



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



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

**Report of the
1st Meeting of the Rosersberg Initiative Working
Group
Tunis, Tunisia, 3-5 December 2007**

EU/AG/RIWG.2
January 2008
English only

I. Summary

Participants of the 7th meeting of the international Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) in June 2007, following a review of research and strategy documents, agreed that the existing system for environmental emergency response and preparedness is *ad hoc* in key areas and needs improvement. AGEE participants agreed to address this through a new international undertaking that has become known as the *Rosersberg Initiative*. The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (Joint Environment Unit) was requested to provide a Secretariat function for the initiative.

The aim of the Rosersberg Initiative is to strengthen the global regime that governs environmental emergency response and preparedness. The AGEE created the Rosersberg Initiative Working Group (RIWG) to carry out implementation. The 3-5 December 2007 meeting in Tunis ('the Tunis meeting') was the first meeting of the RIWG, and a first step towards implementing the Rosersberg Initiative.

Activities of the RIWG are divided into three thematic areas:

- **Thematic area one** aims to increase advocacy for and training on environmental emergencies;
- **Thematic area two** analyses relevant international and regional arrangements that govern the response and response preparedness to environmental emergencies and, based on this analysis, will recommend changes and improvements for the international environmental response area; and,
- **Thematic area three** reviews operational aspects of environmental emergencies with the aim of developing best practice guidance for use by national authorities.

The overall objective of the Tunis meeting was to agree on actions in each thematic area to be conducted in 2008 and 2009. The meeting was attended by representatives from 15 countries and from international organizations including the European Commission.

Participants decided upon numerous practical activities. Importantly, they agreed to undertake a number of specific tasks themselves, with the Joint Environment Unit providing a backstopping role. Agreed-upon activities include:

- Finalizing a baseline review study of existing emergency governance systems and a set of recommendations for changes and improvement, by end of March 2008;
- Developing an advocacy brochure for use by governments, by June 2008;
- Developing guidance material for effectively receiving and providing environmental emergency assistance, by June 2008;
- Developing a training module on environmental emergencies;
- Promoting the Environmental Risk Identification tool (now Hazard Identification Tool or HIT) among national authorities; and,
- Launching the Humanitarian and Environmental Leaders in Providing and Preparing (H.E.L.P.²) awards in 2008

These activities should contribute to a substantial strengthening of the international environmental emergencies governance. They should ultimately result in a robust system comparable to those that govern civil-military coordination, search and rescue and nuclear accidents.

The RIWG will report on the progress of the Initiative to the AGEE at its 8th meeting in 2009.

II. Introduction

Purpose of document

This document provides: a summary of background material for the Tunis meeting, a summary of key discussion points from group discussions, and details of agreed-upon next steps.

Background

Participants of the 7th meeting of the international Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) in June 2007, following a review of research and strategy documents, agreed that the existing system for environmental emergency response and preparedness is *ad hoc* in key areas and needs improvement. AGEE participants agreed to address this through a new international undertaking that has become known as the *Rosersberg Initiative*. The AGEE created the RIWG to carry out implementation. The Tunis meeting was the first meeting of the RIWG and a first step towards implementing the Rosersberg Initiative. The first meeting of the Rosersberg Initiative Working Group in Tunis was hosted by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA).

The meeting was attended by representatives from: Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Denmark, Germany, Jordan, Kenya, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Tunisia, United States of America, and Zambia. Representatives from the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Green Cross International (GCI), the International Civil Defence Organization, and VEOLIA Environmental Services also attended the meeting.

The RIWG is divided into three thematic areas:

- **Thematic area one** aims to increase advocacy for and training on environmental emergencies.
- **Thematic area two** analyses relevant international and regional arrangements that govern the response and response preparedness to environmental emergencies and, based on this analysis, will recommend changes and improvements for the international environmental response area.
- **Thematic area three** reviews operational aspects of environmental emergencies with the aim of developing best practice guidance for use by national authorities.

At the Tunis meeting, participants were divided according to their expertise and interests into one of each thematic area for detailed discussions. All participants then shared their views in plenary sessions. Details of the results of discussions in each of these thematic areas are found below.

Summary of meeting opening

Mr. Leif Jonsson, on behalf of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA), Mr. Chris Dijkens, the Chair of the AGEE, and Mr. Vladimir Sakharov, the Chief of the Joint Environment Unit, welcomed the participants. SRSA was thanked by the Chair for its generosity in hosting the meeting. The participants noted the absence of the Deputy Chair, Mr Gupta, with regret. SRSA expressed its wish to offset the carbon emissions of the meeting, should budgets permit

The Chair explained that the Rosersberg Initiative is a mechanism based on research, and on substantial discussion of documents presented at the 7th meeting of the AGEE. He emphasized that this meeting would be the first step in a logical process to improve the international emergency response system. The next step is the implementation of the decisions taken in Tunis in the next two years, with a report back to the AGEE at its 8th meeting in 2009, and further steps considered for 2009-2011.

The Chair encouraged participants to share their experiences and views in the meeting and beyond. He underlined the importance of the active involvement of many countries, organizations and the private sector to ensure the success of the Initiative. It was noted that preparatory work for the Tunis meeting had been carried out by the Joint Environment Unit, acting as Secretariat to the Rosersberg Initiative process.

III. Thematic area 1: Advocacy, communication and training

1. Overview

The objective of Thematic Area 1 is to increase the preparedness of the international community to deal with a growing number and intensity of environmental emergencies through awareness and training related activities.

The Joint Environment Unit prepared three background documents setting out draft strategies¹ on advocacy, communication and training, which members of Thematic Area 1 used as a starting point for its discussions. These papers built upon AGEE 7 analysis and discussions. SRSA also presented material in plenary on a possible new resource center for environmental emergencies, and the Joint Environment Unit presented material relating to a new awards scheme. These documents and the presentations can be summarized as follows:

Advocacy document

More donors are needed to provide environmental emergencies funding, equipment, and expert services. The document proposed an **advocacy strategy** to increase the number of donors capable of providing aid and to contribute to international efforts to respond to environmental emergencies. Proposed target audiences include governments, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, universities, private industry and academic institutions. Proposed activities include the promotion of environmental emergencies by members of the RIWG and AGEE at multilateral and bi-lateral meetings, the development of an information brochure and a virtual communications platform to allow dialogue between relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

¹ 'Advocacy Strategy' - Discussion Paper (EU/AG/RIWG.3), 'Communication Strategy' - Discussion Paper (EU/AG/RIWG.4), and 'Opportunities for Training' - Discussion Paper (EU/AG/RIWG.5). To ensure best understanding of the proceedings and decisions taken at the meeting, the report should be read in conjunction with these documents, which can be found on the website of the Joint Environment Unit under <http://ochaonline.un.org/ToolsServices/EmergencyRelief/EnvironmentalEmergencies/RosersbergInitiative/tabid/2647/Default.aspx>.

Documents can also be found on the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Center (Virtual OSOCC) at [http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/\(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgb\)/VOLogin.aspx](http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgb)/VOLogin.aspx). The Joint Environment Unit has created a private discussion forum called 'Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) Implementation Group' for the Rosersberg Initiative on the Virtual OSOCC where participants can find all relevant documents and communicate with each other.

Communications document

A suggested main thrust in awareness-raising is the development of a **communications strategy** to increase communications activities of AGEE members and draw the attention of the general public to the work that countries and international organizations do in the context of environmental emergencies. The document suggests that the general public should understand the importance of an international response to environmental emergencies and encourage their governments to engage in international efforts to assist affected countries in case of a disaster. Proposed communications activities include the promotion of new initiatives, tools or significant events related to environmental emergencies through the media, the issuance of press releases about missions undertaken by countries and international organizations, and the publication of articles on latest developments in the area of environmental emergencies response area.

Training document

It is necessary to increase the number of experts available for environmental emergency response deployment, and ensure appropriate cultural, regional and linguistic diversity. The training document explored solutions such as expanding existing training programmes, developing online training and identifying synergies in existing training, perhaps through an on-line or 'virtual' training academy. More training could also be offered for key tools such as the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) and International Humanitarian Partnership environmental modules. Questions that should be addressed in the strategy relate to who should be trained; where; in what; to what degree; the training application process, and funding implications and sources.

Resource center for environmental emergencies presentation

Linking training efforts and providing access to information and research could be one of the tasks of a resource center for environmental emergencies. SRSA is currently looking at possibilities to establish such a center. Results could include finding synergies between existing training efforts and better use of existing resources and material. The representative of SRSA invited participants to give their views and ideas regarding the activities that could be undertaken by a center.

H.E.L.P² presentation

As requested at the 7th AGEE meeting, the Joint Environment Unit presented the new H.E.L.P.² awards scheme as an option for enhanced awareness raising and outreach. The purpose of the H.E.L.P.² Awards is to increase public and government awareness about environmental emergencies by drawing attention to efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies by national authorities and the international community.

Raising the profile of the issue will allow for better communication of several messages, in particular: the strong connection between environmental emergencies and humanitarian tragedies, the importance of treating environmental emergencies as part of humanitarian response operations by identifying and mitigating environmental impacts concurrently with other humanitarian response activities and the need for countries – especially developing and vulnerable countries – to take steps to ensure that domestic capacity to respond to environmental emergencies is continually being improved.

The awards will consist of a certificate on behalf of OCHA, UNEP and GCI and a citation, signed by a Panel of Advisors. They are designed to recognize and thank countries and organisations providing international environmental emergency assistance, and to recognize countries with notable improvements for the receipt of assistance. GCI has been instrumental in

developing the programme which will be launched in 2008 on the websites of the Joint Environment Unit and GCI.

After the launch of H.E.L.P.², nominations for awards can be submitted to the Joint Environment Unit and/or GCI for review by a panel of advisors. Awards will then be presented at multiple ceremonies to ensure maximum exposure².

2. Key discussion points

a) Advocacy and Communication Strategies

The group decided to merge the proposed advocacy and communications strategies into a single advocacy strategy. This will focus on three main target audiences: governments of provider and recipient countries, international organizations and the general public, with the latter being addressed as a long-term goal. The Joint Environment Unit will develop a document setting out the main aspects of the combined strategy in early 2008.

The group felt that transmitting effectively a series of key communications messages to these audiences would encourage the adoption of effective prevention and preparedness measures and the provision of assistance to countries in disaster situations. Messages and the method to disseminate them should accurately target each audience.

Possible communications messages discussed by the group include:

- That environmental assistance is humanitarian assistance
- That environmental emergencies must be a priority in order for humanitarian relief to be effective
- That multilateralism and international effort is a collective responsibility
- That environmental emergencies impact human lives and welfare in direct and immediate ways
- That countries can actually help address environmental emergencies in real ways

The dedication a World Environment Day to environmental emergencies and disaster management was raised as a possible platform to increase awareness on environmental emergency action among target audiences. The Joint Environment Unit offered to undertake research on how themes are chosen for World Environment Day and share details with the group.

The group identified the need for a document setting out key messages and arguments explaining the importance of combined international efforts to respond to environmental emergencies and the benefits for governments to take part in response activities. Existing material was thought by the group to be too technical for the target audiences. The group agreed to develop a brochure aimed at government officials to communicate key messages, and outline available tools and resources, including their use and emphasize the importance of prevention. The representative of

² More details of the award can be found in the relevant document called “H.E.L.P.² Awards -Humanitarian and Environmental Leaders in Providing and Preparing Awards Scheme” on the Virtual OSOCC under [http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/\(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfbog\)/VOLogin.aspx](http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfbog)/VOLogin.aspx) and on the website of the Joint Environment Unit under <http://ochaonline.un.org/ToolsServices/EmergencyRelief/EnvironmentalEmergencies/RosersbergInitiative/tabid/2647/Default.aspx>.

Pakistan volunteered to work on the content, design and lay-out together with the Joint Environment Unit.

