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**REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY
RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

**CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR L'INTERVENTION
D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)**

**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**



9th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.30/6/1
30 March 2009

Malta, 21-24 April 2009

Original: English

Agenda Item 6

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (MTWG).**

Note by the Secretariat

Background

1. The Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC held in 2000 agreed on the establishment of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) aimed at facilitating the exchange of technical data and other scientific information on preparedness and response issues related to marine pollution emergencies and concurred with the guidelines for the method of work of the Working Group ("Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group").

2. The need for such a Regional Forum was strengthened by a decision of the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8, Annex IV, Appendix 1, Monaco 14-17 November 2001), where it was agreed that REMPEC should develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan and with the "specialized regional organisms" which play a coordinating role as set forth in the Mediterranean Action Plan, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

3. The Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (hereinafter referred to as "the Strategy"), which was adopted in 2005 by the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP (DEC)/MED IG.16/3, Portoroz, Slovenia, 8-11 November 2005), also addresses the issue of co-operation with other Organizations. In particular, Specific Objective 17 of the Strategy states that Contracting Parties shall encourage:

- their respective scientific and technical institutions, as well as the industry, to actively participate in R&D activities and programmes related to accidental marine pollution prevention, preparedness and response;
- their respective national institutions and industry to present the results of their R&D activities and programmes in international fora.

4. Moreover, the activities carried out within the MTWG also facilitate the implementation of the following Specific Objectives of the Strategy:

- Specific Objective 18: To improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of decision-making process in case of marine pollution incidents through development and introduction of technical and decision support tools.

- Specific Objective 20: To revise the existing recommendations, principles and guidelines and to develop new ones aimed at facilitating international co-operation and mutual assistance within the framework of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol.

Amendment of the Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG)

5. According to Article 3 of the Guidelines for the MTWG, "The Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points should periodically examine and review these guidelines and make recommendations as appropriate to facilitate the work of the Group". Hence, the Eighth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC held in Malta in 2007 unanimously agreed:

- to nominate REMPEC as the Secretariat of the MTWG and task the MTWG Secretariat to amend the "Guidelines for the MTWG" accordingly and to circulate them to the Focal Points;
- to maintain the MTWG as a correspondence group;
- to designate appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the MTWG; and
- to envisage the MTWG as a regional forum through which the Contracting Parties would contribute to the relevant work carried out at a global level (e.g. IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group).

6. As requested by the Eighth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the "Guidelines for the MTWG" were amended by the Secretariat and circulated to the OPRC Focal Points in November 2007.

MTWG's Work Programme

7. In May 2007, the Eighth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC requested the MTWG to:

- develop Guidelines on Shorelines Cleanup Assessment;¹
- develop a Decision Support Tool on Waste Management; and
- develop technical Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques.

8. In compliance with the amended Guidelines of the MTWG, the Contracting Parties designated appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the three activities of the MTWG Work Programme, as follows:

- 13 nominations for the development of the "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment";
- 14 nominations for the development of a Decision Support Tool on Waste Management; and
- 13 nominations for the development of the technical Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques.

Cooperation between the Regional Forum (MTWG) and the International Forum (IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group)

9. Following the decision of the Eighth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, the MTWG has been contributing, as a regional forum, to the work carried out at the international level. The MTWG Programme has been submitted to the Sixth Meeting of the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group. Following the proposal of the Secretariat, the Fifty-Sixth Session of IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) agreed to include in the programme of work of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group the following:

¹ The title of the Guidelines on Shorelines Cleanup Assessment has been renamed as "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment" to avoid any confusion and focus the title on the purpose of the Guidelines as specified in the paragraph 15 of the present document.

