



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER/REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY, INFORMATION and TRAINING CENTER  
(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

**Ref: Strategic Plan 10-11/ Activity 4.5.b**

**27 May 2012**

**TC/1262-11-2000**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Regional OPRC Forum on Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean**

**Activity Report**

**11-13 April 2012  
Kingston, Jamaica**

Andrew Wood  
*IMO Consultant*

<b>Objectives:</b>	To further the OPRC Convention by technical information sharing and testing existing notification protocols through a scenario driven exercise during the workshop.
<b>Host:</b>	The Government of Jamaica via the Maritime Authority of Jamaica and the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica.
<b>Output:</b>	Forty persons attended with 20 being delegates and the remainder being subject matter experts or observers. The US provided eleven subject matter experts to lead discussions on planning, preparedness, prevention, and response. The US also facilitated the scenario driven exercise. Delegates agreed to continue with information sharing and furthering the objectives of the workshop via multi-lateral activities and participation in the online forum established by REMPEITC.

**1. Background**

1.1. This activity is the third following the workshops held in Bahamas, December 7-9, and in Curacao, January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

1.2. The participants were eager to continue the discussions and maintain the momentum of cooperation, and information sharing. At the workshop in January, April was selected as the best time for this activity in order to plan, prepare, and to explore options for a suitable host. In January, it was also recommended that participation be expanded to include other countries in the region which either have an existing off shore



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER/REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY, INFORMATION and TRAINING CENTER  
(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

exploratory industry or the potential for one. It was also recommended that industry representatives be invited to participate. In February, the group forwarded a Resolution to IMO making this recommendation and asking for IMO's support.

1.3. The Government of Jamaica agreed to host this workshop, jointly by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica, and the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ). Since it was early in the IMO budgetary cycle and this activity was not in the budgetary plan, IMO could not provide any new funding but was very supportive of the activity occurring. IMO did grant permission to utilize remaining funds from the January workshop and a new activity was created to reflect this.

1.4. In preparation for this activity, REMPEITC pursued further discussions regarding support and participation with UNEP, IADC (International Association of Drilling Contractors), OGP (Oil and Gas Producers), IPIECA (International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association), and ARPEL (Regional Association of Oil, Gas and Biofuels Sector Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean). UNEP committed 10,000 USD to support and IADC provided an additional 5000 USD. Both of these donations proved critical to the activity occurring with sponsored delegates. OGP, IPEICA, and ARPEL participated through their member in Jamaica, PCJ's attendance.

1.5. The participants invited were those original participants; Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, and the United States. In addition, Barbados, Curacao, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago were also invited. However, out of the additional invitees, only Guyana was able to attend. See Annex 1 for a detailed participant list.

1.6. The United States provided the Subject Matter Experts to lead the development of the agenda, which included a spill scenario, and to facilitate the discussions. The agenda and scenario were developed utilizing the on-line forum established by REMPEITC and co-hosted with the USA. This participatory development ensured a scenario in alignment with the participants needs and enabled the workshop to quickly resume were things left off in January.

## **2. Seminar Objective**

- 2.1. To further the effectiveness of the OPRC Convention in the region;
- 2.2. To further technical information sharing;
- 2.3. To validate communications procedures and protocols;



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(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

2.4. To continue to improve regional cooperation and mutual understanding of the challenges each country faces when dealing with an oil spill with trans-boundary implications.

**3. Program Overview**

3.1. The workshop was organized and hosted by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe under Activity 4.2.f of the 2010-2011 Strategic Plan. Funding was provided by the IMO Programme Implementation Document TC/1262-11-2000, and with the grant from IADC.

3.2. The US provided all subject matter experts, all of whom were government funded. The US government participated via; U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

3.3. Both Clean Caribbean and Americas (CCA), and IADC were invited, but were unable to attend due to schedule conflicts. The Regional Association of Oil, Gas and Biofuels Sector Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARPEL) was invited and was represented by their member company, the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica.

3.4. Due to limited funding, RAC/REMPEITC had limited sponsorship of delegates, but participation remained high, which is indicative of the enthusiasm for this activity. In addition to the providing all subject matter experts, the US sent two delegates: one from BSEE and one from the USCG. See Annex 1 for complete details of participants.

3.5. An agenda of the three-day workshop is included as Annex 2. Below are highlights of each day

**1. Program Details—Day One**

The opening ceremony was led by RADM Peter Brady of the Maritime Authority of Jamaica. In attendance were ambassadors to Jamaica from Cuba and the United States, as well as a representative from the Mexican Embassy. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Mr. Christopher Cargill, of the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica.

