

Office for the
Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

United Nations
Environment Programme



International Environmental Emergency Response

Introduction to the
Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit



UNITED NATIONS

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1. Introduction

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (Joint Environment Unit) is the United Nations mechanism to mobilize and coordinate emergency assistance to countries affected by environmental emergencies and natural disasters with significant environmental impacts. It is a partnership of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and has been in place since 1994. The Joint Environment Unit was set up in accordance with recommendations of a 1993 governmental meeting, and formalized in July 1994 by the heads of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)¹, and UNEP.

Cooperation between OCHA and UNEP through the Joint Environment Unit is widely recognized to be practical and effective. It optimizes the use of limited resources and provides a model of pragmatic cooperation between UN organizations.

This document describes the history of the Joint Environment Unit, its work and achievements.

¹ The name Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit changed to Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit in 1998 when DHA was reorganized into the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

2. Origins of the Joint Environment Unit

First steps

Recognizing the serious threat of environmental emergencies and the need to improve international response to disasters, Mikhail Gorbachev, the then-President of the USSR, made a formal proposal at the UN General Assembly in 1988 to establish the *UN Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance*. Numerous countries supported this proposal.



Increasing concern in the international community regarding industrial accidents, including their impacts on the environment, led to a decision by the Governing Council of UNEP (decision 15/10 of 1989) to request the Executive Director to consult governments, UN bodies, specialized agencies and competent regional organizations on the establishment of the UN Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance (UNCUEA).

During that same year, Resolution 44/244 was adopted by the General Assembly, recognizing the need to strengthen international cooperation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats and rendering assistance in cases of environmental emergency.

Strong government support led to the decision adopted at the 16th session of the UNEP Governing Council (GC) that established the UNCUEA on an experimental basis, and located it in Geneva.

The Experimental Stage

During its experimental stage, UNCUEA was supported both operationally and financially by Austria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, the European Commission (EC), Finland, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. As an early priority, UNCUEA carried out a review of major environmental emergencies of the previous ten years, and an in-depth evaluation of relevant activities of other UN bodies and international organizations. Significant gaps in response mechanisms were found, and methods of improving international arrangements were identified.

Towards the Joint Environment Unit

Results of the experimental stage were presented to a governmental meeting in November 1993. Governments concluded that a special international tool to respond to environmental emergencies was needed. They expressed a strong wish, however, to avoid the proliferation of disaster response mechanisms. Governments also stressed that UNEP should not develop its own response structure, but should integrate its environmental expertise into the exist-

ing UN natural disaster response mechanism. As a result, governments decided to terminate the experimental stage of UNCUEA, and transform it into the Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit. The new unit would be integrated into DHA's Disaster Response Branch in Geneva. This decision was strongly supported by representatives of both UNEP and DHA, who were requested to submit to the meeting a "Joint UNEP/DHA Recommendation on Institutional and Administrative Arrangements for the Enhancement of the International Response Capacity with regard to Environmental Emergencies". Governments endorsed the recommendation.

In 1994, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP (CPR) endorsed the 'Joint UNEP/DHA Recommendation', which formed the basis for the cooperation between the two organizations.

The Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit became operational on 1 July 1994.



3. Institutional Arrangements

OCHA

The United Nations Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is the principal UN humanitarian body. It plays the leading role in the coordination and management of the activities relating to disaster response in the UN system, in particular, through its Emergency Services Branch (ESB) in Geneva. UNEP's work in the area of emergency response is carried out under the overall coordination of OCHA, through the Joint Environment Unit.

UNEP

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice of environment within the UN system. Within UNEP, the Joint Environment Unit falls under the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI).

The Joint Environment Unit reports for all operational matters to the Chief of the ESB of OCHA². It is also administered by OCHA and is located in OCHA buildings. OCHA puts at the disposal of the Joint Environment Unit, free of charge, all of its emergency response mechanisms and instruments. For its part, UNEP provides a range of technical and environmental support services.