- to participate in the development of the Draft "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment", to be carried out through a correspondence group under the coordination of REMPEC, by examining:
 - .1 the draft comparative study of the existing guidelines on shoreline clean-up assessment, to be developed by REMPEC;
 - .2 the draft "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment", also to be developed by REMPEC, which will compile the best practices in the domain of shoreline cleanup assessment, including standard forms; and
- to review a standard matrix (decision support tool) based on the results of the Mediterranean Waste Management Study to be carried out by REMPEC, through the MTWG; and
- to initiate the development of a technical Guideline on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques

Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment

10. The Secretariat in collaboration with the MTWG implemented the project in two phases:
 - Phase I: Comparative Study on existing oiled shoreline assessment guidelines, hereafter referred as "Comparative Study";
 - Phase II: Draft "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment".
11. With a view to implement the two phases of the project, the MTWG has been technically supported by the Oil Spill Training Company Ltd which was contracted by REMPEC.
12. It is recalled that the shoreline assessment following a spill is crucial and may be used for various purposes such as:
 - to define the regional scale and scope of the oiling;
 - to establish shoreline protection priorities and remobilization potential;
 - to assess treatment strategies and tactics and prepare treatment plans;
 - to provide very specific instructions to personnel involved in cleanup operations on each segment of the shoreline;
 - to provide overviews of the spill response status and progress;
 - to provide a basis for post treatment inspection and evaluation, etc...
13. The primary objective of the Guidelines is to provide coastal States affected by a pollution incident with the relevant knowledge to enable them to undertake, immediately after an oil spill and during the cleanup operations, detailed and comprehensive shoreline surveys. A copy of the draft Guidelines is reproduced in document REMPEC/WG.30/INF.12.
14. The Guidelines are also aimed at harmonising shoreline assessment in the region and at facilitating the exchange of information between the Contracting Parties and also between the Contracting Parties, international organizations, REMPEC, international experts and other professionals who may assist the affected States to respond to the incident.
15. The Draft Guidelines are primarily designed for field missions and secondly for raising awareness on the matter amongst the relevant administrations in charge of the response operations. The document has been drafted with a didactic approach and is designed to be easily reproduced in black and white to ensure its prompt dissemination when several surveyors are required in different locations.
16. The project's main focus is on shoreline assessments' data gathering and not on the analysis and use of this data by response decision makers when planning the response operations.

17. It should be emphasised that the level of detail of the information gathered may vary depending on the response stage. For instance, at the initial stage of a response, basic information may be sufficient to undertake immediate response measures. As the response to the incident develops, this level of detail becomes more and more important as termination of operation approaches and the 'how clean is clean' issue has to be resolved. Surveys need to be fit for the purpose; the objectives of shoreline surveys need to be absolutely clear from the outset at each stage of the response.

18. In this respect and to facilitate this exercise and guide the shoreline survey, an "Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form" template has been prepared by the MTWG and is reported in the Draft Guidelines. The level of information to be filled in the form, which is quite detailed, will depend on the stage of the response.

19. To facilitate the identification of shoreline types and oil thickness and character, photographic guides were included in the Draft Guidelines. With a view to illustrating the photographic guides, the MTWG was requested to provide photographs of the corresponding Mediterranean shoreline types. At the time of writing this report, only OTRA SARL and ITOPF have provided photographs.

20. Following the submission of the Comparative Study (MEPC/OPRC-HNS/TG 8/3/2) to the Eighth Meeting of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, the Group will consider and provide comments on the final draft of the Guidelines at its Ninth Meeting to be held in London between 6 and 10 July 2009. The outcome of this Meeting will be disseminated to the MTWG and to the OPRC Focal Points for their consideration.

21. The Secretariat is grateful to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and in particular national entities and officials nominated as MTWG contact points which have supported the initiative and to the OPRC-HNS Technical Group for the contributions and comments provided during the development of the present Draft Guidelines.

22. The Secretariat also recognizes and highly appreciates the in-kind support and contribution of the "Centre de documentation de recherche et d'expérimentations sur les pollutions accidentelles des eaux" (CEDRE) of France, the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Ltd. (ITOPF), Mr. Sergy Gary from S3 Environmental, a leading expert on the concept of Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Team (SCAT), OTRA SARL, UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA), the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Environment Canada which provided valuable comments and specific information material.

23. Finally, to smooth the process of integration of the systematic shoreline assessment in the national response procedure and therefore increase the efficiency of the response, a training programme on shoreline assessment based on existing programmes available in countries outside the Mediterranean region (e.g. Canada, New Zealand) will be developed. A pilot training is scheduled to be organised by REMPEC during the biennium 2010-2011.

Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool

24. Following the decision of the Eighth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Secretariat initiated the implementation of the project, detailed as follows:

- Phase I: "Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Study" aimed at developing and disseminating to the Mediterranean coastal States a questionnaire related to the respective national waste management policy. The questionnaire covered technical, logistic, financial and legal aspects of the management of oily waste.
- Phase II: Draft a Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool, hereafter referred as the "*Draft Decision Support Tool*". This document has been designed to assist the countries in drafting or updating their oil spill waste management plan. It also provides support for the selection of the best environmental practical option for the treatment and final disposal of oil spill waste and for the review of their regulatory framework, if necessary.

- Phase III: On the basis of the outcome of Phase II, an electronic version of the “*Decision Support Tool*” will be developed to facilitate and guide Mediterranean coastal States in developing/improving their national waste management strategy and in defining the most appropriate waste stream for a given type of waste, according to the country’s capacity and legislation.

25. In the first phase of the project, a draft questionnaire was first sent to Egypt, Israel and Tunisia who volunteered to test it. The questionnaire was amended according to the three States’ comments and disseminated to the Contracting Parties. The information gathered enabled the assessment of the national status and capabilities regarding oil spill waste management.

26. The first analysis of the REMPEC questionnaires reflects the situation in the region based on the replies provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Monaco, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. The Centre extends its appreciation to these Contracting Parties for their contribution to this initiative.

27. In the second phase of the project, the “*Draft Decision Support Tool*” was developed on the basis of the result of the Mediterranean Waste Management Study and international best practices taking into consideration technical, logistical, financial and legal aspects.

28. Before the Ninth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, the “*Draft Decision Support Tool*”² was submitted to the MTWG and to the OPRC Focal Points for comments. According to their comments, it will be amended and submitted to the Ninth Meeting of the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group for its consideration and input. In order to incorporate the proposed amendments, these comments should be sent to the Centre by not later than 18 May 2009.

29. Following the recommendations of the MTWG and the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, the Secretariat will initiate the implementation of Phase III. Taking into account the volume of information included in the document, the electronic application resulting from Phase III will facilitate and guide Mediterranean coastal States in developing/improving their national waste management strategy.

30. Phase III of the project shall be initiated during the second semester of 2009 and shall be tested by a voluntary Contracting Party, in early 2010.

Sunken Oil

31. As mentioned in paragraph 9 of the present document, the Fifty-Sixth Session of MEPC agreed to include in the programme of work of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, the development of technical Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques.

32. A literature review on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques (MEPC/OPRC-HNS/TG 7/3/7) has been carried out by a correspondence group of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group led by Italy.

33. Italy has also volunteered to lead the correspondence group in charge of further expanding the list of reference material on this topic and of drafting a basic outline for the development of the guidelines. Once the basic outline will be communicated to the Centre, this will be circulated amongst the nominated MTWG members. It should be noted that the draft outline will be submitted to INTERSPILL 2009 in May 2009.

With regard to the “Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment”, the Meeting of Focal Points is invited to:

- **take note** of the work carried out by the MTWG for the development of the “Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment”;

² Taking into account that the document is under development and considering its size (134 pages) the Draft Decision Support Tool has not been reproduced for the Ninth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC. However, a copy is made available for reference.

- **continue supporting** this initiative by urging Contracting Parties to provide the Secretariat with digital pictures of Mediterranean shoreline types, for the finalization of the Guidelines; and
- **request the Secretariat to integrate** the final version of the “Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment” in the Centre’s Regional Information System (RIS) and to disseminate it to the Contracting Parties.

Concerning the Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool, the Meeting of Focal Points is invited to:

- **take note** of the work carried by the MTWG on the Draft Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool and prospective work to be carried out; and
- **encourage** the MTWG nominees to provide comments on the Draft Decision Tool **not later than 18 May 2009**.

Regarding the Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques, the Meeting of Focal Points is invited to take note of the work being carried out on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques.