality, Ministry of Environment of Cote d'Ivoire

Mr. Koffi made a presentation on the national and international response to the dumping of toxic waste in Abidjan district, which occurred in August 2006. He emphasized the importance of strengthening national capacities and establishing a contingency plan to respond to emergencies. He also strongly supported the international mechanisms to intervene in such disaster. In particular, he noted that measuring and sampling equipment should be available for international expert teams to allow them to conduct urgent technical assessment of the situation after a disaster. One of his recommendations focused on information management. He regretted that no communication strategy or public awareness campaign was developed in Cote d'Ivoire after the accident, which would have been useful in keeping the local population informed.

A number of delegations thanked Mr. Koffi for his interesting presentation. In particular, delegations were interested to learn the current status of the situation. Mr. Koffi explained that the clean up and the assessment on potential secondary risks are still on going.

Nigeria shared the experience with hazardous waste dumping many years ago in their country and raised the issue of bringing those responsible to justice and expressed the need for strengthening the Basel Convention for this particular purpose.



Good practice for provision and receipt of international environmental emergency assistance should be shared

The representative of Gambia explained the situation that, in particular, countries on the African continent were facing, where a lack of legislation was exacerbated by the lack of resources. Compared with the situation in Europe, the possibilities to receive assistance from neighboring countries in such situations were limited.

Following a request for assistance, the Joint Environment Unit deployed an UNDAC team to Abidjan in September 2006 to provide a technical assessment of the situation. The UNDAC team was able to share technical and mapping recommendations with national authorities dealing with the crisis, the UN humanitarian coordinator, the EU-MIC liaison Officer and the French technical experts.

The representative from Nigeria drew the attention to the fact that some countries affected by environmental emergencies may face difficulties in responding due to inappropriate national legal framework.

Mr. Brooke fully agreed that international legal mechanisms should be further developed where needed, through appropriate mechanisms. He noted that the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal as one example of an international legal instrument that already exists in relation with certain legal aspects of environmental emergencies.

The representative from Cote d'Ivoire further explained, following a question from Indonesia, that the waste has now been removed and was processed in France. However, lots of work, including an extensive monitoring programme and post-disaster risk assessment were needed to be carried out.

The representative from Ghana supported the reinforcement of capacities at the national and regional level.

Chairman's concluding comments

The Chairman suggested the need to convene a meeting by the end of the year to review progress of the Coordination and Implementation AGEE Working Group. Mr. Larsson offered that SRSA would sponsor the meeting in Sweden, Geneva or another location. This offer was very much appreciated by the audience and accepted by the Chair.

The representative from Germany proposed to call the new effort and mechanism agreed to at the meeting the 'Rosersberg Initiative'. This suggestion was welcomed by participants.

The delegation of France recognized the importance of the AGEE-APELL forum, which gathers emergency responders and technical experts to share experience in both preparedness and emergency activities. The delegation also stressed the importance of sharing experiences from affected countries as well as donor countries.

The French delegation noted the brokerage role of the Joint Environment Unit and stressed the importance of bilateral relations in offering assistance. It underscored the necessity of the Unit remembering this aspect of its work. It also noted the excellent relationship between the Joint Environment Unit and the European Commission Monitoring and Information Centre.

Mr. Sakharov recalled that the Joint Environment Unit was established by Governments to mobilize and coordinate international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies and natural disasters with significant impact to environment and human health.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies:

- Expresses gratitude to Her Excellency Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden for her opening address to the AGEE.
- Expresses appreciation for the Swedish authorities and the Swedish Rescue Service Agency for generously hosting the 7th AGEE in association with APELL, and the staff of Rosersberg College for the attention and hospitality shown to the attendees.
- 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 of the Unit, and for the financial support for organizing the meeting.
- Recognizes the appreciation and support expressed by countries for the third jointly-held meeting of the AGEE and the APELL programme, noting the important synergies between the Joint Environment Unit and APELL.
- Congratulates the Joint Environment Unit for carrying out its mandate to mobilize and coordinate the international response to environmental emergencies and help countries develop domestic capacity to cope with environmental emergencies with efficiency, professionalism and dedication.
- Appreciates the efforts by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency and the Joint Environment Unit to make AGEE 7 an environmentally responsible and climate-friendly event, and underscores the importance of all organizations engaging in efforts to ensure environmental sustainability and demonstrating leadership.

