

JOINT STATEMENT

of Ministers and Heads of Governmental Agencies in charge of Prevention and Elimination of Consequences of Emergencies of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine

1. The Ministers and Heads of Governmental Agencies in charge of Prevention and Elimination of Consequences of Emergencies of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine have met in Sochi (Krasnodarskiy Region), Russian Federation, on 15-16 May, 2002.

2. In course of the meeting, the Ministers and Heads of the Governmental Agencies in charge of Prevention and Elimination of Consequences of Emergencies have discussed the following items:

- further perspectives and mechanisms of interaction among the BSEC Member States, including joint development of the set of documents on interaction and coordination during search and rescue activities in maritime emergencies, as well as integration in monitoring and forecasting of disasters;
- possibilities of composing of an interstate List of potentially hazardous underwater objects and mutual exchange of information;
- possibilities to sign the Additional Protocol to the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC Participating States on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters signed on 15 April, 1998, incorporating the elements of the draft document on Establishing a BSEC mechanism for the coordination of Civil Protection intervention in the event of emergencies;

3. Participants of the Meeting of the Ministers and Heads of Governmental Agencies in charge of Prevention and Elimination of Consequences of Emergencies found it necessary to declare in their statements that:

Conscious of the need for coordinated actions to prevent and eliminate the consequences of natural and man-made disasters, population protection and humanitarian aid in case of serious emergency situations or imminent threat thereof;

Taking into account that geographical, social, political and economical features of the BSEC Member States may be the causes for aid requirements from any country;

Acknowledging that in case of an urgent and exclusive danger arisen, immediate response action will be required by some or all of the BSEC Member States;

Noting that as a result of natural and man-made disasters transboundary effects will cause the need for urgent actions on population and ecology protection on the territories of the several Member States;

Admitting that disasters can be unpredictable both nationally and internationally;

Highly appreciating the United Nations' and its relevant institutions' role in coordinating international efforts in prevention and elimination of consequences of emergency situations, have mutually concluded that:

3.1. New perspectives of regional cooperation stated in the statements of the Member States' representatives may be applied within the framework of the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC Participating States on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters signed on 15 April, 1998.

3.2. Further improvement of mutual actions and faster response of the BSEC Member States will be needed with a view to prevent and eliminate the consequences of emergencies, providing humanitarian assistance to population.

3.3. Purpose of mutual actions will be the development of cooperation among the BSEC Member States and mutual enhancement of national efforts in prevention of natural and man-made disasters, protection of population and ecosystems both for the BSEC and possible third countries.

3.4. These mutual actions first of all will imply cooperation in development and application of modern technologies to fight major damages, disasters, fires, inclusive aircraft fighting forest fires, medical assistance to the injured, protection of environmentally hazardous consequences, transportation and distribution of humanitarian cargoes, humanitarian demining etc.

3.5. Cooperation among the states will be within the framework of the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC Participating States on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters signed on 15 April, 1998, in line with the to-be-signed Additional Protocol to the above-said Agreement including the elements of the document on establishing of the BSEC mechanism for coordination of Civil Protection intervention in the event of natural and man-made disasters.

3.6. Based on mutual cooperation and support, achieved due to mutual trust, swift exchange of information and coordination of actions, the Country-Coordinator, alongside with the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, will be given a task to study the possibility of issuing of an

information bulletin “Emergencies in the Black Sea and Azov Sea basins. Analysis of their reasons, organizing the interaction, using search and rescue assets and equipment.”

4. The Ministers and Heads of Governmental Agencies in charge of Prevention and Elimination of Consequences of Emergencies expressed their gratitude to the Government of Russian Federation, Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, Administration of the Krasnodar Region and the city of Sochi for warm welcome and organizing the Meeting.

For the Government of the Republic of Armenia

For the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan

For the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria

For the Government of Georgia

For the Government of the Republic of Moldova

For the Government of the Russian Federation

For the Government of Ukraine

Sochi, 16 May 2002