

UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Steering group to finalize the user requirements
for the web-based notification application and
draw up a list of standard replies for notification

First meeting
08 October 2007

MINUTES

Introduction

1. A Steering Group meeting to finalize the user requirements for the web-based notification application and draw up a list of standard replies for notification for the Industrial Accidents Notification (IAN) System was held in Geneva on 8 October 2007.
2. The following members of the Steering Group attended the meeting: Mr. Giorgio Alocci and Ms. Natalia Restuccia (Italy), Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania), Mr. Dominique Rauber (Switzerland), Mr. Fesil Mushtaq (European Commission Joint research Centre), Mr. Joseph Buangan (IT expert), Mr. Hakan Volkan (UNECE Information System Unit). Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski Officer in charge of the Industrial Accidents Convention and Ms. Virginia Fusé also participated to the meeting.

I. Finalization of user/functional requirements for the web-based notification application

3. Mr. Wyrowski recalled the decision (2006/3) taken at the fourth Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention to enhance the current communication procedures of the System by introducing a web-based notification, while keeping fax notification as a back-up procedure.
4. Mr. Wyrowski recalled also the decision taken by the joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation (Geneva, 15-16 February 2007) to establish a steering group consisting of representatives of points of contact that would agree and finalize user requirements for the application, draw up a list of standard replies used in notification, provide overall guidance and test the application before final release. He thanked all the participants to come to the meeting and invited to discuss the user requirements.
5. The steering group had an exhaustive discussion on the web-based notification application and user functionalities and agreed the following:

Method of notification:

6. The notification will take effect by sending e-mails. The e-mail will contain a message with a link to the notification report. In order to enter the notification report, the notified point of contact will need to provide its username and password. This method was agreed to avoid a situation that notification information is received by persons not being part of the system.
7. The notifying point of contact will receive an e-mail sent by the system automatically to inform that the notified point of contact has entered the report having logged in to the system. This will be an automatic acknowledgement generated by the system to inform the notifying point of contact that the notification was received.
8. Each point of contact will have its username and password to enter the system. A country may have one or more accounts, depending on the number of institution being nominated as points of contact. The system will differentiate whether the point of contact is for both notification and mutual assistance purpose or only for one of them. This will serve the purpose that appropriate information will be provided to the point of contact.
9. Each point of contact will receive a preliminary created username and password account and will be asked to change the password. The password will be encrypted.
10. Each point of contact will be asked to verify its contact details, in particular the e-mail address(es) and the telephone and fax numbers and update them if applicable. The system will make automatic tests to verify if the provided e-mail addresses are responding.
11. The database with the contact details will be maintained in English and the points of contact will be asked to insert their contact details in English only.

Languages

12. The system will be operational in all three UNECE official languages: English, French and Russian.
13. The system will remember which language is a default language for each point of contact and open after logging in the default language. The point of contact will be able to change its default language.
14. The point of contact will have the possibility to change the language at each step in the notification to the other of the three official languages.
15. The notification reports will be available in all official languages, however the part of the report that was completed as free text and not selected from the menu lists, etc. will be kept in the same language in which it was entered.

System use

16. The system will be operational as a system for notification in case of accident and for requesting mutual assistance. It will also have an exercise mode to carry out the notification exercises.

17. If a point of contact will carry out an exercise it will click after logging in to the system on the button exercise. It will then use the system for exercising the accident notification or request for mutual assistance. In order to differentiate the exercise part of the notification system it will have a different background colour and it will have clearly written “exercise mode”.

Steps in notification

18. The point of contact after logging in will have several options responding to the actions that it would need to do:

- (a) create new notification – to provide first early warning information on a new accident
- (b) current notification – to update information on the accident (at least early warning report was already submitted)
- (c) request for assistance
- (d) archive of past accidents
- (e) exercise mode

19. There will be also quick link to reports created and reports received by the point of contact.

20. By selecting create new notification the point of contact will access the electronic early warning report to be completed

21. By entering the current notification the point of contact will access the reports created so far on accident notification. It will have the possibility to open the last created report and edit it by adding new information. The newly added information will appear in the submitted report in bold so that the notified point of contact will be able to quickly compare what information was added.

22. By entering the request for assistance the point of contact will access the electronic request for assistance report to be completed

23. By entering the archive of past accident the point of contact will be able to see all the reports created for all the accidents unless the report was restricted for its access.

24. By entering the exercise mode the point of contact will be able to send notification or request for assistance reports for the purpose of exercising.

Completing the reports

25. When accessing create new notification / editing already established report / request for assistance the serial number will be created automatically.

26. The contact details of the point of contact will also appear automatically so that it can make sure that its own contact details are correct.

27. Below the contact details there will be the classification information. The point of contact will be able to select whether it wants to restrict the information only to the selected countries to be notified or it can be available (public) to every point of contact having access to the system. If

a restricted function is selected the reports will be only viewed by the defined points of contact also in the archive of past accidents as long as the status will not be changed to public from restricted.

28. If the notification will not be restricted it will be sent also to the European Commission, which is collecting the information on accidents and storing in MARS System.

29. The next line will contain selection of countries to be notified. The neighbouring countries of the notifying country will appear automatically as “checked for notification”. The notifying point of contact will have however the option to uncheck those of the neighbouring countries that it does not want to notify add/or to add countries to the notification that are not direct neighbours.

30. For the request for financial assistance, apart from neighbouring countries also the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (UNEP/OCHA) and the European Commission Civil Protection Cooperation Mechanism (MIC) will appear automatically as “checked for requesting assistance”

31. For the parts of the report: location, substance, weather conditions the system should contain the following functionalities:

- (a) for the location: the country will appear automatically and a possibility will be investigated whether a link can be added with a website (to appear in new window) to check the geographical coordinates
- (b) for a substance: a simple database with the substance as contained in annex I of the Convention (after amendment) will be created and in case of other substances involved a text field will be created to add these substances
- (c) for weather conditions: there will be a possibility to enter the temperature in Celsius or Fahrenheit degrees and the system will automatically recalculate and maintain both information

32. At the end of the report to be completed there will be a “verify form” button; by clicking at which the point of contact will see the report as it will be submitted. There will be also a print out button

33. The report will be submitted by clicking on the submit button. This action will result in storing the report in the data base and sending automatically the e-mails to the countries as “checked” for notification/request for assistance. A “sent information” will appear if the e-mail was sent successfully and in case of problems there will be a button to resend the notification to the selected country to which the notification did not succeed. In case that resend will not succeed either, an information should appear with the telephone/fax number to the particular point of contact, so that it can be called or faxed to log in to the system and checked on the received reports.

34. While submitting the report the date and time of its submission will be added automatically.

35. The possibility will be explored if a function “attach files” to the reports could be added.

II. Drawing up a list of standard replies, used in notification, which will allow to create selection menus in the application

36. For the purpose of facilitating the completion of the reports, the steering group discussed these parts of reports for which a list of standard replies could be created. The steering group agreed that the list of standard replies, if possible to be created, should contain no more than a few entries.

37. Mr. Senzaconi offered to prepare for the steering group consideration some pre-definitions for the part outflow/threat (021-022) and for the immediate consequences of an accident.

38. As for the assistance request report, the steering group decided that it will be useful to verify with UNEP/OCHA and/or MIC the details to be pre-defined on the request for assistance (part 071-075). The secretariat agreed to consult both UNEP/OCHA and MIC.

39. The steering group agreed that the information on the pre-definitions will be exchanged within the group before 2 November 2007.

III. Other business and closing

Issues to be brought to the next Consultation for Points of Contact

40. The Steering Group agreed that the definition of prognoses and measurements as contained in the manual for notification is ambiguous (point 21 of the UNECE Industrial Accidents Notification System (ECE/CP.TEIA/13)) and proposed to discuss this and other definitions at the next Consultation for points of contact

41. The Group also proposed to contain in the agenda of the next consultation for points of contact a discussion on organizing exercises on requesting assistance.

42. Mr. Wyrowski closed the Steering Group meeting.