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### **OFFSHORE SAFETY REGULATORS COMMIT TO GLOBAL STANDARDS**

A group of offshore oil and gas industry safety regulators, which includes the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), has announced a commitment to producing common standards

and further co-operation in the name of global consistency and improved international health, safety and environmental performance.

The announcement follows the first International Regulator's Forum (IRF) conference, held in London, which brought together regulators and industry representatives from around the world. Keynote speakers included Gale Norton, Secretary of the US Department of the Interior; Dagfinn Hoybraten, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Norway; Malcolm Brinded, Executive Director Exploration and Production, Royal Dutch/Shell Group; Tony Hayward, BP Exploration & Production CEO; and officials from Europe, the Americas and Australasia.

The conference focussed on identifying practical steps to achieve offshore safety improvements, and to address international safety and regulatory issues. As a result, members of the IRF have committed to:

- building a global network of regulators and industry bodies dedicated to the common cause of raising health, safety and environmental standards offshore;
- delivering, within a year, real examples of common, global standards of practical value to the industry worldwide, in areas such as lifting and performance measurement; and

- building on these achievements in the longer term by identifying - and delivering - other products essential to supporting this global partnership.

Taf Powell, Head of HSE's Offshore Division and Chair of the IRF Steering Committee said: "This conference exceeded expectations, both in terms of attendance and outcomes. Work has begun to address joint approaches to safety problems, align safety and business drivers, understand the differences in regulatory regimes and standards and the impact this has on global businesses.

"Most of all, however, the conference has demonstrated that best sustainable economic performance of the upstream oil and gas industry is inseparable from first class safety performance."

The conference focused specifically on: the benefits of a strong health and safety culture; how collaboration can work in practice and achieve improvements in safety and operational efficiency; identification of common safety issues; sharing performance information; and building a community of global regulators to work together and support each other on common issues.

Specifically, it provided an opportunity to emphasise the UK attitude that business efficiency, sustainability and safety go hand in hand. The UK offshore regulatory regime is the most copied in the world and it is hoped HSE will extend its overseas influence, and hence its impact on the performance of the global industry.

In terms of HSE's work programmes and priorities, Powell said: "We have set ourselves some hard targets in terms of incident reduction and dealing with issues such as degradation of older installations, maintenance, monitoring and supervision and quality of risk assessment. This is a fast moving industry and the issues are globalised. A wider network of regulators will help us to gain the information and knowledge that we need to prevent incidents and secure the industry's long term future."

#### Notes to Editors

1. The International Regulators' Offshore Safety Forum was held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, between 30 March -1 April 2005. The conference was organised in Britain on behalf of the IRF, a group of oil and gas regulators from the UK, Norway, The Netherlands, USA, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand.
2. The conference took the first steps to developing a network of regulators that can support each other to prevent incidents. Such a network, it is hoped, will have a positive impact on the big global oilfield companies. In addition to the formal programme, the conference also provided delegates from all over the world with a

unique opportunity to discuss safety and sustainability within the offshore oil and gas industry.