The media was identified as an important means to promote awareness of environmental emergencies. Sensitisation of the media was seen as an important step for the dissemination of the key messages to a wider public. Institutions that offer journalist training courses should be used to improve the knowledge of journalists, thereby making them more receptive to reporting on relevant stories. The representative of GCI volunteered to explore possibilities in this respect.

The group also discussed and welcomed the H.E.L.P² awards scheme. It strongly encouraged the Joint Unit and Green Cross International to continue its development, and endorsed the launch of the awards in 2008.

The group strongly encouraged both deploying and receiving assistance countries and international organizations to issue press releases and articles about missions undertaken or new tools developed in the environmental emergencies response area.

The group will monitor the progress of the agreed activities and report the results to the AGEE in 2009.

b) Training

Participants identified the development of a comprehensive and professional environmental emergencies training methodology as a top priority. This would allow the establishment of a larger, highly professional cadre of environmental emergencies experts who can be deployed through the multilateral system. The methodology would need a basic curriculum that draws upon and integrates existing training modules and materials. Specifically, it could include or help integrate: the HIT, the FEAT, lessons learned in former field operations, United Nations and international arrangements governing the response to environmental emergencies, personal safety issues, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, stress management, and methods of evaluation and assessment of the environmental impact of a disaster. Other training courses and methodologies with similar contents such as the UNDAC induction courses should be used as examples for the development of a new course.

The representative of the Netherlands offered to work in close collaboration with Sweden and other partners to develop the curriculum for comprehensive training, and pilot it with a focus on training international experts for deployments through bilateral and multilateral channels. The final product should be certified in some manner. The Netherlands noted that the development of the training is a high priority for them and should be undertaken rapidly.

The representative of the European Commission noted that funding may be available to European Union (EU) member states for training activities through its Civil Protection Funding Instrument and strongly encouraged European members of the RIWG and the AGEE to file a proposal for the development of a training module in the 2008 round.

It was noted that the training should be an United Nations-supported initiative to create confidence in the quality of the product.

The representative of the GFMC proposed to link training for fire responders with the pilot module and offered his involvement in this regard.

The group also agreed that the pilot training should be expanded for use in training national experts for domestic response. Countries willing to lead such an initiative, using as a basis the curriculum to be developed by the Dutch in collaboration with the Swedes, should be identified. The Joint Environment Unit will undertake the task to identify and contact countries willing to join the expanded project.

Thematic Area 1: Next steps

- The Joint Environment Unit will develop and disseminate an advocacy strategy document, in early 2008;
- The Netherlands will develop a training module for experts in environmental emergencies in close collaboration with Sweden, with pilot trainings envisaged for August 2008;
- The Joint Environment Unit will identify and contact countries to join the training module project and apply for funding available under the EC Civil Protection mechanism,
- The representative of Pakistan will develop a layout and design for a brochure for the use of governments, by June 2008;
- The members of the RIWG are encouraged to publish press releases in case of missions or other relevant events to raise awareness towards environmental emergencies issues among other countries, organizations and the general public;
- Green Cross International will explore training opportunities for journalists in the field of environmental emergencies, in early 2008.

IV. Thematic area 2: Improving the international and regional arrangements governing the response to environmental emergencies

1. Overview

The objective of thematic area 2 is to develop options to strengthen the normative and possibly legal basis of the system that governs environmental emergencies.

As recommended at the 7th meeting of the AGEE and to prepare for the Tunis meeting, the Joint Environment Unit commissioned the development in 2007 of a baseline review of selected international and regional arrangements to begin identifying these options. An independent consultant with a background in environmental governance systems prepared the document *‘Improving International Environmental Emergency Governance Systems’*³ and presented it at

³ *‘Improving International Environmental Emergency Governance Systems’*³ (EU/AG/RIWG.6) which can be found on the V-OSOCC und [http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/\(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgb\)/VOLogin.aspx](http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgb)/VOLogin.aspx) and on the website of the Joint Environment Unit under <http://ochaonline.un.org/ToolsServices/EmergencyRelief/EnvironmentalEmergencies/RosersbergInitiative/tabid/2647/Default.aspx>

the Tunis meeting. The objective of the discussions in this Thematic Area was to obtain feedback from the working group on the initial findings of the background document, and to discuss the priorities for the remaining period of the review.

