

# **Establishment of a Steering Committee for Environmental Emergencies and the timing of the Ninth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies**

Proposal by the Chair

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The purpose of this paper is to (1) propose the creation and outline the responsibilities of a Steering Committee for the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE), and (2) to propose a date for the ninth meeting of the AGEE (AGEE 9).

## **(1) AGEE Steering Committee**

The AGEE Steering Committee would be an extension of the larger AGEE, but would work more directly and regularly with the Joint Environment Unit in implementing the recommendations that come out of AGEE 8. It would be convened one or more times between AGEES 8 and 9 – depending on funding – to help ensure that the activities of the Joint Environment Unit were progressing, and provide guidance and support in areas where difficulties were being encountered. It would assist in preparations for future AGEE meetings, including setting a proposed agenda. This Steering Committee would have its own elected chair and vice-chair, and be supported by the Joint Environment Unit, including commissioning or developing substantive inputs.

The composition of this group would be a maximum 10 members, ideally with a geographical representation. Participants in the Steering Committee would be proposed by the AGEE Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretariat, and endorsed by the full AGEE. Participants in the Steering Committee will fully commit to pro-actively engage in their duties until AGEE 9, at which point the Steering Committee mechanism can be reviewed, revised and/or restructured. However, it is proposed that this Steering Committee would play a more permanent role beyond AGEE 9.

*AGEE participants are invited to consider this proposal, provide feedback, and lend their endorsement, if so agreed.*

## **(2) AGEE 9 in 2012**

Traditionally, the AGEE is convened every two years. As such, AGEE 9 would, in theory, take place in 2011. However, there are a number of arguments that would favor holding AGEE 9 one year later, in 2012.

The year 2012 presents a number of key opportunities for Member States of the AGEE to seize the occasion to most effectively address environmental emergencies.

First, 2012 will mark the culmination of the five-year *Rosersberg Initiative* plan – adopted at AGEE 7 – to improve international awareness of, preparedness for, and response to environmental emergencies.

Second, the next global environmental summit will likely take place in 2012. The summit would follow those held at Stockholm (1972), Nairobi (1982), Rio de Janeiro (1992, the “Earth Summit”), and Johannesburg (2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development). As such, the 2012 summit will likely have a major role in shaping the environmental agenda for the next decade and beyond.

Furthermore, 2012 is also the year that the Kyoto Protocol (for greenhouse gas emissions) is set to expire, and is the target date for implementation of many of the medium-term Millennium Development Goals.

Thus, 2012 will be a year in which international attention at the highest level will be focused on a wide range of environmental issues. Accordingly, AGEE Member States may wish to consider how to make the most of this once-in-a-decade opportunity.

Finally, due to the current global financial crisis, it would be more cost-effective for the AGEE and the Joint Environment Unit to pursue a continuous strategy for three rather than two years.

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