² formerly Relief Coordination Branch of DHA

AGEE

The Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) was established in 1995, at the recommendation of governments. It is an inter-governmental consultative mechanism that brings together disaster managers and environmentalists from developed and developing countries to exchange ideas and experiences on global environmental emergency response issues. The AGEE also reviews the Joint Environment Unit's work, advises on its future activities, and acts as its main source of accountability. The Joint Environment Unit acts as the secretariat to the AGEE.



AGEE 4, Brussels, 2000

The mandate of the AGEE is to:

- Provide a forum for an exchange of views and experience among countries on questions related to the provision of international assistance for environmental emergencies;
- Promote international cooperation in the response to environmental emergencies, with particular attention to developing countries;
- Identify and examine selected challenges with regard to the provision of international assistance for environmental emergencies, which are of major concern to countries, with the aim to prepare ap-

propriate suggestions and recommendations on possible actions at the international level;

- Review the work of the Joint Environment Unit, and provide advice on its future activities.

The AGEE has met seven times. After an initial agreement to meet once a year, it was decided that from 1996 onwards the AGEE would convene every second year. It was decided also that a core group of countries of the AGEE could be consulted to assist the Joint Environment Unit in preparing basic documentation and could meet between the regular sessions. One meeting of the Core Group was held in October 2001 on the issue of terrorist threats and environmental considerations.

National Focal Points

The Joint Environment Unit, in close consultation with the AGEE, has established a global network of officially designated National Focal Points. This network serves as a channel for information and assistance, and allows the Joint Environment Unit to maintain efficient links between potential donor and recipient countries. Following recommendations of the AGEE 7, the Joint Environment Unit commissioned a review of the National Focal Point system to be undertaken by an external consultant.

4. Staffing and Funding

The Joint Environment Unit was initially staffed with two professionals (P-5 and P-3 levels) and one secretary, all seconded from UNEP. In 2000, OCHA agreed to fund the post of the Unit's chief (P-5) and has been funding a P-4 position since 2005, and a temporary P-3 position since 2008. A P-3 position and the Unit's secretary are supported by UNEP. After the French Government had seconded an Associate Expert to the Joint Environment Unit from 2003 to 2005, the Norwegian Government has been supporting an Associate Expert from 2009.



The Joint Environment Unit, 2009

The UNEP-DHA agreement stipulated that both organizations would seek support for their work in dealing with environmental aspects of emergencies, including contributions of resources for the operation of the Joint Environment Unit. UNEP has financed Joint Environment Unit activities from the Environment Fund. OCHA has carried out fundraising activities through its traditional mechanisms and obtained continued support from a number of key donors. At present, OCHA and UNEP finance the Joint Environment Unit (both staff and activities) on an approximately equal basis.

5. Mandate and Functions

In accordance with governmental recommendations, the Joint Environment Unit carries out functions, including:

- **Monitoring:** The Joint Environment Unit routinely screens and monitors media and other information sources for environmental emergencies and liaises closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure early notification of environmental occurrences;
- **Alerting:** When disaster strikes, the Joint Environment Unit alerts the international community and issues Information and Situation Reports to contacts worldwide;
- **Offers of assistance:** Depending on an initial assessment of the situation, the Joint Environment Unit may send an official Offer of Assistance for technical expertise to the affected country;
- **Hazard identification:** In support of the first emergency responders, the Joint Environment Unit applies the Hazard Identification Tool (HIT) to identify “big and obvious” facilities or objects that may have potential secondary impacts in the affected area. The results of this desk research are shared with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team as well as all relevant OCHA and UNEP entities;
- **Rapid environmental assessment:** The Joint Environment Unit can deploy environmental generalists to assess secondary environmental risks and

impacts of natural disasters by using the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT);

- **Sampling and analysis:** In cooperation with the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), the Environmental Assessment Module (EAM), consisting of a mobile laboratory mounted on two small trucks, can be deployed for on-site sampling of air, water and soil and analysis of hazardous and toxic substances;

