

Oil spill challenges

Chairman shares KPT's experience at workshop

RECORDER REPORT

KARACHI: Karachi Port Trust (KPT) organized a two-day workshop on "Preparedness and Response against Oil Spill Emergencies in Pakistani Waters" in recognition of 70-year services of International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The delegates representing stakeholders from Karachi, Gaddani and Hub coasts attended the workshop that was aimed at evolving strategies to ensure safe and secured shipping on clean oceans.

Speaking at the workshop, KPT chairman Rear Admiral Jamil Akhtar said KPT has worked for more than seven decades to establish collective experience for oil spill preparedness to secure safe shipping on clean oceans.

"Devastating effects of oil spills led to the much-needed cooperation between countries, organizations and industries," he said, adding that KPT setup Marine Pollution Control Department for learning opportunities regarding oil spill preparedness and response. He also shared his views on Oil Spill Contingency Plan along with procurement with the oil and shipping industry stakeholders. KPT chairman said the Plan would cover the levels I and II of IMO on Oil Spill Response technology and deployment of equipment while providing platform to stakeholders to review the existing capacity of Pakistan to combat any unforeseen oil spill emergency in the Arabian Sea. He said it would ultimately result in evolving an integrated strategy focusing objectives to enhance preparedness and response capabilities while understanding Convention "OPRC-90" – which encourages cooperation in areas such as the contingency planning and coordinated response procedure, establishment of equipment stocks sufficient to deal with oil pollution risks, research and development programs, training and exercise, programs to facilitate oil spill response, shipboard pollution emergency plans, technical cooperation and international cooperation for oil spill control.

The KPT chairman said participants would be able to apply proper planning techniques in deployment of oil spill response equipment during the course of workshop which ultimately strengthens their command on planning to any kind of oil spill emergency which they face.

"We were not prepared when Tasman Spirit oil spill catastrophe hit us but since then we have built equipment to tackle such incidents and we have been doing drills on regular basis to keep ourselves ready to avert such disasters on our port and coastline," he

said, adding that based on Tasman Spirit experience, they had prepared National Marine Disaster Contingency Plan in 2007 and since then they had conducted eight national level exercises, so far. Still, he said, there exists room to train human resources and stakeholders of oil industry, ship owners and government agencies through various workshops as Pakistan imports 15 million metric tons of hydrocarbon products annually.

While speaking on the occasion, the oil spill response expert and Regional Director of Elastec Jan Hoven spoke on oil spill response and international obligations and strategies with respect to IMO level I and II in the first technical session. In the technical session he remained focused on oil spill related technologies and equipment. Other guest speakers Rear Admiral Pervaiz Asghar (retd) and Dr. Samina Qudwai also spoke on building equipment, technology and strategy to combat pollution being face by Pakistani coastline.