

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

REMPEC/WG.18/10/1
20 July 2000

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Malta, 25 - 28 October 2000

Agenda Item 10.1

MEDITERRANEAN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Note by REMPEC

1. Within the context of sea-based pollution prevention and control activities, the Eleventh Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Malta, 27 - 30 October 1999, UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.12/9) approved the following recommendation:

“To support the establishment of a Mediterranean Technical Working Group, co-ordinated by REMPEC, which will work, as a minimum, by correspondence and whose function will be to facilitate the exchange of technical data and other scientific and technological information aimed at assessing the nature, exposure and risks from accidental marine pollution and promoting remedies for such pollution in the Mediterranean Sea area.”

2. In this context, it might be recalled that a number of regional agreements have already set up permanent working groups of experts for the exchange of information on operational and technical questions. Examples of these are: 1) the Bonn Agreement Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA); and 2) the Sea-based Pollution Group (HELCOM Sea) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission).

3. The purpose of establishing such a Mediterranean Technical Working Group is to facilitate the consideration of an issue or specific item by Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points on the basis of a consolidated report prepared by a "lead country" through consultation by correspondence with interested delegations, international organizations and appropriate entities which could be interested in the issue or specific item. The ultimate aim is to improve the existing mechanism of regional co-operation and mutual assistance, as well as assist REMPEC discharge its duties under its mandate, objectives and functions.

4. Proposed draft guidelines prepared by REMPEC for the “modus operandi” of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group are found at Annex.

5. In order to assist the Meeting of REMPEC’s Focal Points decide on an item of work which could be allocated to the Mediterranean Technical Working Group, as well as being mindful that this is probably the first experience of its kind within the Mediterranean regional context for combating accidental marine pollution, the Centre has prepared a short list of items found hereunder which could be considered by the Meeting as possible items of work for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group for the coming biennium:

- inventory of oils commonly traded in major Mediterranean ports or terminals;
- inventory of bulk chemicals commonly traded in major Mediterranean ports or terminals;
- inventory of internet sites that can provide chemical safety data sheets;
- inventory of national institutions which can be used for the delivery of short specialized courses on preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution.

Action requested of the Meeting of Focal Points

6. The Meeting is invited to:

- a) express its views, amend as necessary and subsequently approve the proposed guidelines on the method of work of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group;
- b) assign an item of work to this newly formed Group;
- c) decide on a “Group Leader” and designate members to the Group.

ANNEX

Draft Proposed Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group

Purpose

1. The purpose of establishing this Group is to facilitate the consideration of an issue or specific item by the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points on the basis of a consolidated report prepared by a "lead country" through consultation by correspondence with interested delegations, international organizations and appropriate entities.

Prerequisites

2. The Group should operate under the instructions of and report to the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points. The Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points should decide on the item to be considered by the Group and establish a list of priorities of the Group. The Group will consider one item of work at a time. When allocating an item of work, the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points should take into consideration that it would be desirable that the Group complete the work in time by the next meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points (i.e. within a two-year period).

3. 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.

Participation

4. After a Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points has agreed on the issue to be considered by the Group, the profile of expertise of the Group should be considered. Participation is open to all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, international organizations and appropriate entities which can provide the necessary expertise on a timely basis or which have a particular interest in the issued under consideration. Any Contracting Party, international organization or appropriate entity can join in the work of the Group and any contribution should be accepted at any stage of the work of the Group.

Method of work

5. A "lead country" should be designated by the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points to coordinate the work of the Group and act as Group "leader".

6. Responsibilities of the Group "leader" should include:

- 1) preparation, maintenance and circulation of the list of participants;
- 2) decide on the working language (English or French);
- 3) establishment of deadlines for the preparation of draft texts and receipt of comments and proposals thereon from the participants;
- 4) preparation and circulation of the draft texts and comments thereon;
- 5) preparation and submission to REMPEC (see paragraph 9 below) of the report on the work in time for the Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points;
- 6) introduction of the above-mentioned report to the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points.

7. Responsibilities of participants should include:

- 1) active participation in the work of the Group;
- 2) compliance with the deadline established by the Group "leader";
- 3) relaying to other group members copies of comments, proposals, etc. submitted to the Group "leader".

8. The responsibilities of REMPEC should include:
- 1) to translate the report of the work of the Group;
 - 2) to circulate the report of the work in both languages on behalf of the Group "leader" to the Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points;
 - 3) cover the cost of participation of the Group's "leader" to the Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points.

Outcome of the Group's work

9. The results of work carried out by the Group should normally take the form of a report reflecting the information received from members of the Group. Such a report should be accompanied by a succinct report summarizing the work and indicating which members have provided input to the process. Where it has not been possible to prepare an agreed consolidated report, there should be clear indication in the document on which there was disagreement.

Submission of the Group's report

10. The final report of the Group's work should be submitted to the first meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points to meet after the work would have been assigned. It should be submitted to REMPEC 12 weeks before the opening of the Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points to allow enough time for translation and distribution to the Focal Points.

11. In the case that the Group has not finalized its work in time to meet this deadline, a progress report should be received by REMPEC not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points to ensure enough time for translation and circulation to the Focal Points for their consideration.

Existence of the Group

12. The Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points should periodically review the necessity for the continued existence of the Group and make recommendations accordingly to the Meetings of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.