- **Expert deployments:** Through its extensive network of donors, the Joint Environment Unit can deploy a great variety of experts to carry out specific assessments and address a wide range of environmental issues, including hazardous materials (HazMats), disaster waste management, oil and chemical spills, dam stability, slope stability, use of natural resources during large population movements, etc;

- **Brokerage:** The Joint Environment Unit puts affected countries in contact with donors willing to provide needed response resources;

- **The release of OCHA Emergency Cash Grants** can be arranged in certain circumstances to meet immediate emergency needs;

- **Link to early recovery:** Throughout the emergency phase, the Joint Environment Unit liaises closely with UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate a smooth transition from the emergency phase to the (early) recovery phase.

- **Preparedness/Capacity building:** In order to enhance national preparedness contingency planning efforts, the Joint Environment Unit undertakes capacity building measures and liaises closely with relevant actors.

6. Reporting to Governments

The Joint Environment Unit has a variety of reporting mechanisms, as follows:

Reporting through OCHA

Information on the work of the Joint Environment Unit is included in annual reports of the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly; periodic reports of the Secretary-General on International Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance in the field of Natural Disasters; periodic reports to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); OCHA reports to donors; reports to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; and various OCHA reports to Governments.

Reporting through UNEP

Every second year, the Joint Environment reports to the Governing Council of UNEP through the Executive Director's report on implementation of Governing Council decisions. The Joint Environment Unit's activities are integrated into UNEP's Programme of Work. On a quarterly basis, progress is reported to the Committee of Permanent Representatives through reports of the UNEP Executive Director.

UNEP has taken a number of decisions related to the Joint Environment Unit, in particular through its Governing Council (GC). Details of specific decisions are listed in

Annex 1 of this document.

Reporting through the AGEE

Recommendations made by the AGEE are submitted by the Joint Environment Unit to the respective heads of UNEP and OCHA for action. Details of specific AGEE decisions are listed in Annex 2 of this document.

The AGEE plays a crucial role in providing guidance and expertise in the development of the various tools for the Joint Environment Unit. Specifically, it has endorsed the drafting of *Guidelines for the Development of a National Environmental Contingency Plan, Guidelines for Environmental Assessment Following Chemical Emergencies*, the expansion and improvement of a National Focal Points system for environmental emergencies, an update of the *Directory of Emergency Response Centers*, and information on the use of the UNDAC mechanism for environmental emergencies.

7. Activities of the Joint Environment Unit

The Joint Environment Unit has two main functions: to mobilize and coordinate assistance to countries affected by natural disasters, and an important but secondary function to assist countries in the enhancement of national environmental emergency response preparedness systems.

Response to Environmental Emergencies

A list of emergencies from 1994 to 2009 to which the Joint Environment Unit provided assistance can be found in Annex 3 of this document.

A key mechanism through which the Joint Environment Unit responds is the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system. The UNDAC system is a stand-by operational roster of disaster management professionals, who are seconded from governments, as well as from OCHA, UNDP, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO). Upon request by a disaster-stricken country, an UNDAC team can be deployed within hours to carry out a rapid assessment of the situation and prioritize needs, and to support national authorities and the UN Resident Coordinators/UNDP Resident Representatives in the coordination of international relief.



Since its first application during the Indonesian forest fires in 1995, the UNDAC mechanism has also become an important tool for the inter-agency response to environmental emergencies. It is one of the many tools that UNEP can access in OCHA through the Joint Environment Unit.

To support UNDAC as an effective means to identify and mitigate environmental emergency risks, the Joint Environment Unit has, in collaboration with the OCHA/ESB Field Coordination Support Section, developed an environmental chapter for the revised UNDAC handbook. This is used as a basis for the training of all new UNDAC team members.