The document sets out key challenges and preliminary findings of the research, including a set of draft recommendations for future actions. Key identified challenges in governance systems include:

- The lack of a comprehensive international system and procedures for notification (including notification both to (1) a central Secretariat and (2) to other countries);
- The lack of a comprehensive international system and agreed procedures for requesting, offering, and providing international assistance (including request and offer through (1) a central Secretariat and (2) other countries);
- The lack of regulations to facilitate the entry, stay, and exit/re-export of experts, equipment, and materials;
- Uncertainties as to what constitutes an environmental emergency;
- Uncertainties as to the obligations of the requesting country and the assisting countries;
- Limited official recognition for the role and responsibilities of the United Nations in mobilizing and coordinating international environmental emergency assistance. This includes the lack of an explicit mandate from the UN General Assembly Resolution.
- A general lack of detailed guidance for States, international organizations, NGOs, and other institutions regarding specific procedures, standards, and arrangements for notification, request for assistance, and provision of assistance in response to an environmental emergency;
- A lack of awareness regarding existing instruments and requirements, which hinders their effective implementation;
- Coordination among organizations is not defined, and can lead to confusion and inefficient use of resources, especially where there are issues of “turf;”
- Most existing governance systems do not apply to land-based sources of marine pollution, creating a gap in mandates;
- Practically all of the existing international environmental emergency governance systems explicitly or implicitly do not apply to incidents during or arising from war, armed conflict, or other hostilities. Accordingly, there is uncertainty regarding mandates and procedures in such contexts; and,
- The lack of a formal, comprehensive system for environmental emergencies that focuses on the nature and effects of environmental emergencies, rather than the specific source or context of the emergency, means that many international environmental emergency governance systems do not address accidents that are severe, but not necessarily transboundary.

2. Key discussion points and priority settings

The participants discussed the key challenges in detail. Particular focus was placed on the need to streamline international response. Discussion centred on the provision of assistance. It was suggested that a certain freedom to act is conferred by the lack of precise provisions and mandates, and that non-binding systems have benefits.

There was consensus that the lack of a universally accepted definition of the term ‘environmental emergencies’ can constitute an obstacle to an effective international response system. However, the absence of a fixed definition was also thought to allow for assistance providers of last resort when no other organisation is mandated to respond. The Joint Environment Unit uses a definition that focuses on the effects rather than causes of an environmental emergency. The group considered this useful, and supported the suggestion to base international environmental emergency response on a set of indicators for what constitutes an emergency rather than trying to use fixed definitions.

To underscore points made in the document for this meeting, the Joint Environment Unit representative provided examples of when early notification to potentially affected neighbouring, downstream countries and the wider response community could have made a difference in the timely and effective response to a disaster. Participants supported the establishment of a formal notification system to be adopted by stakeholders worldwide. In this context it was noted that the notification systems of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could serve as examples, including standardized methods and procedures to address the large number of different systems and rules currently governing notification in environmental emergencies.

Participants agreed that the issues of definition and notification should be addressed by guidelines providing operational guidance to international organizations and states. The guidelines should include provisions regarding all aspects of international assistance in environmental emergencies, in particular the request and offer of assistance. The guidelines should be based on existing practices to date, building on effective approaches and avoiding ones that experience has shown to be problematic. The consultant was requested to continue research along these lines.

The study explored placing a strong focus on regional organizations. The group confirmed the importance of regional institutions such as the European Community Mechanism; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED), the Organisation of Sahel and Sahara (OSS), the Organisation of Arab States, and the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN). The group agreed that the effectiveness of both regional and international institutions depends on criteria such as common interest, the size of the group, clear lines of communication, appropriate guidelines and good organisation and structure. Non-legal agreements such as the NATO Memorandum of Understanding on cross-border transport in emergencies, the Tunisia/Algeria agreement on bi-lateral level, and bodies such as the GFMC can play an important role in strengthening response effectiveness and should therefore also be considered in the course of the baseline review.

