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Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
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Eighteenth session
Geneva, 3 - 4 November 2008
Item 6(b) of the provisional agenda

REGULATORY COOPERATION

SECTORAL PROJECTS

**Progress report on the activities of the Sectoral Initiative
on Explosive Environments Equipment**

Note by the secretariat

The Bureau of the Working Party (WP.6), at its last meeting on 19 March 2008, asked the Conveners of the sectoral initiatives to compile concise information on the status of the initiatives that they are developing following the guidelines of the International Model. The information is organized on the basis of a template prepared by the Secretariat.

The progress report is submitted to the Working Party for noting.

I. PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND KEY DELIVERABLES

1. Equipment for explosive environments (i.e. areas where flammable liquids, vapours, gases or combustible dusts are likely to occur in quantities sufficient to cause a fire or explosion) are in use in many sectors such as the chemical and oil industry, gas stations, facilities for handling and storage of grains, woodworking areas and sugar refineries, among others.
2. While users act more and more globally with a single engineering approach for their plants, national laws and regulations emphasize the mandatory approval of domestically recognized notified bodies.
3. This situation makes it very difficult to open markets for explosion-protected equipment and is against the interest of industry as well as of the consumers.
4. The objectives of the task force:
 - (a) To foster the use of relevant International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)/International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards by the industry;
 - (b) To promote a globally harmonized legislation;
 - (c) To ensure mutual acceptance of test procedures and test results among the test houses;
 - (d) To strive for comparable installation, maintenance and repair procedures of the equipment.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT

5. The first meeting of the project was held during the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies in November 2007, where a number of countries presented their legal framework for this important sector.
6. The meeting participants agreed to collect information about the legal framework currently in force in the main markets. Answers to the questionnaire have been received by the European Union, North America, the Russian Federation and Australia. Replies from Japan and China are pending. Additionally, the IECEx-Scheme (the International Trade of Electrical Equipment used in Explosive Atmospheres) actively supports the project.

III. PROJECT MEETINGS HELD IN 2008

7. At the kind invitation of the IECEx Secretariat and the national hosts, the second meeting of the UNECE Sectoral Initiative on Equipment for Explosive Environments will take place back to back with the Annual Meeting of the IECEx-Scheme and the Industry Symposium (Paris, 29 September).
8. The Task Force will hold another meeting as part of the WP.6 Annual session in November 2008.

IV. PROGRESS IN 2008 AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE ANNUAL SESSION

9. During the second meeting in Paris participants will:
- (a) Discuss in detail the terms of reference of the UNECE Initiative;
 - (b) Analyse answers to the questionnaire, aiming to highlight commonalities in the regulations that exist on the different markets;
 - (c) Commence work on a first draft of a possible agreement.
10. The main deliverable for the 2008 annual session is the questionnaire with the answers received until the present date.

V. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE WORK

11. The Initiative on Explosive Environments Equipment consists of the following members: Mr. Frank Lienesch, Mr. Hatto Mattes, Mr. Chris Agius, Mr. Fabrizio Sacchetti, Mr. Kerry Mc Manama, Mr. Uwe Klausmeyer, Mr. Liu Weijun

VI. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE SECRETARIAT PLAY?

12. The secretariat is expected to continue supporting the work of the UNECE Initiative by servicing its meetings as appropriate (prepare the invitation, agenda and supporting documents) and preparing the meetings reports. The website of the Initiative should be kept continuously up to date with recent developments. The secretariat could assist the Convener in maintaining and developing contacts with the various counterparts of the Scheme in the national governments.