In addition, the Joint Environment Unit facilitates the integration of environmental expertise into the UNDAC missions. The Joint Environment Unit assists the UNDAC team in hazard identification and rapid environmental assessment and sampling and analysis by making available the HIT and the FEAT. If a need for specialized assistance is identified, follow up assistance can be provided through experts, as well as the EAM (for sampling and analysis).

For several years, OCHA has given opportunity to UNEP to train their staff and put them on the UNDAC roster. Beginning in 2006, a small number of UNEP staff members have undergone the training for deployment on UNDAC missions. Experts are continuously being trained, and in 2008 Sweden trained fifteen associate environmental experts, increasing the standby capacity of the UNDAC system.

Response Preparedness

A key secondary responsibility of the Joint Environment Unit is to assist developing countries enhance their environmental emergencies response capacity. A Joint Environment Unit environmental emergency preparedness mission can assess a country's needs and priorities at strategic, managerial and operational levels.

Based on an assessment, the Joint Environment Unit can provide:

- Technical support for the development of environmental emergency centers;
- Technical support for the development of environmental emergency contingency plans that are integrated into national disaster management plans;
- Exposure to other key tools and resources including: UNEP-APPELL, and international lessons learned;
- Follow up / brokerage with donors.

These activities are always conducted in close collaboration with national authorities, UNDP, OCHA regional and country offices and UNEP.

Since 2005, the Joint Environment Unit has conducted specific environmental emergency response preparedness missions in Yemen, Iran, Turkey and Kuwait, and supported an OCHA preparedness mission in Côte d'Ivoire. With the Joint Environment Unit's integration into OCHA's Emergency Preparedness Section in 2008, the

Unit has further increased its emergency preparedness activities. In particular, the Joint Environment Unit has developed specific guidance on the tasks of environmental experts integrated into UNDAC Disaster Response Preparedness missions. The Joint Environment Unit also supported UNDAC Disaster Response Preparedness missions to Honduras and Cambodia.

Links between Response, Prevention and Preparedness

Environmental Emergencies Partnership

A global "Environmental Emergencies Partnership" (EEP) was launched by OCHA and UNEP at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, with the goal of reducing the frequency and severity of environmental emergencies. EEP is a global mechanism to bridge gaps between stages of the disaster management cycle and between various disaster management stakeholders. A wide range of national authorities and regional and international organizations support the partnership. The Joint Environment Unit provides the Secretariat for the EEP.

The EEP has shown particular value as a tool to engage countries in preparedness activities. For example, it provided the impetus and context for a Joint Environment Unit response preparedness mission to Iran in 2005, and to Turkey in 2007.

UNDAC Disaster Response Preparedness Missions are planned and managed through close collaboration between

OCHA's Field Coordination and Support Section, the Emergency Preparedness Section, Regional Offices and the regional desk in the Coordination and Response Division. The Joint Environment Unit liaises closely with these actors to ensure the integration of environment in these missions.

UNEP Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB)

UNEP PCDMB was formed in January 2007 following the merger of the UNEP Disaster Management Branch and the Post Conflict Assessment Unit. It has quickly become a vital partner for the Joint Environment Unit. In particular, the Joint Environment Unit and PCDMB work closely to ensure a smooth transition from the response phase, to subsequent recovery and rehabilitation phases for which PCDMB has responsibility. Moreover, PCDMB is on standby to assist the Joint Environment Unit as needed during the disaster response phase, and the Joint Environment Unit reciprocates during recovery and rehabilitation.

Awareness and Preparedness at the Local Level (APELL)

APELL is an important partner of the Joint Environment Unit and its purpose is to increase public awareness of possible hazards within a community, stimulate the development of co-operative plans to respond to emergencies, and encourage prevention of industrial accidents and natural disasters. APELL makes substantive contributions to the reduction of environmental emergencies and their damages.