Participants agreed to prioritise certain recommended activities, as follows:

High priority items:

As a main focus, environmental emergency guidelines should be developed. The option to incorporate new guidelines into existing instruments such as the International Search and Rescue Guidelines (INSARAG)⁴ or the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance of the International Federation of

⁴ <http://www.reliefweb.int/undac/documents/insarag/guidelines/topics.html>

the Red Cross⁵ should be considered. A final decision will be taken upon receipt of the baseline review in April 2008.

A ‘joint environmental emergency response plan’ similar to the “Joint Emergency Management Plan of the International Organizations”⁶ for radioactive emergencies should be developed. The plan should describe an interagency framework involving all relevant international organizations at the global level for preparedness for and response to environmental emergencies irrespective of their causes. It should incorporate clearly defined roles and therefore promote coordination in the current system. It should not interfere with domestic emergency response mechanisms. Rather, it should encourage states to consider interfacing with the arrangements of such plan when notifying about environmental emergencies. This could minimize consequences and facilitate the prompt and effective provision of information and assistance. The plan should not prescribe arrangements between different organizations but describe a common understanding on how each agency acts during a response and when making preparedness arrangements.

Medium-term priority:

Discussions should be held on the necessity of an environmental emergencies mandate for the Joint Environment Unit to facilitate a more coordinated international response. A new UN General Assembly resolution that builds on prior resolutions, is an option to provide a broad mandate to the Joint Environment Unit and/or expand on the role of environment in humanitarian action that could be considered. This could acknowledge experiences to-date, codify essential aspects of existing practice, and encouraging the further strengthening of international and regional systems governing response to environmental emergencies.

Another medium-term goal should be to strengthen regional governance systems. This could be linked to the establishment of a resource center providing technical assistance to countries seeking to establish effective procedures and institutions for notification, request for and provision of assistance. In addition, capacity building and awareness raising activities targeting legislative drafters, emergency responders, custom and immigration officials and environmental experts could facilitate the implementation of the priority measures above. The latter should be coordinated together with Thematic Area 1.

Longer-term priorities

In the long-term, the development of a certification system of experts and the feasibility of a legal instrument could be considered by the group and relevant stakeholders. Some issues that remained outstanding and require further discussion include the link between war, armed conflict and environmental emergencies, and the status of land-based sources of marine pollution.

⁵ <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/idrl/guidelines/guidelines.pdf>

⁶ <http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/jplan2002.pdf>

Thematic Area 2: Next steps

The baseline review of the existing systems including recommendations for improvement will be presented to the group on 31 March 2008.

The group also wishes to convene another meeting after the dissemination of the baseline review to review the final recommendations and take action on the priorities noted above.

V. Thematic area 3: Operational aspects of environmental emergencies

1. Overview

The aim of thematic area 3 is to facilitate the implementation of good practice for provision and receipt of international environmental emergency assistance at the national level.

Three documents formed the basis of discussions in Thematic area 3: *'Environmental Risk Identification'*, *'Operational Aspects of Providing and Receiving International Environmental Emergencies Assistance'*, and *'National Focal Points for Environmental Emergencies'*⁷.

In accordance with a decision of the AGEE 7, a further study will be undertaken in 2008, reviewing lessons learned from previous disasters and analysing existing mechanisms on country level, as a basis for guidelines or an operational manual. A particular focus of the discussion was to get feedback on the proposed contents of this study. These proposed contents are described in the document *'Operational Aspects of Providing and Receiving International Environmental Emergencies Assistance'* and include:

- *Case studies*: These will explore national level environmental emergency experiences both where international assistance was provided, and where it was never requested;
- *Knowledge of existing systems* for the provision and receipt of assistance: The study will ask countries and organizations to provide detailed information on their technical and practical arrangements for giving and receiving assistance;
- *Notification on emergencies and requests for assistance*: As the lack of immediate notification and request for assistance was identified as a main obstacles to effective international response in environmental emergencies, countries and organizations will be asked to comment on a notification and request for assistance form for environmental emergencies circulated by Joint Environment Unit;
- *Classification of environmental emergencies*: This topic looks at different classification systems applied on national level to determine the need for a global classification system in environmental emergencies, for example on the type of incident, geographical location, or actual or potential impact;

⁷ 'Environmental Risk Identification' (EU/AG/RIWG.7), 'Operational Aspects of Providing and Receiving International Environmental Emergencies Assistance' (EU/AG/RIWG.8), 'National Focal Points for Environmental Emergencies' (EU/AG/RIWG.9). They can be found on the Virtual OSOCC under [http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/\(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgobg\)/VOLogin.aspx](http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/(nnsbkw45nadfspmuvlvrfgobg)/VOLogin.aspx) and on the website of the Joint Environment Unit under <http://ochaonline.un.org/ToolsServices/EmergencyRelief/EnvironmentalEmergencies/RosersbergInitiative/tabid/2647/Default.aspx>.

- *National focal points (NFP)*: Using as a basis *National Focal Points for Environmental Emergencies*, a document which sets out draft terms of reference required for a NFP to effectively fulfil its functions, participants will be requested to provide feedback on the existence of NFPs in their countries and advice on steps to be taken by the Joint Environment Unit to improve the existing system.

2. Key discussion points

The group endorsed the contents, extent and usefulness of the proposed topics for the study. They noted that the study should take the entire disaster management cycle into account. More specifically:

a) Case studies

Participants provided information on their experiences in environmental disasters. The discussion highlighted that national response systems, including bilateral agreements for notification and assistance, exist in many countries. However, it was noted that in many cases the necessary request for assistance is not made. This can be the result of an internal lack of coordination, the belief of countries to be able to manage the situation themselves or the lack of awareness of existing response systems, including the services of the Joint Environment Unit. This underscores the need for clearer national and international procedures, in particular improved coordination between stakeholders. Participants felt that disaster prone countries should be made aware of their options in terms of requesting assistance.

b) Existing national systems

The group endorsed the need for effective national decision-making systems for providing international assistance to environmental emergencies. The systems of the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden were mentioned as good practice examples. It was pointed out that requests for assistance sent to donor countries by the Joint Environment Unit often remained unanswered. This may be linked to the fact that national existing systems still generally focus on humanitarian response only, notwithstanding the importance of environment in a humanitarian context. This showed the need for improvement of the existing systems.

The group identified the lack of environmental generalist experts for deployment in case of a natural disaster as an obstacle to effective and quick response. New resources could be obtained through increased cooperation between different stakeholders, in particular agreements with the private sector. The group encouraged the development of such agreements.

c) Requests for assistance

The study will review methods and good practices used with regard to notification and request for assistance. This has a clear connection to issues of notification addressed in Thematic Area 2. However, Thematic Area 3 looks at the operational implications of a notification form, whereas Thematic Area 2 analyses the governance system that underpin notification and request for assistance. The group discussed the Notification and Request for Assistance Form developed by the Joint Environment Unit, the European Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The group generally agreed that the notification form is necessary and useful to facilitate the response activities at international level. A written notification and request help ensure clear information and thus an effective response.

d) Classification of environmental emergencies

The group endorsed the suggestion of a classification system for environmental emergencies to facilitate a quick and effective international response. Open questions including the scope, scale and level to be applied within a classification system should be clarified within the study in 2008.

e) National focal points for environmental emergencies

The group agreed that an effective global system of NFPs on environmental emergencies would greatly facilitate the international response to disasters. The Joint Environment Unit has used a list of NFPs for environmental emergencies for many years, but still faces obstacles that hinder the system's effectiveness. For example, NFPs have to take up different functions including administrative and operational activities. However, it is often difficult for one government ministry or department to fulfil all functions, which in turn creates difficulties for governments to appoint a single NFP. The Joint Environment Unit also experiences difficulties in the identification of relevant ministries from outside the country.

