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**BRIEFING PACKAGE FOR SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND
HIGH-LEVEL EXECUTIVES IN THE EVENT OF MAJOR OIL SPILLS**

1 The Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its fifty-fifth session (9 to 13 October 2006) approved a Briefing package for senior government officials and high-level executives in the event of major oil spills, prepared by the fifth session of its OPRC-HNS Technical Group (2 to 6 October 2006), the text of which is set out in the annex.

2 The Briefing package was developed as a framework which will enable the preparation of a comprehensive but concise brief for senior government officials and high-level executives, containing basic information on technical and political issues arising from a major oil spill, as well as an indication as to the probable implications and consequences of the incident in question. The information so provided will also enable the senior government officials and high-level executives to produce appropriate answers to questions that might be asked by the media and the public at large.

3 Member Governments and, in particular, Parties to the 1990 OPRC Convention, are invited to bring the annexed Briefing package to the attention of the appropriate departments within the maritime Administration responsible for oil pollution preparedness and response.

ANNEX

BRIEFING PACKAGE FOR SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND HIGH-LEVEL EXECUTIVES IN THE EVENT OF MAJOR OIL SPILLS

Purpose

1 The present Briefing package will facilitate the preparation of a comprehensive and, at the same time, concise brief for senior government officials and high-level executives, by expanding on, or providing answers to, the basic statements listed below. The resulting brief should enable the relevant senior government officials and high-level executives within the national maritime Administration responsible for oil spill preparedness and response to obtain the information on technical and political issues arising from a major oil spill, as well as the probable implications and consequences of the incident in question, necessary to take well-suited and timely executive decisions. The information so provided will also enable the senior government officials and high-level executives to produce appropriate answers to questions that might be asked by the media and the public at large.

Triggers for a high-level response

2 There are a number of triggers which may influence the magnitude of, and sense of crisis associated with, a marine pollution incident. Some of these triggers are technical triggers due to proximity to sensitive resources, for example, while others may be based on elements such as issues of public perception, particular sensitivities due to past events and the way an event is covered by the media. Incidents that would trigger the highest level of interest and which would require immediate and high-level government intervention are incidents:

- .1 of national significance
- .2 that elicit significant media attention
- .3 with transboundary implications
- .4 that have substantial budgetary consequences

Contents of briefing package

3 Based on the triggers, as identified above, concise information must be gathered and brought to the attention of relevant persons. The level of detail is low. A series of topics is provided as a guideline, as outlined below:

- .1 Incident information
 - .1 description of the scale and nature of incident
 - .2 public and responder health and safety implications
 - .3 environmental impact
 - .4 identified risks arising from the incident
 - .5 measures taken
 - .6 responsibilities and legal implications

- .2 National and transboundary implications
 - .1 scale of, or impact from, the incident
 - .2 national and international co-operation
 - .3 magnitude of socio-economic impact
- .3 Media attention
 - .1 press releases and public information
 - .2 description of size of media involvement
 - .3 governmental considerations
 - .4 policy decisions in relation to media attention
 - .5 level of presentation (operational/strategic/political)
- .4 Budgetary consequences
 - .1 liability of parties involved in the incident
 - .2 national costs with regard to response measures (estimation of costs)
 - .3 costs with regard to monitoring/restoration
 - .4 claim management
 - .5 humanitarian aid, including emergency funding
- .5 Related issues
 - .1 stakeholders interests: governmental, commercial, NGOs, local community and others
 - .2 legislative and regulatory implications
 - .3 requirement for formal environmental impact assessment
 - .4 potential for future research and development
 - .5 impacts of international conventions
- .6 Networking

Driven by the various aspects of the evolving incident and response measures, a certain kind of “silent diplomacy” could be helpful in arranging for things required to handle the incident. Specific contacts or meetings could be useful to focus parties on avoiding further damage or undo damage caused.

4 The incident management should bring these aspects to the level concerned for consideration.