Support Activities and Capacity Building

Guidelines

The Joint Environment Unit has developed guidelines to assist nations that may be vulnerable to environmental emergencies, and/or lack the know-how to develop capacity to manage such events. These include:

- “*Guidelines for the Development of a National Environmental Contingency Plan*” and “*Establishing a National Environmental Emergency Response Mechanism*”. These documents outline options for establishing national structures that broker and coordinate necessary resources and expertise for response to environmental emergencies. The AGEE considered and endorsed both documents. They have been disseminated through the AGEE, as well as through National Focal Points, and have been widely used.
- “*Guidelines for Environmental Assessment following Chemical Accidents*” can be used as an emergency assessment tool to enable competent national authorities and/or international experts to gather the necessary data on-site, for onward transmission to the Joint Environment Unit.
- In 2003, OECD prepared “*Guiding Principles for Chemical Accident Prevention, Preparedness and Response*”, in co-operation with, amongst others, the Joint Environment Unit. The document sets out

guidance for the safe planning, construction, management, operation and review of safety performance of hazardous installation in order to prevent and/or mitigate accidents involving hazardous substances.

- Based on its experience in previous natural disasters, the Joint Environment Unit, together with waste management experts, developed *Emergency Waste Management Guidelines*, consisting of clear pictograms organized as waste management ‘do’s and ‘don’ts’.

Training

Together with the Netherlands and Sweden, the Joint Environment Unit developed a training course on environmental emergency response. The Pilot Environmental Emergencies Training took place from 18 to 22 August 2008 in The Hague, the Netherlands. At this first training, staff of the EAM and UNDAC associated experts of Sweden were trained. To ensure that participants of the training would be mission ready, the comprehensive curriculum covered a wide range of issues such as the UN response system to natural disasters, environmental emergencies, personal mission preparedness, information management, stress management, and cultural awareness.

Furthermore, the Joint Environment Unit has continued its collaboration with the Swedish Rescue Services Agency³

by providing expertise and training at the annual NATO/Partnership for Peace course on “*International Environmental Disaster Operations*”. The course is aimed at professionals such as team leaders, environmental experts and environmental disaster response coordinators. The Joint Environment Unit also delivers training modules on UN response mechanisms and environmental emergency response issues, and helps conduct practical training exercises.

³ On 1 January 2009, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) was merged into the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB).

ANNEX I UNEP Governing Council decisions

This Annex provides information on UNEP Governing Council (GC) decisions that are relevant to the Joint Environment Unit and/or environmental emergencies.

18th Session – 1995

The Executive Director of UNEP submitted to the GC a report that indicated a strong preference on the part of developing countries for a simple mechanism and single entry point into the United Nations system for international assistance with environmental emergencies.

Based on this report, the GC adopted decision 18/19 on the *Improvement of the International Response to Environmental Emergencies*. The resolution requested the Executive Director to prepare a detailed progress report on the activities of the Joint Environment Unit. The report would review the Joint Environment Unit's activities, resources and structure, including the involvement and contribution of UNEP, and the appropriateness of the Joint Environment Unit's location.

19th Session – 1997

In response to the decision of the 18th session, the Executive Director submitted a report declaring that the Joint Environment Unit demonstrated a practical approach that made the best use of limited resources, filled identified gaps in the international coverage of environmental emergencies, and did not duplicate the response of other organizations. He noted progress made by the Joint Environment Unit in the establishment of an open-ended roster of environmental stand-by experts, and the development of draft *Guidelines for the Development of a National Environmental Contingency Plan*.

Governments strongly supported the work and response activities carried out by the Joint Environment Unit. In decision 19/9 on the *Improvement of the International Response to Environmental Emergencies*, the GC expressed its satisfaction with the continued collaboration between UNEP and then-DHA. The Joint Environment Unit was requested to develop its activities in accordance with the recommendations of the

AGEE.

20th Session – 1999

The Executive Director submitted a report on *Further Improvement of the International Response to Environmental Emergencies*, which reconfirmed the need for a response mechanism for environmental emergencies, particularly in light of continuing industrialization and chemical use trends in developing countries, and the increase in frequency and magnitude of environmental emergencies.

