



**WORKING PAPER**

**DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP)  
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE**

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 to 24 October 2014**

**Agenda Item 7: Other business**

**EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD)**

(Presented by the Secretary)

**SUMMARY**

Issues raised with the transport of persons infected, or suspected to be infected with Ebola Virus are presented for consideration by the meeting.

**Action by the DGP-WG:** The DGP-WG is invited to develop guidance on transporting infected patients as well as deceased persons.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The World Health Organization (WHO) has established an Emergency Committee (EC) on Ebola virus disease (EVD) and the WHO Director General, Dr. Margaret Chan, announced on 8 August that the EVD outbreak in West Africa is a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)” under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (<http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/9789241596664/en/>).

1.2 For the purposes of transport, Ebola virus is classified as UN 2814 — **Infectious substance affecting humans**. It is noted Special Provision A140 is applicable so that for documentation purposes, the technical name must be added whereas it need not be shown on packages. Patient specimens, and medical or clinical wastes, containing or reasonably expected to contain Ebola must be assigned to UN 2814.

1.3 However, this does not address the air transport of patients infected or suspected of having Ebola. Air ambulance services have been used thus far. Keeping in mind the humanitarian nature of such transport, questions have been raised whether approvals must be sought for such transport and if yes, by whom. Due to the specific prohibition in paragraph 4.2 of Annex 18 for the transport of infected live animals, additional concerns have been raised, suggesting a similar exemption process should be followed.

#### **4.2 Dangerous goods forbidden for transport by air unless exempted**

The dangerous goods described hereunder shall be forbidden on aircraft unless exempted by the States concerned under the provisions of 2.1 or unless the provisions of the Technical Instructions indicate they may be transported under an approval granted by the State of Origin:

- a) dangerous goods that are identified in the Technical Instructions as being forbidden for transport in normal circumstances; and
- b) infected live animals.
- ...

This prohibition was developed at DGP/5 (27 January to 12 February 1981) following discussion of transporting deliberately infected animals, acting as carriers in cases where the infectious substance in question could only be transported in a living creature, usually a small rodent. It is suggested this prohibition is unrelated to the present issue and that an exemption requirement is not necessary.

1.4 Regarding the transport of deceased suspect, probable or confirmed EVD cases, guidance on reducing the risk of Ebola infection has been provided by the WHO in <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/>

“States should ensure funerals and burials are conducted by well-trained personnel, with provision made for the presence of the family and cultural practices, and in accordance with national health regulations, to reduce the risk of Ebola infection. The cross-border movement of the human remains of deceased suspect, probable or confirmed EVD cases should be prohibited unless authorized in accordance with recognized international biosafety provisions.”

1.5 However, this would forbid the international transport of such deceased persons e.g. repatriation of deceased health care workers or nationals visiting the region. Information supplied informally by the WHO suggests that the virus may be able to survive in corpses for days, possibly weeks, but this has not been established definitively.

## **2. ACTION BY THE DGP-WG**

2.1 The DGP-WG is invited to consider the issues raised above and to develop guidance on transporting infected patients as well as deceased persons.