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TO THE CONVENTION ON THE
TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS
OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**



Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CP.TEIA/SEM.3/2007/1
ECE/MP.WAT/SEM.8/2007/1
28 August 2007

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION
AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND
INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Original: ENGLISH
ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN ONLY

Workshop on the Safety of Tailing Management Facilities

Yerevan (Armenia), 12–14 November 2007

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Introduction

1. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes mandated at their respective latest meetings (Rome, 15–17 November 2006, and Bonn, Germany, 20–22 November 2006) the Ad hoc Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) to develop safety guidelines and good practices for tailing dams for consideration at their next meetings.
2. Pursuant to this decision, the Joint Expert Group established a Steering Group with expertise in the safety of tailing dams and decided to prepare a workshop. The Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany kindly offered to jointly organize this event.
3. This note provides information on the theme, organization of work and logistics of the workshop.

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II. Objectives

4. The key objectives of the workshop are:
- (a) To exchange experience and good practice on national and international developments regarding the prevention, control and reduction of tailing dam failure. The workshop will focus mainly on management systems, inspections and emergency planning for tailing dams, as well as on their pre-construction and closing. Participants will also discuss the issue of abandoned and orphan tailing dam sites, including their decommissioning and remediation.
 - (b) To provide comments on the draft guidelines and good practices for tailing dams based on the diverse experience of workshop participants, who will represent governmental authorities, operators, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

III. Dates and venue

5. The workshop will take place on Monday and Tuesday, 12 and 13 November 2007 in Yerevan, in the premises of the hotel Metropol:

Hotel Metropol
2/2 Mashtots Ave.
0015 Yerevan
Armenia

6. An integral part of the workshop will be a technical field trip to a tailing dam at Ararat, organized jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The site visit will take place on Wednesday, 14 November 2007. Furthermore, with a view to promoting synergy and coordination, on 15 and 16 November 2007 UNEP will hold back to back with the above workshop its technical meeting, focusing on mining in the Caucasus.

IV. Organization of work

7. The workshop will consist of three sessions.

Session I: Presentation and overview on the key issues addressed by the guidelines

This session will address the key issues regarding safety of tailing dam facilities. The participants will be invited to share experience on:

- (a) The importance of pre-construction aspects: dam safety in planning and design, licensing, environmental impact assessment and land use planning;
- (b) Management systems and dam safety;

- (c) Inspections;
- (d) Contingency planning.

While discussing the key issues, particular attention will be given to:

- (a) Education and training of competent authorities and operators;
- (b) Public information and public participation throughout the “life cycle” of a tailing dam;
- (c) Transboundary context;
- (d) Abandoned and orphan sites.

Session II: Feedback from stakeholders on the draft guidelines, including on the evaluation of their future implementation.

During the second session, participants representing various stakeholders, such as operators, governmental authorities, financial institutions and NGOs, will share their appraisals of the draft guidelines and provide their evaluations of the implementation of the guidelines, addressing the most difficult issues from their points of view.

Session III: Discussion on the improvement of the guidelines.

The third session will be devoted to a plenary discussion with a focus on how to further improve the guidelines.

- 8. A detailed provisional programme for the workshop will be issued in October 2007.

V. Working languages

- 9. The workshop will be conducted in English and Russian.

VI. Participation

- 10. The workshop is open to experts from UNECE member countries representing relevant governmental authorities, the private sector (operators of tailing dams and financial institutions) and NGOs.

- 11. Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the secretariat as soon as possible, but not later than 5 October 2007. The financial request form is available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/welcome.htm>

VII. Registration of participants

12. Each participant should complete a registration form (available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/welcome.htm>) and return it to the organizers and the secretariat at the address indicated on the registration form as soon as possible, but not later than 5 October 2007.

13. Registered participants will receive a confirmation in October, together with other necessary information.

VIII. Arrival of participants, transport and hotel accommodation

14. Transport for participants will be arranged by local organizers. Each participant should therefore indicate clearly in the registration form his/her days and times of arrival and departure to and from Yerevan.

15. The workshop will start at 11 a.m. to allow participants travelling from Western Europe and arriving in Yerevan only early in the morning on 12 November to have some rest before the workshop.

16. Accommodation will be arranged for registered participants at the Hotel Metropol (the venue of the workshop) by local organizers on the basis of information provided in the registration form. A registration desk will be open to assist participants on 12 November from 10 a.m.

IX. Visas

17. To facilitate the process of obtaining a visa, the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia will provide participants requiring visas with a personal invitation letter.

18. Participants requiring an entry visa should contact the nearest diplomatic representation of Armenia. There is also the possibility of receiving an entry visa upon arrival at the airport in Yerevan.