- Reiterates that the Joint Environment Unit should remain integrated in OCHA's disaster response system in Geneva, and continue to be utilized as the UN system's principle response mechanism in the context of environmental emergencies.
- Recognizes with appreciation the role of APELL as a tool for disaster risk reduction and its inclusion in several Joint Environment Unit mission reports' recommendations.
- Recognizes that the lack of funding hinders the full follow-up of APELL recommendations in UNDAC and Joint Environment Unit reports.
- Urges that UNEP maintains, and enhances financial and human resources support to the APELL programme, for it to continue to be a UNEP vehicle for local level disaster prevention and preparedness, enabling it to grow and to provide the needed support to UNDAC and the Joint Environment Unit as well.
- Recognizes that the changes to the climate documented by scientists have significant humanitarian implications and that this, combined with ever-increasing recognition of the importance of environment in a disaster context, means that all environmental emergency stakeholders must collaborate to continually upgrade and improve all aspects of the international framework to respond to such emergencies, as outlined in several AGEE 7 documents,
- Notes with satisfaction the role of the Joint Environment Unit as Secretariat of the Environmental Emergency Partnership, and the latter's value as an informal tool to engage diverse partners in activities that bridge gaps between phases of the disaster management cycle and between various disaster management stakeholders.
- Recognizes with gratitude the long-standing support of several countries to the Joint Unit, but also acknowledges the need for broader donor support to ensure geographic and linguistic diversity in the international response framework, and welcomes the introduction of practical options to this end.
- Welcomes the new UNEP Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB), and congratulates the Joint Environment Unit and PCDMB for the cooperation already demonstrated since the new branch's inception and, in particular, during the Lebanon Crisis, and encourages the collaboration to continue, including through the use of new operating procedures.
- Thanks the European Commission, and specifically the Monitoring and Information Centre, for its cooperation with the Joint Environment Unit, which has led to many successful missions and achievements. It encourages the MIC and the Joint Environment Unit to continue collaborating and undertake the activities defined in the 2007-2009 Joint Environment Unit work plan, specifically, joint missions, lessons-learned exercises and joint training.
- Encourages the Joint Environment Unit to identify new partners from the private sector and among non-governmental organizations that are eager to participate in efforts to response to environmental emergencies and to help build capacity in developing countries through response preparedness missions.
- Recognizes the necessity of appropriate resources and adequate financing of the activities of the Joint Environment Unit, especially to implement the decisions of the 7th AGEE meeting.

Agenda 4:

- Recognizes that all countries and many other partners have roles to play in the provision of multilateral assistance.
- Recognizes that there is an imperative to further strengthen the international regime for governing environmental emergencies due to increasing challenges from issues such as climate change, as well as an important window of opportunity in which to do so.

Specifically,

- Recommends countries work through their respective competent national authorities to promote greater awareness of the environmental dimensions of emergencies and the importance of addressing environmental issues during the response phase.
- Recommends also that the Joint Environment Unit work with governmental, international and non-governmental organizations to build a public awareness campaign.

- Countries are asked to assist the Joint Environment Unit with outreach activities aimed at improving countries' understanding of the Joint Environment Unit's services. Such activities would include the development and dissemination of guidelines and procedures for the provision of multilateral environmental assistance.
- Endorses the proposal to carry out a study into the systematic monitoring and notification of environmental emergencies.
- Endorses the Environmental Risk Identification – ERI (formerly known as the Profile of Potential Environmental Risks - PPER) initiative and encourages its further testing and development.
- Agrees that the AGEE and the Joint Unit should pursue the development of internationally recognized guidelines and standards for environmental emergency assistance.
- Encourages and supports enhanced collaboration with key partners including the EC-MIC and regional offices of OCHA and UNEP.
- Supports the development of an environmental services package under the International Humanitarian Partnership.
- Encourages the development of mechanisms to ensure deployment of Environmental Recovery Advisors.
- Supports the elaboration of an international framework for environmental emergencies management, using as applicable existing useful models.
- The AGEE emphasizes that implementation of recommended activities and substantial strengthening of the global regime for environmental emergencies management requires the engagement of many actors, particularly drawn from the AGEE, and suitable mechanisms to channel their efforts. The AGEE therefore invites countries and organizations to volunteer to lead or participate in a number of activities that will ensure the implementation of AGEE 7 recommendations during next two years.
- Resolves to establish the Coordination and Implementation AGEE Group to oversee the implementation of the most pressing recommendations made in the paper delivered by Dr. Calvi-Pariseti, including the specific recommendations mentioned above. The working group will be based on the plan developed during the meeting and endorsed by countries. The working group will be lead by the Chair and Vice Chair of the 7th AGEE meeting. The working group will ensure the smooth operation and delivery of results in three thematic areas:
 - *Advocacy and Strengthened International Response Capacity* with the objective of increasing the preparedness of the international community to deal with increased numbers and intensity of disasters through three tasks: raising awareness of environmental emergencies, conduct outreach to engage more providers of assistance and advise on improvements that can be made to response preparedness at national and international level ;
 - *Improving international governance systems* with the objective of proposing specific structural improvements to enhance the global regime for environmental emergency response and preparedness through reviewing processes for notification of environmental emergencies, and reviewing international structures used in other fields and proposing changes and amendments to the system for environmental emergencies;
 - *Operational aspects of assistance* with the objective of documenting and disseminating good practices for the provision and receipt of international environmental emergency assistance.
- Congratulates countries for their support for this initiative, including their active involvement in these thematic areas.

