

In response to the letter sent by Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, Ref.: DSD/2013/182, please find below the WHO response to questions 5 and 6 of the *Questionnaire on issues relating to the environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea*:

Response to incidents

5. Has your government/organization developed an action plan or built capacities to respond to incidents related to WOCMDS? If not does your government/organization intend to do so in the future?

WHO has built capacities to support countries, if requested, responding to all types of chemical incidents and emergencies that overwhelm national public health capacities and capabilities

http://www.who.int/entity/phe/events/wha_66/flyer_chemical_incident2013.pdf. The International Health Regulations (IHR) are an international legal instrument that is binding to all the Member States of WHO with the aim to help the international community prevent and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide, including chemical events. The text of the IHR is available at: <http://www.who.int/ihr/9789241596664/en/index.html>. Further information about the IHR is available at <http://www.who.int/ihr/en/>.

Raising awareness and other actions

6. Does your government/organization provide information on WOCMS to civil society and industry? Does your government/organization raise awareness on WOCMDS and how?

Through the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) (<http://www.who.int/ipcs/en/index.html>), WHO works to establish the scientific basis for the sound management of chemicals, and to strengthen national capabilities and capacities for chemical safety. Chemical safety is achieved by undertaking all activities involving chemicals in such a way as to ensure the safety of human health and the environment. It covers all chemicals, natural and manufactured, and the full range of exposure situations from the natural presence of chemicals in the environment to their extraction or synthesis, industrial production, transport, use and disposal (including, for example, some warfare agents). However, WHO does not currently have activities dedicated to WOCMDS specifically.