

2nd October 2002

REPORT OF THE 2002 EMERGENCY PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (EPPR) WORKING GROUP MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Council (AC) Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group held its meeting in Cordova, Alaska, The United States, on 15-16 April 2002.

The meeting was attended by delegations from Canada, Finland, Norway, The Russian Federation, Sweden and the US. Observers from the Northern Forum and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were also present. A list of participants is attached to the report (Annex 1).

Mr Olli Pakkala from Finland acted as Chair for the meeting and Ms Miliza Malmelin acted as secretary of the meeting.

Before the meeting the host country had arranged for a tour of the oil terminal in Port Valdez with the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. and a visit to the Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic System office of Prince William Sound.

AGENDA

Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and pointed out that this meeting in fact was the tenth meeting of EPPR.

Agenda item 2 Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with the addition of point 5.7 Update on the Field Guide (Annex 2). A list of documents concerning the items on the agenda is attached (Annex 3).

Agenda item 3 The Arctic Council

3.1 Work of the Arctic Council and the SAOs

The chair informed of the two Senior Arctic Officials' (SAOs) meetings held since the 2001 EPPR meeting. The meeting reports from these can be accessed at <http://www.arctic-council.org/meetings.asp#sao>. The chair also informed of the 10th Anniversary of the AEPS (Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy) which was celebrated in Rovaniemi, Finland in June 2001. The main event at the anniversary was the publication of the report "Arctic Flora and Fauna - Status and Conservation" by the CAFF working group. In his speech at the anniversary the chair had highlighted the need to widen EPPR's mandate to cover also natural accidents; the cooperation on regional level

between rescue and civil protection authorities; and the question on what can be done to nuclear activities and radioactive waste within the Arctic Council. The speeches delivered at the 10th anniversary can be found at <http://www.arctic-council.org/pmeetings/aeps10/index.asp>.

The chair finally informed of the Capacity Building workshop held in Helsinki in November 2001. Questions that had arise where how the Arctic Council can improve the capability of the northern peoples to handle emergencies, and to what extent the indigenous peoples were taken into account in the preparations of the Circumpolar Map. The idea of a possible capacity building pilot project in the EPPR field was expressed, but no more concrete suggestion was expressed.

The meeting asked the secretary to inform the working group when the final report from the Capacity Building workshop is available on the web site.

The upcoming SAO meeting in Oulu (May 2002) was briefly introduced. The United States informed that circumpolar infrastructure and transport would be at the agenda. The issue touches upon communication and is in that sense related to capacity building.

3.2 Restructuring of the Arctic Council - EPPR's future mandate

The chair introduced the non-paper dated 18 Oct. 2001 on the review of the Arctic Council structure, written by the chair of the SAOs. The paper states: "The Ministers:

- request EPPR to give more emphasis to prevention, preparedness and response to radiological and other hazardous materials;
- decide to expand the mandate of EPPR to include prevention of natural disasters as well as preparedness and response to such emergencies;
- urge EPPR to coordinate well with other working groups as well as with bilateral cooperative processes and sub-regional bodies such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council."

In its comments to the non-paper the meeting noted that radiological issues have always been on the agenda , even though there has not been very much activity in the area lately. The AMAP working group works with the monitoring and assessment of radiological pollution but there is a need for EPPR to cover the emergency prevention and response aspects. The transportation and storage of used nuclear fuel is of great concern to many people living in the North and it is important to take the attitudes of the public into consideration.

The meeting further noted that a broadening of the mandate to include also natural disasters could be possible. Some states saw this as important and vital for the working group, whereas other states were more reluctant. Nobody directly opposed the idea, though. The hesitation was mainly connected to how to organize this new area of work within the working group, as experts from other fields would need to be involved in the work. A new structure and way of working will be needed. Also the risk for that the broadened mandate remains an empty line was mentioned - project proposals in this new area are needed.