- Asks the Secretariat to have Terms of Reference for each thematic group prepared and distributed at the latest by the end of July 2007. These will be available on the Virtual OSOCC, as will all work of the working group.
- Thanks Sweden for offering to host one or several meetings of the working group after the Terms of Reference have been distributed and accepts this offer.

Finally,

- The AGEE recommends that, to stimulate awareness of environmental emergencies and to acknowledge outstanding service to reduce their impact, a method of recognition using the Environmental Emergencies Partnership as a platform be created to honour:
 - governmental and nongovernmental organizations for efforts to support international response missions to countries affected by environmental emergencies and international capacity building missions aimed at helping countries prepare for emergencies
 - countries and/or agencies that have shown major/outstanding improvements in their internal capacity and preparedness to deal with environmental emergencies.
- The AGEE respectfully requests OCHA, UNEP, Green Cross International and other partners to work together in developing a suitable honour, to attract a wide range of partners and thereby build a broad-based, inclusive movement to support the initiative and to report back to the AGEE in two years time on progress made.

and

Agenda 5:

Thanks Mr. Dave Wright for his informative presentation on Hurricane Katrina and for sharing with the AGEE the useful lessons learned by the US EPA.

Agenda 6:

- Congratulates APELL for its efforts from 2001 to 2007.
- Recognizes that several useful tools and projects have blossomed in the last two years.
- Recognizes that the Community Risk Profile and the APELL training kit for local authorities are both useful tools for awareness raising and capacity building at the local level and welcomes their multi-hazard approach.
- Commends the promotion and implementation of APELL in several countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Iran, and Peru and all local institutions that made this promotion and implementation possible.
- Welcomes the inclusion of APELL experts in Joint Environment Unit missions, such as Yemen, Iran, and Indonesia.
- Congratulates the successful APELL implementation in India, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and thanks the European Commission and the government of France for the financial support that allowed these achievements.
- Recognizes the good cooperation that APELL has with its partners, namely INERIS (France), the National Safety Council of India, the Ministry of Water, Land, and Environment of Morocco, the Central Environmental Authority of Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, and the Department of Disaster Reduction and Mitigation of Thailand that assured the successful implementation of the APELL programme in the countries and without whom this wouldn't be possible.
- Urges the above mentioned partners to continue to promote APELL and ensure its wide dissemination.
- Welcomes the new APELL project on Corporate Social Responsibility and its close relationship with the private sector.

- Recognizes the need to address the prevention of small-scale industrial accidents and major industrial accidents.
- Agrees with the way ahead proposed by UNEP-DTIE, namely focusing on the prevention of industrial accidents, continuing the promotion of APELL at national and local level as a tool for disaster prevention and preparedness and promoting APELL as a tool to support climate change adaptation in coastal areas and SIDS, with a special focus on tourism risk management.
- Recognizes that for APELL to deliver efficiently and effectively the proposed topics, it needs to be better funded and resourced within UNEP and DTIE.
- Recognizes the unique position of APELL within the UN system to address the prevention of industrial accident.
- Welcomes the idea of the International Department of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency becoming an APELL collaborating center on capacity building.
- Welcomes APELL to work in full collaboration with the Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB), with the Chemical Programme as well and with the Joint Environment Unit and OCHA (UNDAC) to fully deliver its planned strategy.
- The AGEE endorses APELL strategy and its related future activities.

Specific Recommendations from APELL partners for consideration in the next two years

INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION

- Consider the possibility of establishing an APELL Regional Center in the Middle –East through the leadership of ROWA, that will address and adapt the APELL process to local needs (various activities, including APELL in industry and possible adaptation for environmental security)
- Consider establishing a network of APELL partners-implementers to exchange experience and share updates on latest developments – Consider developing a web-based network.
- Consider increasing efforts to raise awareness about the programme in developing countries.