In GC decision 20/8 on the report, the Executive Director was requested to strengthen the contribution of environmental expertise from UNEP to the coordination of the UN system-wide responses to natural disasters and to develop linkages between UNEP's work on environmental emergencies and its overall work on environmental assessment and early warning.

21st Session – 2001

The Executive Director reported to the GC on further improvement of environmental emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, response and mitigation. As part of this report, a draft strategy on environmental emergencies was developed and submitted for approval. It was reported that the Joint Environment Unit had promptly and efficiently responded to multiple requests for assistance.

In the decision 21/17 the GC requested that the Executive Director enhance UNEP's long-term strategic cooperation with OCHA, recognizing the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, through the Joint Environment Unit. The Executive Director was requested to provide an analysis of the causes and long-term environmental effects of emergencies and possible policy implications for national governments and the international community for consideration of the GC at the twenty-second session.

22nd Session – 2003

The Executive Director submitted the above-noted analysis to the GC.

The ten-year experience of the Joint Environment Unit was reviewed, and it was recommended to improve mechanisms for sharing expertise and lessons learned, and expand the roster of environmental experts.

Decision 22/8 requested UNEP to establish a process, with the participation of governments, for the regular review of the Strategic Framework on Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, Assessment, Mitigation and Response, and to facilitate the implementation of UNEP's Agenda for Action. The Executive Director was also requested to develop and pursue programmes on capacity building to improve the ability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prevent, prepare for and respond to environmental emergencies. The GC welcomed the actions undertaken by the Joint Environment Unit and the AGEE to develop the Environment Emergencies Partnership.

23rd Session – 2005

The document '*Strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster*' contained a number of important provisions with regard to OCHA-UNEP collaboration through the Joint Environment Unit. In particular,

- The Governing Council expressed "its satisfaction and recognizing the continued positive collaboration between UNEP and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) through the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit in enhancing the ability of the international community to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to respond to environmental emergencies."
- The Governing Council invited "governments and relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes to continue cooperating with UNEP and OCHA through the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit in their efforts to provide emergency assistance to countries, in particular, developing countries facing environmental emergencies and natural disasters with environmental impacts."

- The Governing Council noted "with satisfaction the efforts of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit to continue its mandate as the United Nations coordinating body for international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies."

24th Session – 2007 & 25th Session – 2009

No new decision on environmental emergencies was adopted at these sessions.

The Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010 -2013 was 'adopted' at the ministerial meeting in Monaco in February 2008. It identifies 'Disasters and Conflicts' as one of six priority areas of work for the organization. The Joint Environment Unit will proactively contribute to the mainstreaming of the Disaster and Conflict Priority across UNEP.

ANNEX II

AGEE conclusions and recommendations

This Annex provides a synopsis of key AGEE conclusions and recommendations.

AGEE 1 – 1995

The AGEE welcomed the establishment of the Joint Environment Unit. The AGEE also expressed the need for an overall long-term work plan, and stressed the importance of coordination between the Joint Environment Unit and other UNEP units and relevant UN bodies. The AGEE supported the establishment of a list of National Focal Points as contact points for the activities of the Joint Environment Unit. In addition, the AGEE recommended the development of a framework for a contingency plan for environmental emergencies.

AGEE 2 – 1996

The AGEE expressed satisfaction and endorsed the constructive collaboration between UNEP and OCHA. It recommended, in particular, to further improve the flow of information on environmental emergencies; support the implementation of activities and services through the development of specific capabilities, especially brokerage, clearing house and assessment functions; to expand and improve the list of the National Focal Points, taking into account operational needs; and to request countries to consider nominations of national experts to the roster of environmental stand-by experts.

