

## **2- Page highlights to SAO Chair - EPPR II Working Group Meeting December 2-4, 2014 in Seattle, USA**

EPPR held its semi-annual meeting in Seattle, United States on December 2-4. 37 participants attended representing six AC countries, two Permanent Participants, two observer states and 3 three observer organizations. The Chair of SDWG, and representatives from PAME provided updates via teleconference. The International Association of Oil and Gas Producers attended as invited experts.

The three day program included a tour and briefing on the US Coast Guard Cutter HEALY, the EPPR II meeting and a one day workshop on the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for Emergency Response in the Arctic. The working group meeting focused on follow-up activities from the last EPPR meeting in Ottawa and the SAO meeting in Yellowknife. Project updates and project proposals were discussed. The relevant sections of the AC Tracking Tool were updated after the meeting.

A new Chair for EPPR was elected, as were two Vice-Chairs. Dr. Amy Merten (US) will assume the position of Chair on May 1, 2015. She will be supported by Mr. Ole-Kristian Bjerkemo (NO) and Mr. Jens-Peter Holst-Andersen (DK) as Vice-Chairs.

### **Road to the Ministerial and US Chairmanship Priorities**

The Chair outlined the timeline for preparations for the Ministerial meeting April 23-25, 2015. The Secretariat will prepare the first draft report to SAOs by December 15, consisting of the Chairman's report on activities 2013-2015 and the EPPR Work Plan for 2015-2017. The Chair noted the need to adhere to strict deadlines.

Ann Heinrich, US/HoD, presented the US on priorities for the Arctic Council during its Chairmanship, 2015-2017. EPPR welcomes the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to priorities under Thematic Area 1: Arctic Ocean Safety and Stewardship, namely activities under the auspices of the SAR agreement and marine environmental protection.

### **Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOA)**

Canada provided an update from the first functional exercise of the Operational Guidelines for the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOA), Phases 1, 2 and 3. The report will be put forward for Ministerial approval in 2015. It was agreed that all recommended updates to the Operational Guidelines, i.e., telephone number updates, be implemented as soon as possible. The Operational Guidelines will be housed on a password protected area of the EPPR website. A short summary report will be prepared for outreach purposes.

EPPR welcomed the proposed planning concept for the second functional exercise of the Operational Guidelines for the MOA under the US Chairmanship. Objectives for the exercise will link to use of several EPPR projects. The US will send out letters of invitation to the parties to request identification of at least one person to participate in the planning process.

It was agreed that HoDs will submit to the Secretariat by January 15, 2015, views on whether the EPPR working group mandate should change to include a more explicit mandate on search and rescue (SAR), including follow-up on the SAR Agreement.

### **Cross-Cutting activities**

- Representatives from PAME joined the meeting via teleconference highlighting the update of the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) and an upcoming conference being planned by World Maritime University (WMU) and PAME in August 2015. EPPR will provide input to the AMSA ahead of February 2015 and also follow-up to provide input to the agenda of the WMU conference.
- SDWG Chair, Jutta Wark, provided an update on the Traditional and Local Knowledge Proposal currently being finalized within SDWG. EPPR HoD will forward feedback to the proposal through the

Secretariat. It was agreed that whenever possible TLK should be taken into consideration within EPPR projects.

- EPPR decided to present a coherent position on the potential role that the WG might play in the future implementation of the TFOPP Framework Plan. Canada will lead consultations with HoD and propose timelines for input.
- The TFOPP work was discussed and the links to EPPR's mandate in many areas of the text was noted. EPPR will review the initiatives more closely and offer its assistance to SAOs where appropriate to implement the Framework Plan.

## New Projects

Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities: EPPR agreed on the development of a scoping workshop for the project "*Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities*" which will be led by the US, Norway, Canada, ICC and AIA. Funding is pending with national authorities. The agenda and other relevant documents will be circulated to EPPR for comment and information.

Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets: EPPR approved the project "*Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets*" which will be led by the US. Norway noted interest in working together with the US on this project.

Circumpolar Oil Spill Gap Analysis: EPPR accepted the proposal put forward by Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark and the US to hold a scoping workshop before the next EPPR working group meeting. Canada will contribute to the planning of the workshop. EPPR WG will be updated on the agenda/invitations for the workshop.

## Current projects

IMO/EPPR Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow Conditions: EPPR decided on timelines to finalize the Arctic version of the IMO/EPPR Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow Conditions. Final comments will be provided to the Canada by December 17, 2014. An Arctic-only version of the guide will be made available on the EPPR website. The Arctic version of the Guide will be put forward for approval by SAOs as a deliverable to the Ministerial in April 2015.

Arctic ERMA (Environmental Response Management Application): The final report on Phase I and Phase II will be submitted to SAOs for approval in March 2015 SAO Meeting as a deliverable to the Ministerial. A request for Member States to provide data sets to Arctic ERMA was acknowledged. Phase I and II are completed. The meeting took note of a presentation on Arctic SDI, and connections to on-going work within EPPR, including Arctic ERMA

Safety Systems in the Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural projects: EPPR took note of the report from the SAR and Oil Spill Response exercise held off the oil platform Prirazlomnaya, close to Varandey in Russia, on August 5-7, 2014.

Arctic Rescue: EPPR took note of the outcomes of this the International Conference "Challenges in Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Arctic: Staff Issues" which was held September 23-25, 2014 in Arkhangelsk, Russia.

Radiation Projects: EPPR welcomed the update on the radiation exercise "*Arctic 2014*" conducted at the Atomflot facility in the Murmansk region of Russia in June 2014. It was decided that the observer handbook and the report from the exercise will be submitted as a Ministerial deliverables. A short report, in the form of a brochure, will be developed for the showcase event.

Occupational Safety and Health in Arctic Oil Spill Response Workers: The US gave an update on the project which is currently on hold. EPPR urged the US to finalize the project.

## Next meeting

The next EPPR meeting will be May 26-28, 2015 in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.