The United Sates informed that the Cold climate workshop arranged by the Northern Forum just prior to the EPPR meeting had dealt with oil spill issues and flood issues. Even though the two issues were kept apart and dealt with in separate workshops it is very possible that the recommendations from the workshop can be of use to EPPR.

The meeting endorsed in principal, with some hesitation, the draft statements about EPPR written in the non-paper (18 October 2001). The meeting wanted to put forward to the SAOs

the following comments and additions to the draft statements: 1) the fundamental functions of EPPR, connected to pollution prevention, preparedness and response should not be forgotten; 2) the new tasks may have influence on the structure of the work of the working group; 3) EPPR should coordinate and also cooperate with several sub-regional bodies among which should be mentioned the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Northern Forum, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

3.3 Other working groups and activities

Short information on the upcoming (1-4 October 2002) AMAP international symposium on environmental pollution of the Arctic was given. The symposium will showcase results of recent research and monitoring into the sources, pathways, levels, trends and effects of persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and radioactivity, and their implications for human health in the Arctic.

The meeting also briefly discussed the arrangement of the International conference on Oil and Gas activities suggested by AMAP. The conference will most probably be postponed to 2006. The meeting expressed its willingness to contribute to the conference. The issue will be discussed in more detail at later EPPR meetings.

Short information on the PAME meeting agenda was given. It was noted that at least the different shipping activities are of interest to EPPR. These include ship-ship, ship-shore oil transfer guidelines and possible follow-up activities of the snap shot analysis of shipping. The meeting expressed its willingness to contribute to the oil transfer guidelines.

The decided that the secretary should inform the respective working group on EPPR's willingness to contribute to the AMAP International Conference on Oil and Gas activities and to the PAME Arctic Water Oil Transfer Guidelines.

The United States informed that Ms. Karen Perdue from the University of Alaska/ Statewide Health has been nominated lead for the United States delegation to the Sustainable development working group.

The Northern Forum informed about the Severe Cold Climate Workshop arranged in Anchorage, Alaska on 11-12 April. The workshop focused on oil and chemical spills and on floods. Both civilian and military authorities took part in the workshop. The conclusions from the working group on oil and chemical spills was distributed at the meeting. The conclusions from the working group on flooding were not yet ready for distribution. Seppo Lehto who had taken part in the working group on floods though concluded that one of the difficulties is to compare floods in different countries and areas. Assessment of flood areas is something that the Arctic Council/EPPR could do together with the Northern Forum.

The meeting decided that when the full report and the recommendations are available from the Northern Forum Cold Climate workshop the secretary should distribute them to the working group. The delegates should then carefully read it through and consider how cooperation between EPPR and The Northern Forum should best be done and what projects could be conducted. Further discussion on the cooperation between the two bodies should take place at the next EPPR meeting.

Agenda item 4

Information exchange

Canada

- The Mackenzie Delta is experiencing another “boom” resulting from natural gas exploration. At present this activity is primarily on land, but at least one developer is moving into the shallow, nearshore Beaufort Sea. A few exploratory wells have been or are being drilled, with more anticipation in the next few years. One of these wells is an R&D experiment on gas hydrates (JAPEX).
- Before the end of the year, the Delta Producers (Imperial, Shell, and Conoco) are expected to file intent (Preliminary Information Packages) to develop their three fields (total 6 tcf) and build a transmission pipeline (32 - 48 in. diameter) up the Mackenzie Valley. (A map showing oil and gas dispositions in the Beaufort Sea and a copy of the latest Northern Oil and Gas Bulletin were provided at the meeting.)
- Two base-metal (Pb/Zn) mines in Nunavut Territory are in the process of closing down. At the same time, there is a diamond “staking rush” underway in the same territory. In the vicinity of Yellowknife, at the present time, there is one diamond mine in operation, one under construction, and a third proposal undergoing the Environmental Assessment Review. Further north, there is a huge base-metal prospect with diamond potential which is currently dormant. A deep water port in the central Canadian Arctic with an associated all-weather “road to resources” is being discussed. Should this materialize, it would result in a major increase in mineral exploitation for both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
- Information was provided on Environmental Emergency Planning Requirements for Industrial Facilities in Canada - Regulations under Section 200 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). The regulations require environmental emergency plans for 170 substances. All handlers and owners of these substances will have to present a plan. When all the plans are ready this material will offer an excellent ground for developing best practices.
- One of the main issues in the Northwest is how to deal with the McKenzie pipeline for gas transportation. First steps in the regulatory proceedings are expected before Christmas. Seismic explorations have also been done in the area during the winter, and mining prospects are under way in the east.
- An information sheet was provided describing the Arctic Regional Environmental Emergencies Team, its purpose and objectives, and the activities undertaken while in planning or advisory (during an incident) mode. (Further information is available from dave.tilden@ec.gc.ca.)

Finland

- The process to unify municipal fire and rescue organizations and resources into bigger entities is underway according to the Act on Regional Rescue Services which has been effective as of the beginning of the year 2002. Instead of 448 municipal fire brigades there will be 21 Regional Rescue Services from 1 January 2004 on. The Province of Lapland will comprise one concerted rescue authority. Responsibility of the actions will remain municipally organized as agreed by the appropriate municipalities.

- A new Act on Search and Rescue at Sea came into effect on 1 February 2002. The Act is an overall set of regulations on measures taken in case of distress. It strengthens the leading position of the Frontier Guard authorities and obligates other authorities to assist when their expertise and resources are needed. The National Maritime Act was amended at the same time. It includes now a legally binding obligation to the vessels and their captains to notify the sea rescue authorities of any situation that may lead to distress.
- A international seminar on combating oil in ice and cold conditions was held in Helsinki in November 2001. The proceedings from the seminar will be distributed among EPPR participants when they are available.
- The co-operation between the provincial northern rescue authorities in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia has strengthened. A northern search & rescue meeting between the authorities was arranged in 2001.

Norway

- The parliament of Norway has approved start up of production at an offshore gas field, the Snow white, in the Barents Sea. The gas will be transported through a pipeline to shore and made into LNG for sea transport to the consumers. The production is expected to begin in 2005/2006.
- No more new activities are planned in that part of the Barents Sea before an extensive environmental assessment has been conducted. This is estimated to take 1½ to 2 years, or more.
- Gennady Semanov from CNIIMF in St.Petersburg has together with SFT been preparing a risk assessment for oil activity in the Russian part of the Barents Sea area. The aim is to update the Barents Sea regional oil spill contingency plan and develop recommendations on how to maintain adequate preparedness and response to oil spills in the Barents, White and Pechora Seas. The statistics used for the risk assessment are taken from the Baltic Sea and from international statistics. A similar assessment for the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea have been done some years ago.

Sweden

- Sweden has recently finalized a review of the regulations on the use of dispersants (dating back to 1986). The recommendations regarding the use remains the same: no use of dispersants is recommended in the Baltic Sea.
- Finland and Sweden is co-operating in a project where satellites together with air planes are used to detect illegal oil spills, aiming at catching the polluters redhanded.

The Russian Federation

- Russia reported on organisational changes in EMERCOM. As of 1st January 2002 EMERCOM is also the authority responsible for fire services.
- Last year work has started to prepare a series of maps on complex natural risks in Russia. The Atlas will contain 16 maps on different types of risks and is estimated to be finished in 2003-2004. This year work is being done on the combination of natural and technical risks.

The United States

- Gary Thomas from the Prince William Sound Science Centre (PWSSC) gave a presentation on the community based science program used and its nowcast/forecast modelling.
- Walter Cox from PWSSC reported on the development of a draft research agenda for oil spill response in ice-covered waters.
- The MORICE project has concluded its 6th and last phase this winter, which was real life testing in Svalbard. The final report is being prepared and will be presented at the AMOP in 2002 and the IOSC in 2003. The concept of mechanical recovery of oil from ice has proven functional.
- Two international conferences on radiological issues will be arranged this year. The AMAP conference will be in St Petersburg in June 2002 and it will focus on Arctic and Antarctic issues. A more general conference will be held in September.
- The oil industry in Alaska is expanding east from Prudhoe.
- Additional regulations on the use of dispersants have come into force.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- The observer informed about the role of the Red Cross in Russia. The Red Cross assists in disaster planning and preparedness and has a complementary role to national authorities. In Russia the Red Cross works with EMERCOM and the emphasis of the work is on natural disasters.

Agenda item 5

Ongoing projects of the EPPR working group

5.1

Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic

The Circumpolar map is now finished. Several questions on how (and if) to proceed developing the map still remains, though. One way to proceed is to develop the map into a series of interactive maps, allowing the customer to choose which parameters are shown on the printout map depending on what geographical area or species he/she wants to focus on. That would allow for an enormous number and variations of maps, and not be limited to the 75 maps now produced. Another way of developing the map is to add other pollutants than oil to the GIS data base and make it into a general information tool, not only for EPPR, but also for the other working groups. The updating of the data in the database has also to be decided upon. Can the consultant responsible for the map go directly to other working groups or scientific sources to get the updated material needed or does the updating procedure has to be done through the national EPPR representative, which could be slower?

The meeting also discussed whether the background data used when preparing the maps should be freely accessible on the website or not.

The meeting expressed its gratitude to Norway for all their work on the Circumpolar Map project and for an excellent final product. The meeting adopted the Circumpolar Map and decided to present it to the SAOs as well as to the Ministers. Finland offered to contribute financially so that colored promotional handouts about the Circumpolar Map can be distributed at the Ministerial Meeting. The meeting further decided that the website will be publicly accessible, but that the background data sets will not be available for the public.

Norway was asked to prepare a proposal on how the update and maintenance of the Circumpolar Map should best be handled, reflecting also the cooperation with other Arctic Council working groups on the issue. Decision on these aspects will be taken through correspondence. The correspondence procedure should be finalized in the beginning of September, so that these aspects also can be reflected in the report to the Ministers. Further development of the Circumpolar Map will be considered at the next EPPR meeting.

5.2 Source control management and prevention strategies for chlorine handling at the Apatit waterworks

The United States presented the progress achieved within the project. The risk assessment prepared on Apatit waterworks is almost finalized. Also the first version of the risk methodology is almost ready. The aim is to have both reports finalized in June. After this negotiations on at what facility to continue the project will be held. The aim is to find a facility that presents a radiation hazard for the second phase of the project. The idea is to test and refine the methodology to ensure it is applicable to a spectrum of hazards.

The meeting endorsed in principal the final report of the Emergency prevention/ Source control pilot project in Apatity-vodokanal and the first version of the developed methodology. The meeting further encouraged US/Russia to continue with the project in another facility as planned. The final report and the methodology will be distributed by US/Russia in July. Also information on the new facility and a plan for how to continue the project there will be sent out at the same time. Objections should be given within one month after the distribution. If no objections are received the report and methodology can be considered endorsed. The report will then be forwarded to the SAOs and the Ministers for approval.

* The above timelines have not been kept and therefore no final report and methodology document will be endorsed before the Ministerial. The SAOs and Ministers will be informed of the progress, but no special approval will be asked for. (Addition made 15 August 2002).

5.3 Airborne radiation monitoring

The United States informed about the NEWNET radiation monitoring stations placed in Alaska. The plan is to have two to four stations installed in the surrounding of the Bilibino nuclear power plant in Chukotka, Russia this summer.