AGEE 3 – 1998

The AGEE expressed appreciation to OCHA for providing the Joint Environment Unit with emergency facilities, office space, and administrative support and for making available the emergency cash grants for immediate response needs in case of environmental emergencies. With regard to the UNEP Global Resource Information Database (GRID), the AGEE recognized the value of information produced by GRID as an assistance tool for OCHA in general and the Joint Environment Unit in particular. It welcomed enhanced cooperation between GRID and

the Joint Environment Unit on emergency-related issues.

AGEE 4 – 2000

The AGEE recommended that the Joint Environment Unit intensify public relations, identify and track emerging trends, and focus on strengthening linkages with the APELL programme. The AGEE reiterated that the Joint Environment Unit should be integrated in OCHA's disaster response system in Geneva and continue to be considered as the UN system's principal response mechanism in the context of environmental emergencies.

AGEE 5 – 2003

During the forum, a day was organized with UNEP-APELL on the implementation of the Environmental Emergencies Partnership (EEP). The AGEE stressed the important role the UNDAC mechanism plays in responding to emergencies. It also underlined the necessity of integrating environmental components into the overall OCHA management system. The AGEE identified three major thrusts of the Joint Environment Unit's work: coordinating and mobilizing assistance in the event of environmental emergencies; improving the integration of environmental components into OCHA overall management of emergencies, and developing training and capacity building activities. The Joint Environment Unit was also invited to prepare specific project proposals and approach potential donors with requests to fund them.

AGEE 6 – 2005

The AGEE considered the paper *'Emergency response and environmental issues during the Indian Ocean Earthquake-Tsunami: initial lessons to learn.'* The paper identified key areas for improvement, notably the recognition of the clear division of roles and responsibilities between UNEP and the Joint Environment Unit and the need for improved cooperation between these two partners. Another recommendation was aimed at the donor base for international emergency response. It suggested that the Joint Environment Unit should be able to count on stronger, guaran-

reed capacities. In particular, it was noted that it is essential that the Joint Environment Unit is able to access financial and personnel resources in a more predictable way. According to the document, this should involve, at a minimum, the Joint Environment Unit broadening its donor base to ensure response capacities are available with greater certainty.

The AGEE considered future activities for the biennium 2005-2007 and recommended that the Joint Environment Unit carry out activities in the following key areas: (i) continue building a roster of environmental experts, (ii) increase the assessment capacity of the Joint Environment Unit by developing an assessment methodology for natural disasters, (iii) continue capacity building activities, and (iv) strengthen the linkages between prevention, preparedness and response through the EEP.

AGEE 7 – 2007

Based on the findings of the study called “Strengthening the International Systems for Environmental Emergencies Response”, the participants of the 7th AGEE meeting launched the so-called Rosersberg Initiative. Given that the growing number of natural and man-made disasters requires a coordinated and effective response from the international community, the Rosersberg Initiative has the overall objective to strengthen the international system for the response to environmental emergencies.

The Rosersberg Initiative consists of three Thematic Areas:

- Thematic Area 1: Awareness raising, engagement and capacity building;
- Thematic Area 2: Improving the international legal system in environmental emergencies (Governance);
- Thematic Area 3: Improving national structures and mechanisms (Operational measures).

ANNEX III **Major environmental emergency response activities**

This Annex describes major responses to environmental emergencies and natural disasters undertaken by the Joint Environment Unit. As noted, between 1994 and 2009, the Joint Environment Unit has provided assistance to countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

- Albania – Pesticide storage incident
- Albania – Explosion
- Armenia – Dam collapse threat
- Brazil – Large-scale forest fires
- Belarus – Chernobyl post-disaster assessment
- Bolivia – Floods
- Cameroon – Potential dam collapse
- Chile – Acute river pollution
- China – Songhua River spill
- China – Earthquake
- Cote d'Ivoire – Dumping of toxic waste
- Democratic Republic of Congo – Nyiragongo Volcano eruption
- Democratic Republic of Congo – Partial Uranium mine collapse
- Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda – Earthquake
- Djibouti – Floods and pesticide storage damage
- Djibouti – Toxic Chemical Spill
- Dominican Republic – Hurricanes
- Ecuador – Bush fires
- Ecuador – Floods
- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – damage assessment
- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Montenegro) – Collapse of retention

dam

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Large-scale mining tailings spill

