

UN/SCEGHS/6/INF.12

**Sub-Committee of Experts
on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemical
Sixth session, 10-12 December 2003
Agenda item 5(c)**

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

In the pages that follow, the secretariat makes available the presentation by Mr. Matthew Gubb of UNEP Chemicals about SAICM, which was presented to the Sub-Committee GHS in plenary on Thursday 11 December.

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

Briefing for SCE on GHS
Thursday 11 December 2003

Outline

- Background and mandate
- Preparations
- SAICM PrepCom1
- Next steps
- GHS links

Background and mandate

- Agenda 21, Chapter 19
- Discussions at UNEP Governing Council meetings in mid- to late 1990s concerning international action on chemical safety.
- UNEP Governing Council decision 21/7, February 2001
 - Requested the Executive Director, in consultation with Governments, IOMC, IFCS and other relevant organizations and stakeholders to examine the need for a strategic approach to international chemicals management.
- UNEP Governing Council decision SS.VII/3, February 2002
 - . Considered the report on the need for a SAICM, based on responses from 45 Governments, 6 IGOs, 9 NGOs.
 - . Decided there is a need for a SAICM.
 - . Endorsed the IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 as the foundation for SAICM.
 - . Requested UNEP to work with Governments, IOMC, IFCS and other stakeholders to review current activities, identify gaps and identify projects and priorities.
 - . Called for an open-ended consultative meeting.
- World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, September 2002
 - Set a goal of achieving, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.
 - This would include the development of a SAICM (by 2005).
- UNEP Governing Council decision 22/4 IV, February 2003

- . Endorsed the concept of an open-ended consultative process involving representatives of all stakeholder groups taking the form of preparatory meetings and the convening of an international conference.
 - . Requested the Executive Director to compile possible draft elements for consideration by PrepCom1 and invited stakeholders to contribute to the compilation.
 - . Proposed holding the international conference in conjunction with the 9th Special Session of UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum in early 2006.
- World Health Assembly Resolution 56.22, May 2003
 - . Supported the continuing role of WHO and IFCS in developing a SAICM and called for health aspects of chemical safety to be taken into account.
 - . Foreshadowed consideration of the completed SAICM by the World Health Assembly.
 - International Labour Conference conclusion, June 2003
 - . Supported ILO contributing to work on SAICM and called for full participation of workers and employers' organisations.
 - . Foreshadowed consideration of the completed SAICM by ILO decision-making bodies.

Preparations

- A 10-member SAICM Steering committee was formed in 2002:
 - . 7 participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals or IOMC (FAO, ILO, OECD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO)
 - . Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)
 - . UNDP
 - . World Bank
- SAICM Steering Committee Terms of Reference
 - “The role of the steering committee is that of a facilitative steering mechanism to deal with practical aspects of the SAICM process... such as planning for documentation and consultative meetings.”
- Open-ended information meeting, Geneva, 29 April 2003
 - an opportunity for stakeholders to be informed on SAICM preparations and give feedback
 - attended by 38 Governments, 11 intergovernmental organizations and 11 non-Governmental organizations

SAICM PrepCom1

- The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was held in Bangkok from 9 to 13 November 2003
- SAICM PrepCom1 followed on from IFCS Forum IV, held from 1 to 7 November, in the same location
 - Forum IV developed a “SAICM thought-starter” that was taken up in discussions by the PrepCom (in addition to the Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000)
 - many of the same participants attended both Forum IV and SAICM PrepCom1 (reciprocal funding for sponsored delegates)
- 428 participants:
 - 305 from Governments
 - 37 from IGOs
 - 81 from NGOs
 - 5 observers
- Representing:
 - 127 Governments;
 - 19 intergovernmental organizations; and
 - 22 non-governmental organizations and umbrella networks (approximately 60 individual NGOs)
- Multi-sector participation is a key feature of SAICM. PrepCom1 included participants from the following sectors:
 - . agriculture
 - . civil defence
 - . development
 - . economy, trade and industry
 - . environment
 - . foreign affairs
 - . health
 - . labour
 - . science and technology
 - . universities and research institutes
- Dr Halldor Thorgeirsson (Iceland) was elected President of the PrepCom, along with four Vice-Presidents from Croatia, Nigeria, Thailand and Uruguay
- . The Committee adopted an overarching SAICM goal from the (WSSD) Johannesburg Summit Plan of Implementation:
 - to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment

- Discussion on possible SAICM elements was organized by the President as follows (with not all topics addressed at PrepCom1):
 - Statement of political strategic vision
 - Statement of needs
 - Goals and objectives
 - Principles and approaches
 - Scope
 - Scientific activities in support of decision-making
 - Concrete measures
 - Coordination
 - Capacity, resources & development
 - Implementation and taking stock of progress

- The structure of the eventual SAICM itself is not yet agreed but there was preliminary support at PrepCom1 for a tripartite document:
 - a high-level political declaration
 - an overarching chemicals policy
 - a global programme of action

- Rules of Procedure were adopted *ad referendum*
 - The SAICM PrepCom Rules of Procedure represent a blend of traditional UN-style rules (e.g. UNEP Governing Council) and the IFCS Terms of Reference
 - The rules respond to expectations for an open, transparent and participatory process expressed in UNEP GC decision 22/4
 - Governments, NGOs and IGOs are all “participants”
 - The only distinction is that certain prerogatives such as voting are reserved to Governments.

- An assessment of progress...
 - The substantive phase of the SAICM development process was successfully launched in Bangkok.
 - Participants were numerous and diverse.
 - A President and Bureau were elected with minimum delay.
 - An overarching goal was adopted.
 - Rules of Procedure were adopted (*ad referendum*).
 - The potential scope of SAICM remains extremely broad but there is now a structure for debate and for organizing the issues.

Next steps

- 1 or 2 more PrepCom sessions will be needed, probably in late 2004 and late 2005 respectively
- There is agreement in principle to hold the final “international conference on chemicals management” (ICCM) in conjunction with the 9th Special Session of UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum in early 2006
- Interest has also been expressed in regional consultations.

- Fundraising will be a critical factor in maintaining the momentum of SAICM.
- Each major meeting costs about \$1 million, allowing for 6-language interpretation and support for multi-sector participation by developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- PrepCom1 requested the secretariat to undertake certain inter-sessional work in consultation with the President:
 - a document compiling the strategic elements, headings and sub-headings identified under the 10 discussion categories proposed by the President
 - a document organizing the possible concrete elements suggested by a contact group
 - a prototype matrix for mapping inter-relationships among concrete actions
- The documents will be circulated in advance for review by participants and then considered, along with comments received, at PrepCom2.

GHS links

- The extent to which GHS features in SAICM is up to the participants.
- Already it is being mentioned regularly as a possible SAICM element.
- SAICM has the potential to give added impetus for implementing GHS.

A PrepCom1 contact group on “concrete measures” proposed a *possible* SAICM approach to GHS:

- Invites UNITAR/ILO, as the focal point for capacity building in the UN SCEGHS, in collaboration with the Sub-committee to develop a **roster of GHS experts** who could provide support on training and capacity building activities on the application of GHS classification, labelling, and safety data sheets by the end of 2004.
- Encourages the WSSD GHS Partnership to aim for the following **specific targets for capacity building activities** of their framework workplan of the Partnership:
 - Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials
 .GHS awareness raising, capacity building **guidance and training materials** (including GHS action plan development guidance, national situation analysis guidance and other training tools) prepared and pilot tested, and these outcomes endorsed by the UN SCEGHS, by the end of 2004.
 - GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level
 .At least two **regional GHS workshops** held and implementation strategies prepared by the end of 2005, taking into consideration regional economic integration arrangements.
 - GHS Capacity Development at the National Level
 .At least two **pilot projects** for National GHS Situation Analysis, Action Plan Development and Implementation per IFCS region completed and evaluated by the end of 2006 (with a view to having the GHS operational by 2008).
- Calls upon countries, regional economic integration organizations, donor organizations, multilateral financial institutions and stakeholder groups, in

- particular industry, to make available sufficient **financial and technical resources** to support national and regional GHS capacity building projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- Invites the Forum Standing Committee of the IFCS to bring the FORUM IV GHS Action Plan to the attention of the **UN SCEGHS**, and to submit a progress report to **IFCS FORUM V**.
 - GHS has also been raised in the context of other SAICM discussions, e.g. on Occupational Safety and Health
 - All proposals for SAICM elements are preliminary at this stage and subject to further discussion by the PrepCom.

Conclusion

- *Background and mandate*
 - SAICM relates back to discussions in the 1990s
 - a strong mandate from UNEP GC and WSSD in 2002
- *Preparations*
 - 10-organization steering committee
 - open-ended information meeting held in April 2003
- *SAICM PrepCom1*
 - Bangkok, 9-13 November 2003
 - successful launch of the substantive phase of developing SAICM
- *Next steps*
 - PrepCom2 > PrepCom3 (?) > ICCM
- *GHS links*
 - GHS already well noted as a potential SAICM element