INDUSTRY OUTREACH

- Consider the possibility of further involving the industry in the APELL programme, trying to advocate for APELL to become an element of the Responsible Care.
- Explore the role of the local industry as a vector for local continuity of an APELL process.

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Consider how to better promote the APELL concept for its inclusion in curricula of courses in Universities that are related to industrial accidents.

PROGRAMME ENHANCEMENT

- Consider new ways of sustainable funding and resources
 - Promote it under the framework of climate change
 - Consider bringing a new resolution on APELL in the forthcoming GC
 - Consider establishing partnerships to allow working with and through others (SRSA)
- Consider developing a web-based database of project products
- Consider developing a simple guidance on how to institutionalize APELL into national legislation (collect some existing examples)

PROCESS ENHANCEMENT

- Consider the development of an assessment tool for local performance
- Consider developing an APELL handbook for natural disasters
- Consider the development of a study-guidance on how to better approach stakeholder and engage stakeholders in the initial phase, study the possibility of addressing some key community needs/issues (chronic pollution).

- Consider further engagement with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

GENERAL

- Consider the possibility of having a one-full day dedicated for APELL in the forthcoming AGEE meeting, considering eventually a back-to-back meeting.

Agenda 7:

- The AGEE commends the Joint Environment Unit for its accomplishments of the previous two years. Worthy of specific recognition are the responses to the South Asia earthquake and the Lebanon Crisis. The phased deployment to South Asia is a model for future OCHA-UNEP deployments to large sudden-onset disasters and complex emergencies. The cooperation between the Joint Environment Unit and UNEP's PCDBM ensuring a seamless transition between the response and recovery phases in the Lebanon Crisis should be replicated in the future.

Agenda 8:

- Crisis Management of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands is commended for the development of "BOT-mi" tool, and thanked for supporting three emergency response missions in the past year by allowing those mission teams to access the tool. It is cooperation through sharing domestic tools such as BOT-mi with the international community that exemplifies the best traditions of multilateral assistance. AGEE encourages other countries to learn from and to follow this example.

Agenda 9:

- The AGEE supports UNEP and PCDBM in the development of its new strategy. It also wishes the new branch well in the growth, development and implementation of its strategy. Countries that have specific comments or questions are encouraged to provide them through the AGEE website.

Agenda 10:

- The AGEE endorses the work plan of the Joint Environment Unit for the biennium of 2007-2009, taking into account comments made during the AGEE meeting. It encourages countries to provide in-kind and/or financial support the Joint Environment Unit in achieving this plan.
- The work plan will be revised to incorporate the new tasks assigned to the Secretariat to support the Coordination and Implementation AGEE Group.

Specifically,

- The AGEE approves the initiative of the Joint Environment Unit to include the identification of secondary risks after natural disasters in its response activities in the form of the Environmental Risk Identification (ERI)
- The AGEE also recommends the future path for the ERI as a prevention/response preparedness/risk reduction tool, is actively pursued. In order to reach its full potential, the AGEE recognizes the importance of sharing national information for the development of the ERI.
- Strongly recommends the Joint Environment Unit develop an external relations strategy aimed at increasing the donor base of the unit specifically from North and South America, Asia and the Pacific. More importantly, the Joint Environment Unit should also use this strategy to explain the benefits realized by donor nations from participating in multinational efforts on environmental emergencies.

- Strongly recommends the development of the Environment Support Module for the International Humanitarian Partnership – currently being established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Division and Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, both of the Netherlands.

Agenda item 12:

- The meeting congratulates the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, of the Netherlands and the Joint Environment Unit on the development of the FEAT.

Specifically,

- The AGEE endorses this project, encourages field-testing, recommends the development of the training module be pursued forthwith and the routine integration of FEAT into UNDAC missions also be pursued.
- The AGEE also supports, as dictated by field testing, continual upgrading of the FEAT, for example to ensure that it is compatible with electronic ‘palm’ devices. Further, it recommends the FEAT be made available to the widest possible array of other organizations, including relevant international organizations and UN agencies, allowing for a broad application of this valuable tool.

General:

- Requests the Senior Management of UNEP and OCHA to allocate, at the earliest practical time, the necessary resources for the biennium 2008 -2009 for the administration and operation of the Joint Environment Unit.
- Requests UNEP and OCHA Secretariats to inform respective Senior Management on major conclusions and recommendations of the 7th AGEE. The delegations are also requested to channel relevant information and statements 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 the 7th AGEE meeting.
- Invites potential donor countries to consider hosting the 8th AGEE meeting in 2009, including the provision of support for participants from developing countries.