To address these problems, the Joint Environment Unit has developed draft terms of reference for NFPs, which could be circulated to countries. Details are in the document: *'National Focal Points for Environmental Emergencies'*. The group endorsed the draft terms of reference and agreed that they should be elaborated in the study. The group discussed options for the identification of NFPs and decided that the study should look into ways for the Joint Environment Unit to implement and maintain a working NFP system, including its feasibility with regard to the limited resources of the Joint Environment Unit. Guidance material for governments on why, how and with whom to establish NFPs should be developed. To facilitate the establishment of a working global system, the group committed itself to look into the identification of potential focal points in their countries and supported the dissemination of the final terms of reference and guidelines by the Joint Environment Unit.

f) Former Environmental Risk Identification (ERI) – now Hazard Identification Tool (HIT)

The HIT is designed as a tool to assist UNDAC teams and disaster affected countries to respond to disasters. It provides responders with preliminary information on the environmental hazards posed by large infrastructure and industrial installations in disaster-affected areas. It is a desk-based (as opposed to field-based) exercise that can be undertaken by any country, organization or individual expert involved in a natural disaster. The HIT is linked to the FEAT. In 2008, the HIT will be further developed by Sweden to be used as a preparedness tool to map risks *before* disaster occurs. Further details are set out in the background document *'Environmental Risk Identification'*. The group reconfirmed the usefulness of the HIT.

Participants felt that the major advantage of a HIT is the alert to environmental hazards immediately following a natural disaster, as it allows a quick screening of the actual risks posed by hazardous facilities. The timing of sending an HIT was thought to be more important than complete accuracy, although attempts to specify locations in detail were encouraged. Participants supported the wide dissemination of the HIT to governments and relevant international and national organizations. Kenya, Colombia and Zambia offered to promote the HIT to their national authorities.

With regard to the further development of the HIT as a preparedness tool, the group strongly encouraged countries to participate in this project. The possibility to receive funding for the further development of the tool from the Civil Protection Unit of the European Commission was mentioned. At the same time, Sweden will further pursue the identification of a pilot country for 2008. It was also agreed that the Joint Environment Unit and the Netherlands will try to integrate the HIT into the FEAT training module for 2008 and into the new training methodology on environmental emergencies.

Thematic areas 3: Next steps

The group decided to stay together as an entity until the 8th meeting of the AGEE in 2009. They wish to convene another RIWG meeting after the finalization of the study in the second half of 2008 to review the results of the study and decide on future activities.

Decisions taken in the meeting included:

- A study will be undertaken reviewing lessons learned and good practice and developing guidance material for use by national authorities. The guidance material will include clear terms of reference for NFPs and recommendations for the establishment of a global NFP system by the Joint Environment Unit;
- The group members will try to identify NFPs for the Joint Environment Unit;
- Kenya and Colombia will promote the HIT to their relevant national authorities;
- The Netherlands and the Joint Environment Unit will attempt to include the HIT into the FEAT training; and,
- The Joint Environment Unit will coordinate the further integration of the HIT into a general training module on environmental emergencies to be developed within Thematic Area 1.

VII. Conclusion

Participants felt that major progress has been made in the implementation of the Rosersberg Initiative since June 2007. The 3-5 December meeting in particular resulted in concrete, practical next steps involving numerous partners. Major steps include decisions on the development of a training module on environmental emergencies, a brochure for the use of governments, the development of a joint response plan for environmental emergencies and guidelines on environmental emergencies response and response preparedness, and good practice guidance material including recommendations for the establishment of a global NFP system. The discussions held during the meeting reconfirmed the strong need to improve the current international governance system in environmental emergencies and confirmed the readiness of countries and international organizations to meet this need.

Depending on funding and sponsorship, a second meeting of the Working Group (or a thematic area meeting) was proposed in 2008, for the further development of agreed and suggested activities.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking participants for their extensive contributions and engagement, and noted that the event had surpassed expectations.