1.1. The first session was in plenary where the delegates, most of whom were involved in its development, adopted the agenda.

1.2. The Cuba, Mexico, and US delegations each made presentations similar to the presentations made on the first day, at the first seminar, held in Bahamas in December.



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(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

This reiteration was due to the number of new participants, and to help the group have a common understanding of the various roles and policies in effect before moving forward with the scenario driven exercise the following day. None of the new participating countries chose to make a presentation at this time.

1.3. The Cuban delegation emphasized that their focus was on prevention of incidents and that they have incorporated information gained from the workshops into their prevention oversight and response planning efforts. They require a Safety Case for each well drilled and intend on sharing that information with the US for future wells. This is as they have done with the well being drilled by REPSOL.

1.4. The Mexican delegation also requires a Safety Case for each well. Safety cases are reviewed and approved by the National Hydrocarbon Commission (CNH).

1.5. There was an informal evening session attended by the US and Mexico to further discussions.

## **2. Program Details—Day Two**

2.1. This session was in plenary with a scenario based discussion, facilitated by LCDR Amy Wirts of the US. See Annex 3 for the scenario details. The intent was to spur open discussion, in a no-fault atmosphere with the understanding that an incident of this magnitude could occur anywhere. Questions were provided only as a guide, and the discussion succeeded in identifying areas to be addressed further.

2.2. The scenario involved a fictional deep water drilling rig off the northern coast of Cuba. It began with the rig accidentally moving off station, losing communications with the well head, and unable to determine if there was any oil pollution. The scenario progressed into the loss of well control, and a resultant oil spill, and played out for a five-day period.

2.3. A key point raised was the need to standardize units of measurement when providing details regarding an incident. The use of metric units and terminology was agreed upon for the scenario and for future communications.

2.4. One of the first issues discussed was international communications and notifications. In keeping with the cooperative spirit of the workshops, Cuba stated that they would make detailed and timely notifications to each of their neighboring countries which could possibly be affected by an oil spill. Notifications would be done on two tracks simultaneously; a formal diplomatic notification, and an informal, technical notification to government spill response organizations.



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER/REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY, INFORMATION and TRAINING CENTER  
(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

2.5. The discussion raised a key point about how best to disseminate the crucial information to ensure that the incident details were provided, but with many unknowns, the information must be controlled so as not to be blown out of proportion.

2.6. It was decided that for notifications to neighboring countries of an incident involving a drilling unit, which did not have a known oil spill or a significant potential for one, that notifications be limited as to not set in motion a notification process which was established for a definitive spill. This would ensure the facts are not misconstrued.

2.7. As the scenario progressed and led to an oil spill of an undeterminable amount, the discussion moved toward providing further updates to neighboring countries, the public, and the media. Due to the challenge in determining an actual spill discharge rate from an uncontrolled deep water well, a key point discussed was that the response effort should be based on the Worst Case Discharge (WCD). The WCD for a particular well is information required in a Safety Case, which is part of the permitting process. This is the message to be conveyed to the public and the media.

2.8. Requests for international assistance were discussed. Cuba mentioned they would request assistance within the early hours of an incident that exceeds their capabilities. Specific resources likely to be requested would be: satellite images of the spill and oil trajectory, subsea capping and containment equipment, subsea dispersant equipment, Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs), and surface collection/support vessels.

2.9. Cuba would coordinate response efforts with other potentially affected countries in the region via Cuba Civil Defense, which has the lead on the response. Cuba would be open to response assets from other countries entering their air space and waters, pending approval from the Cuban government. The Cuban Border Guard has the lead for naval operations and the Aerial Control Center in Havana will be directing air operations.

2.10. The US delegation mentioned their goal of responding to a spill with potential to impact US waters as close to the source, and as quickly as possible. Cuba acknowledged and expressed their expectation of direct coordination between the USCG and the Cuban Border Guard during a response in their offshore waters.

2.11. The US clarified that requests of assistance for spills not likely to impact US waters, must be made through formal diplomatic channels. Cuba concurred with this and expressed concern regarding the licensing requirements for US-based OSROs to work in Cuba. The US noted that the spiller is responsible for the spill cleanup and its costs, and must ensure they have adequate response resources available.

2.12. Several delegates expressed the need for standardized guidelines for requesting international assistance. REMPEITC stated that the Caribbean Island OPRC Plan provided good guidance on that topic and recommended its format be utilized by all



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(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

countries in the WCR, regardless if they were a party to that plan. REMPEITC provided copies group of the draft IMO document “International Offers of Assistance Guidelines” and encourage delegates to provide feedback to IMO.

2.13. The current political situation between Cuba and the US was discussed. While it poses unique issues, the sharing of oil spill response equipment in general is wrought with challenges, some of which are easily identified and should be planned for, if not resolved, beforehand. REMPEITC mentioned CCA’s customs preclearance authorization form as an example. Also, the need for immigration authorities’ involvement and available to aid the smooth arrival of spill response personnel. The need for spill response authorities to identify their own resources, including personnel, which are available to respond to a neighboring country’s request for assistance.

2.14. Areas for future discussion include; equipment inspections, equipment performance standards, oil spill removal organizations and training, oil spill cleanup contractors, and aerial surveillance, including the use of satellites to track oil on the surface of the water.

2.15. REMPEITC raised a concern about the apparent assumption made by regional governments on the level of response assumed by CCA for all spills, not just ones committed by a CCA member company. REMPEITC cautioned that it should not be assumed that all equipment in a government or company inventory would be available to respond to a spill outside of their normal operating area.

2.16. During the wrap up of the scenario, Mexico encouraged each country to complete the Caribbean Multinational Authorities Matrix.

2.17. There was also an informal evening session attended by Cuba and the US.

### **3. Program Details—Day Three**

3.1. This session began in plenary, with a small group soon breaking off mid-morning for a more detailed discussion on oil rig inspections, oil spill clean up equipment oversight (OSROs), and well control. This breakout session was facilitated by Bryan Domangue from BSEE. It proved so fruitful that the attendees reconvened in the late afternoon after the closing ceremonies to further this technical information sharing.



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER/REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY, INFORMATION and TRAINING CENTER  
(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

- 3.2. The previous day it was decided that the wrap up discussion should follow a basic format of each participating delegation providing three areas they thought successful and three areas that need further addressing.
- 3.3. Cuba began the wrap up session with some key points;
  - 3.3.1. They mentioned the increased awareness about the importance of regional cooperation on the prevention of, and response to, oil spills and the need to continue working on viable solutions to the challenges faced.
  - 3.3.2. They feel better cooperation among the regional authorities has been achieved.
  - 3.3.3. They are in favor of bilateral and multilateral agreements between neighboring countries and that these workshops would aid in the development of such agreements, such as MEXUS, the agreement between Mexico and the US.
  - 3.3.4. Cuba felt the workshops had raised the level of coordination and improved the national plans of the less experienced Caribbean countries.
  - 3.3.5. The principal emphasis of these workshops has been in the response area and they would like to see more of the preventive aspects covered.
- 3.4. Mexico believes the progress at the workshops has been a first good step and that it needs to continue with more detailed future activities. They would like to see more emphasis on rig inspection. They recommend including other agency inspection regulations and requirements.
- 3.5. Guyana reiterated the need to standardize measurements in communications and recommended using the metric system. They would like to see more detailed discussions on requests for international assistance, the development of media strategies, the development of standards for OSROs, and a discussion about the role of flag states during an incident.
- 3.6. Jamaica is focused on developing their NCP. They would like to more information on methods of requesting international assistance, personnel training at all levels including oil spill response, and more discussion regarding government oversight of an off shore exploration/exploitation industry, including rig inspections regimes.
- 3.7. The US continued the wrap up session listing three positive outcomes;



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER/REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY, INFORMATION and TRAINING CENTER  
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3.7.1. The US stated that the procedures identified in the previous two seminars, including the use of established OPRC Plan procedures for notification and reporting, were verified during the scenario on day two.

3.7.2. The distinction between notification of a potential spill vs. that of an actual spill was a key success. This included identifying key triggers in the notification process.

3.7.3. They were very please by the active and informative participation from all delegations.

3.8. Three areas identified by the US to improve upon;

3.8.1. The need for the US to streamline internal procedures regarding communication of a rig incident, which may be a potential threat, but not necessarily an oil spill. An example is the US's National Response Center's procedures for disseminating information.

3.8.2. The development of procedures for requests for international assistance, which is an issue before IMO's OPRC-TG.

3.8.3. The lack of written, multilateral, technical operating procedures for an offshore response in the Northern Caribbean.

**4. Outcomes and Future actions**

4.1. The US proposed a detailed plan to develop written procedures for coordinating international resources to respond to an offshore incident in the northern Caribbean;

4.1.1. This written document would capture the ideas and concepts discussed in these workshops.

4.1.2. The format and content would follow the framework of the Caribbean Islands OPRC Plan and U.S. response plans. This proposal will be developed on the on-line forum and at future workshops. See Annex 4 for details.

4.2. It is recommended that additional funding and participation in future activities be sought from industry NGOs. All delegations agreed to invite industry and NGOs to the next meeting.





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(RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)**

- 4.3. It is recommended to continue utilizing the online forum to maintain dialogue and to develop future activity agenda.
- 4.4. Jamaica recommended exploring the option of virtual meetings via conference calls and video teleconferences. This will be explored, but internet reliability and bandwidth may be a challenge.
- 4.5. All delegations expressed strong support for continued meetings at the pace outlined in the Resolution to IMO at the conclusion of the Curacao workshop. REMPEITC confirmed that the Resolution was recognized by IMO as outlining the way forward for future activities. The Resolution recommended the workshops continue with three activities per year, including two additional activities in 2012. These activities are to be organized by REMPEITC with possible funding from IMO and other sources.
- 4.6. Both Cuba and Mexico expressed an interest in hosting future workshops. Mexico will explore hosting a workshop in late August or early September. Cuba will explore hosting a workshop in early December.

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Annex 1: Participants List

Annex 2: Workshop Agenda

Annex 3: Workshop Spill Scenario

Annex 4: US draft Northern Caribbean Multilateral Technical Operating Procedures  
for Offshore Response

Annex 5: Workshop Evaluation Result

# Participants List

**Third Regional OPRC Forum on Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response in  
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Kingston, Jamaica April 11 – 13, 2012**

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\* Sponsored Participants



Third Regional OPRC Forum on Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean  
11-13 April, 2012

**Day 1: Preparedness, Prevention and Response Background Discussions**

(Day 1 is intended to bring the new participants up to speed in preparation for the scenario-based discussion on Day 2.)

0800	Registration of participants
0830 - 0900	Opening and Introduction to the Seminar (REMPEITC Facilitator) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming Remarks (Host/REMPEITC)</li> <li>• Review of Seminar Program</li> <li>• Introduction of the Participants</li> </ul>
0900-1030	BSEE Presentation of Drilling Operations Regulations and Background Information and Q&A Session
1030 - 1100	Refreshment
1100 - 1200	Cuba Presentation on Drilling Operations Regulations
1130 - 1200	Mexico Presentation on Drilling Operations Regulations
1200 - 1330	Lunch
1330 - 1500	USCG Presentations on Preparedness and Response and Q&A Session
1500 - 1530	Refreshment
1530 - 1600	Cuba Presentation on Preparedness and Response
1600 - 1630	Mexico Presentations on Preparedness and Response
1630 - 1730	Presentations from new participating countries on their Regulatory Frameworks / Q&A Session





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**Day 2: Scenario-Based Discussion**

0800	Gathering of participants
0830 - 0900	Introduction of scenario-based discussion as a planning tool
0900 - 1000	Scenario-based Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of scenario</li> <li>• Discussion session 1: 0-12 Hours               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial notifications</li> <li>○ Immediate response</li> <li>○ Media concerns</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1000 - 1030	Refreshment
1030 - 1200	Scenario-based Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion session 2: 12-96+Hours               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Response coordination</li> <li>○ Regional / International interactions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1200 - 1330	Lunch
1330 - 1500	Scenario-based Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion session 3: Sustained ops / well control</li> </ul>
1500 - 1530	Refreshment
1530 - 1630	Scenario-based Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion session 3: Sustained ops / well control</li> </ul>
1630 - 1730	End of day wrap up discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top three discussion items for drilling operations and response/preparedness identified by scenario-based discussion</li> <li>• Identify break out groups based on outcomes of scenario-based discussion</li> </ul>

Third Regional OPRC Forum on Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean  
11-13 April, 2012

**Day 3: Follow-Up Breakout Group Discussions**

0800	Gathering of participants / Room assignment information	
0830- - 1030	Preparedness / Response Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International / Regional coordination OR</li> <li>• Topic 1 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>	Drilling Operations Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 1 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>
1030 - 1100	Refreshment	
1100 - 1200	Preparedness / Response Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 2 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>	Drilling Operations Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 2 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>
1200 - 1330	Lunch	
1330 - 1500	Preparedness / Response Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 3 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>	Drilling Operations Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 3 (from scenario discussion)</li> </ul>
1500 - 1530	Refreshment	
1530 - 1730	Summary of Action items and Pending issues Future Plan and recommendations - the next step	
1700- 1730	Closing Ceremony	