Georgia – Dam collapse threat

Georgia – Conflict

Grenada – Hurricanes

Guatemala – Hurricane Stan

Guinea – Floods

Guyana – Toxic spill into a major river

Guyana – Floods and potential dam collapse

Haiti – Hurricanes

Honduras – Floods/Geohazards

Hungary – Large-scale mining tailings spill

Indonesia – Large-scale forest fires (1997, 1998, 2005)

Indonesia – Indian Ocean Earthquake Tsunami

Indonesia – Cracked gas well/mud volcano

Indonesia – Floods in Jakarta

Indonesia – Yogyakarta earthquake

Indonesia – Dam integrity assessment

Islamic Republic of Iran – Drought

Kenya – Aviation fuel spill

Kosovo – Fires

Kyrgyzstan – Toxic chemical spill

Lebanon – Oil spill

Macedonia – Fires

Madagascar – Cyclone Indlala

Maldives – Indian Ocean Earthquake Tsunami

Mexico – Floods

Moldova – Acute underground water pollution

Mongolia – Toxic spill of sodium cyanide

Morocco – Inland oil spill

Mozambique – Floods

Myanmar – Cyclone Nargis

Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala – Hurricane Felix

Nigeria – Munitions depot explosion

Occupied Palestinian Territories – Conflict in Gaza

Pakistan – Marine oil spill

Pakistan – South Asia Earthquake

Paraguay – Floods and chemical storage damage

Peru – Earthquake

Philippines – Dumpsite collapse

Philippines – Mining tailings spill

Philippines – Oil spill

Philippines – Cyclone/Capsized ferry with toxic cargo

Republic of Korea – Oil spill

Romania – Large-scale mining tailings spill

Russian Federation – Large-scale forest fires

Russian Federation – Pipeline oil spill

Russian Federation – Chernobyl post-disaster assessment

Rwanda – Pesticide storage fire

Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo – Toxic chemical spill into a river system

Seychelles – Tropical storm

Seychelles – Industrial site damage
 Slovenia – Chemical dumpsite fire
 Somalia – Alleged dumping of hazardous waste
 Sri Lanka – Indian Ocean Earthquake Tsunami
 Sudan – Darfur crisis
 Suriname – Heavy floods
 Suriname – Hydrogen Sulphide cylinders
 Sri Lanka – response to tsunamis
 Syria – Dam collapse
 Syria – Oil spill
 Tajikistan – Landslide dam and Lake Sarez
 Tanzania – Bush fires
 Tanzania – Neurological disease outbreak
 Tanzania – Power Outage on Zanzibar
 Turkey – Earthquake and industrial accident
 Turkey – Dumpsite collapse
 Turks and Caicos Islands – Hurricanes
 Ukraine – Sewage spill into a major river
 Ukraine – Chernobyl post-disaster assessment
 Ukraine – Oil spill in the Kerch Strait
 Uruguay – Heavy Floods
 Venezuela – Mudslides and chemical storage damage
 Vietnam – Forest fires

ANNEX IV
List of Abbreviations

AGEE	Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies
APELL	Awareness and Preparedness at the Local level
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP
DEPI	Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
DHA	UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs
EAM	Environmental Assessment Module
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EPP	Environmental Emergencies Partnership
ESB	Emergency Services Branch
FEAT	Flash Environmental Assessment Tool
GRID	UNEP Global Resource Information Database
HIT	Hazard Identification Tool
IHP	International Humanitarian Partnership
Joint Environment Unit	Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNCUEA	UN Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP PCDMB	Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme
UN GC	UNEP Governing Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization