

CLOSING REMARKS

APEC Workshop on Oil Spill Response
Singapore
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(PAPER NOT AVAILABLE)

APEC WORKSHOP ON OIL SPILL RESPONSE AND PLANNING

Closing Statement
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On behalf of the Minerals Management Service, a regulatory agency of the United States Federal Government, I would like to say that this APEC workshop on oil spill response and planning has been an unqualified success. This topic is extremely important to APEC members as they seek ways to improve their ability to protect the marine environment while developing the offshore oil and gas resources that are critical to the commercial well being of their economies.

The Action Plan on Sustainability of the Marine Environment, drawn up by APEC economy members, calls for developing integrated approaches to coastal management; prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution; and sustainable management of marine resources. We believe these objectives were met here by the APEC members who came together to exchange information and discuss ways to improve their current practices. Participants

identified state-of-art technologies and methodologies available worldwide for improving response to oil spills. They discussed upgrading standards for response planning, equipment, methods and operations as well as possibilities for training in the region. Most importantly, we believe the workshop provided an opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation among the members of the APEC economies.

It was a pleasure to work with the Singapore Maritime and Port Authority, and we want to thank Mr. Shahul Hameed, Mr. Edwin M. K. Leong and others for helping to make this workshop a success. We also want to thank Mr. Ho Yu Weng of the East Asia Response Limited and officials of the Integrated Simulator Centre for arranging a site visit to their facilities.

We thank our panel members for the open and stimulating discussion regarding the current state of practice in their respective countries and for their recommendations on ways to improve oil spill response throughout the APEC region.

We thank RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew and Capt Khong Shen Ping of the Maritime and Port Authority for co-hosting this Workshop. The MPA is recognized worldwide as a leading authority in oil spill response. Many of the participants in this workshop had the opportunity to attend the very successful International Chemical and Oil Pollution Conference and Exhibition which was sponsored by the MPA. The combination of the ICOPCE conference and the APEC workshop provided participants an opportunity to hear expert discussions of many of the issues that face regulators and operators today.

Finally, we thank all of you for coming and for contributing to this success.

APEC Oil Spill Response and Planning Workshop

Closing Remarks of Ms. Kathy Bentley
Office of Ocean Affairs, U.S. Department of State

March 25, 2004

First of all, I would like to thank the government of Singapore, East Asia Response Limited, the Integrated Simulator Center, and the Singapore Maritime and Port Authority for helping make this workshop a success. The goal of this APEC Workshop was to improve oil spill response capabilities in the Pacific Region by improving standards in response planning, equipment, methods, operations and training. To that end, we have identified state-of-the-art technologies and methodologies available worldwide and have encouraged cooperation among the APEC Economies. It is my hope that the recommendations paper and distribution of papers presented at the workshop will lead to the continued development of an APEC directory of specialists on this issue.

Within APEC, our economies are addressing many issues dealing with trade liberalization, including pursuing regional and sub-regional liberalization initiatives. In pursuing these goals, however, APEC is mindful that a large portion of its economics rely upon a marine environment that is clean. So much of APEC is dependent up the sea. Within the APEC Marine Resources Conservation Working Group, we understand the link between viable economies and sustainable development, and we are currently working to update our Action Plan to reflect emerging issues.

I believe this workshop has been a wonderful success. It implements a call by APEC Leaders to improve the range and scope of contacts with the business and private sectors. Representatives from the private and public sectors of APEC economies have come together this week to highlight existing partnerships, and they have paved the way for future initiatives. By combining efforts with the ICOPCE conference and Singapore's Maritime Week, many new contacts have been made, not only during the organized events, but also in the margins of this week's activities. I'd like to add on a personal level, I believe this workshop has strengthened cooperation among the economies. It has put a human face to the overarching goals set forth by APEC Senior Officials, and this is very important. We have indeed acted to implement those goals.

The workshop, once envisioned to be held well over 18 months ago, was postponed due to scheduling conflicts and also because of the SARS epidemic. I believe the decision to wait and hold this workshop until now so it would coincide with Singapore's Maritime Week and the ICOPCE conference was an excellent idea. I think you'll all agree, the synergy of combining this week's events has been well worth the wait.

On behalf of the government of the United States of America, I would like to thank all the participants for coming and contributing to this success. Thank you.