US further informed about the planned table top emergency exercise that will be conducted at the Bilibino nuclear power plant in August 2002. The call will go out through IAEA to all Arctic states as well as to other countries neighbouring Russia. If the authorities in the other Arctic states are interested to take part in the table top exercise these can be informed and welcome to join.

It was decided that US together with Russia send out information to the EPPR delegates for the table top emergency exercise at Bilibino so that the relevant authorities of the member states can be informed. The interested states were also asked to provide US (Ann Heinrich) with the contact information to their respective nuclear emergency authorities, so that these can be provided with further information on the table top emergency exercise at Bilibino.

5.4 Shoreline cleanup assessment technology

Canada informed on the rather slow progress in preparing the SCAT manual. An experts meeting is scheduled for this spring at which US and Canada are going to discuss the content, budget, lead and contractor for the manual. All parties interested are welcome to take part in the experts meeting. The manual will possibly be available six months after the meeting. This means that a review of the manual should be possible before the next EPPR meeting.

The meeting took note of the progress of the SCAT project and asked Canada to provide the secretary with details on the upcoming expert meeting, tentatively scheduled for 7 May 2002 in Seattle, as soon as possible so that all countries interested could take part. The meeting further asked Canada to distribute the outcome of the expert meeting to the EPPR delegates.

5.5 Survey on past major accidents

Finland reported on the conducted survey on past major accidents. The results from the survey were not very encouraging as only the US responded. No conclusions can therefore be drawn from the data gathered.

Many countries commented that the questions in the survey should have been more clearly defined to enable more precise answers. The issue was still seen important. If a more detailed survey will take place it would be a good idea to give the coordinates for the place of accident. This way the information could be plotted on a map.

The meeting thanked Finland for the survey on past major accidents. It was agreed that the data gathered provide some background information on the issue but that no conclusions can be drawn from it.

5.6 EPPR web site & The Arctic Guide

The secretary distributed printed versions of the Arctic Guide for possible update by the countries.

The dead line for submitting corrected Arctic guide information to the secretary is on 15th May.

5.7 Update on the Field Guide

Canada informed that the three first chapters of the Field Guide have been published separately as a First responders guide. This has been published in English and in Inuktituk. Canada has also been preparing a fact sheet on the use of the Field Guide.

It was decided that the fact sheet on the use of the Field Guide will be completed by Canada and the secretary and that information on this and on the First Responders Guide be given to the SAOs.

Agenda item 6

Possible new projects - the "shopping list"

The chair introduced the shopping list by saying that it is not meant to be a list of things that should be conducted, but that it is a list of ideas on what EPPR could do in the future.

The United States introduced its proposals on radiological issues: to create a focus group for radioactivity within EPPR; to conduct the second phase of the Source control project at a facility posing radiological hazards; to apply radiological emergencies to the circumpolar map; to develop a best practice emergency program for prevention, preparedness and response for nuclear/radiological emergencies.

The question was raised whether the SAOs have found out that there are no other bodies in the Arctic area taking care of the prevention, preparedness and response issues connected to radiological hazards. It was noted that there are other bodies dealing with similar issues, so the work of EPPR most provide an added value. In general the countries were positive to the proposals, but some reluctance was expressed regarding how to organize the work and whether a sub group is needed or not.

The meeting thanked US for the proposal to put effort in radiological issues and agreed in principal to do so. The meeting asked US to prepare concrete project proposals in consultation with the relevant bodies of the other countries for the next meeting. Decision on how to organize and conduct the projects will also be taken at the next meeting. The project area of radiological issues will be included in the new work plan.

The United States presented a project proposal on prepositioned equipment sites. The idea of which is to make an inventory of the response equipment sites, their capability and time for activation in the member countries. The U.S. is currently doing a response restore inventory (RRI) and is hoping that Canada will be joining as this could occur within their joint contingency plan. Are other countries interested to join?

The EU countries informed that this has been done already for long time within the EU and also within Helcom. The information on the equipment stockpiles is available on the web: [Http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/marpol-cis/index.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/marpol-cis/index.htm). It was suggested that the address to this web site would be included in the Arctic Guide and that a link to the web sites would be established from EPPR's web site.

US will, based on the discussions at the meeting, continue the work regarding prepositioned equipment sites bilaterally with Canada and Russia. The EU and Helcom website addresses listening the Nordic Countries' response equipment will be distributed to the EPPR, the national websites will also be linked to the Arctic guide/EPPR website. Check up on the issue will take place at the next meeting.

The Russian Federation presented the project proposal on the development of a system of interstate interaction for prevention of transboundary accidents.

It was noted that some of the issues addressed in the proposal are already included in the work program of the UN-ECE, and that there might not be any added Arctic value in the project. The U.S. also noted that some of the issues are dealt with within the source control project.

The Russian Federation concluded that additional studies are needed to achieve a more focused project proposal, also in the financial aspect.

The meeting thanked Russia for its project proposal regarding transboundary accidents and asked them to reconsider the question based on the discussions at the meeting. A new proposal may be put forward at the next meeting.

The United States asked the other countries for their interest in developing a project on research and development of oil in ice. If there would be interest in this US could prepare a proposal on the issue. At least Finland, Norway and Canada indicated that they are interested in taking part in research and development in this subject area.

General support was given to put more effort in research and development on oil in ice issues. The meeting asked US to prepare some project proposal in this area for the next meeting. The activity area will be put in the new work plan.

The meeting went through the shopping list and specified it, and developed it into a draft work plan according to the discussions had on the different project areas. Some further additions were made as the idea of developing a project on oily waste disposal was expressed. Also the idea of including information on bilateral and subregional agreements on the standard agenda for the meeting was introduced.

Agenda item 7 Update of the work plan

The chair envisioned that the work plan part (beginning at section 2.3) of the Strategic Plan of Action (1998) would be updated in accordance with the discussion had on new projects and presented to the SAO and Ministers. (See Annex 4.)

It was decided that the secretary will prepare a revised work plan as an annex to the meeting report according to the discussions on the project proposals and shopping list held at the meeting. The next meeting will carefully go through the new work plan and countries are encouraged to put forward project proposals on the new project areas for that meeting

7.1 EPPR deliverables to the Ministerial Meeting, October 2002

The main deliverables to the Ministerial meeting are the Circumpolar map, the new work plan and the new mandate. The report on EPPR to the SAOs should be prepared according to given instructions.

The secretary will prepare the report for the SAO meeting in Oulu according to the guidelines given by the Arctic Council Secretariat. The report will be circulated among the delegates for quick response in week 17 and then submitted to the SAOs.

Agenda item 8 Election of chair and vice-chair for the period 2002-2004

After five years of chairing EPPR Finland will resign from the post.

The meeting elected Ms. Laura Johnston from Canada as chair for the period 2002-2004 and Mr. Kjell Kolstad from Norway as vice chair for the same period, subject to endorsement by the SAO's. The secretariat functions will be taken care of by Canada.

Agenda item 9 Any other business

There was no other business.

Agenda item 10 Next meeting

Russia invited EPPR to Murmansk for the 2003 meeting. The possible date for the meeting will be in late June or beginning of July. Many countries expressed that they would prefer the meeting to be held earlier in June as the summer holiday season starts around the 20th June in the Nordic countries.

The meeting thanked Russia for the invitation to have the 2003 meeting in Murmansk Russia, with the hope that the meeting could be arranged in mid June.

Agenda item 11 Record of decisions and end of meeting

The record of decisions was discussed and approved by the meeting, with minor corrections and clarifications (see bolded texts above).

The Chair thanked the participants for a fruitful meeting and most of all the U.S. and the staff at PWSSC/OSRI for the excellent hosting.

The meeting warmly thanked the outgoing chair for all the work he's been doing for EPPR during the years.