



## SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: 4-8 OCTOBER 2004

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (PrepCom2) opens today in Nairobi, Kenya, and will continue until 8 October 2004. The meeting is expected to continue discussions on the SAICM structure, statements for a political strategic vision, needs, and goals and objectives, elements for a SAICM plan of implementation, and oversight and implementation of SAICM activities until 2020. Delegates are also expected to continue discussions on concrete elements for the SAICM, based on the intersessional work carried out by the Secretariat to organize elements identified during PrepCom1. Following the resignation of the President of the Preparatory Committee Halldor Thorgeirsson in June 2004, governmental participants will be invited to elect a new President at PrepCom2.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SAICM

The concept of a SAICM has been discussed by the UNEP Governing Council (GC) in various forms since 1995, including in:

- UNEP GC decision 18/12 of May 1995, which invites UNEP's Executive Director to convene an expert group to consider and recommend further measures to reduce risks from a limited number of chemicals;
- an expert group meeting in April 1996, which made recommendations in four areas, namely: inadequate capacity of developing countries to handle issues of hazardous chemicals and pesticides; disposal of unwanted stocks of pesticides and other chemicals; insufficient information for chemicals management decision-making and action; and the possible need to ban and phase out certain chemicals; and
- UNEP GC decision 19/13 of February 1997, which requests a report on options for enhanced coherence and efficiency among international activities related to chemicals.

**21ST UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL:** At its 21st session in 2001, the UNEP GC adopted decision 21/7, which requests UNEP's Executive Director, in consultation with governments, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) and others, to examine the need for a SAICM.

**SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION:** In February 2002, at its seventh special session, the UNEP GC agreed in decision SS.VII/3 that the further development of a SAICM was needed, and requested UNEP's Executive Director to develop such an approach with the *IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for*

*Action Beyond 2000* as its foundation. This process was to entail an "open-ended consultative meeting involving representatives of all stakeholder groups" jointly convened by UNEP, IFCS and IOMC.

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD):** The WSSD convened from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and adopted, among other outcomes, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The JPOI is a framework for action to implement the commitments made at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, and includes a number of new commitments. The issue of chemicals management in the JPOI is addressed primarily in Chapter III on Changing Unsustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption. JPOI's chemicals-related targets include:

- the aim to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
- the development, by 2005, of a SAICM based on the *IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000*; and
- the national implementation of the new globally harmonized system for the classification and labeling of chemicals (GHS), with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

**22ND UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL:** The 22nd session of the UNEP GC, held in February 2003, adopted decision 22/4 endorsing the concept of an international conference, with preparatory meetings, as the basis for developing a SAICM. In its decision, the UNEP GC also recognized the need for an open, transparent and inclusive process for developing the approach. The decision further requests UNEP to compile possible draft elements of a SAICM for consideration by PrepCom1, and invites governments, relevant international organizations and other stakeholders to contribute.

**SAICM INFORMATION MEETING:** A stakeholder information and consultation meeting took place on 29 April 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants heard a briefing on the background of the SAICM process, an outline of the preparatory process, and perspectives from organizations in the SAICM Steering Committee, comprising: IFCS, FAO, ILO, OECD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank. Participants also heard an update by UNEP on PrepCom1 documents, and a presentation on the progress achieved in the compilation of possible draft elements for a SAICM.

**56TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY:** At its 56th session in May 2003, the WHO's World Health Assembly adopted resolution 56.22, which supported UNEP GC decision 22/4 and recognized the need for health interests at the country level to be reflected in, and addressed by, the SAICM. The decision urges Member States to take full account of the health aspects of chemical safety in the development of a SAICM and requests the WHO



Director-General to, *inter alia*, contribute to the SAICM through submission of possible health-focused elements, and submit a progress report to the Assembly before the SAICM process is concluded.

**91ST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE:** ILO's International Labor Conference at its 91st session in June 2003, adopted conclusions calling on ILO to contribute to the further development of a SAICM, to ensure full participation of employers' and workers' organizations and to present the final outcome of the SAICM process to ILO decision-making bodies for their consideration.

**IFCS FORUM IV:** The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS Forum IV) took place from 1-7 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand. Convening under the theme "Chemical Safety in a Vulnerable World," Forum IV took stock of the progress achieved on the commitments and recommendations made at Forum III in 2000, and focused on topics relating to: children and chemical safety; occupational safety and health; hazard data generation and availability; acutely toxic pesticides; and capacity building. Delegates also considered and took decisions on illegal traffic and the GHS.

In response to decisions SS.VII/3 and 22/4 IV of the UNEP GC, Forum IV discussed the further development of a SAICM, and forwarded the outcome to SAICM PrepCom1 in the form of a Report on SAICM-Related Work at IFCS Forum IV (SAICM/PREPCOM.1/INF/3). This non-negotiated compilation report addresses:

- the centrality of chemicals in a modern world;
- life-cycle management of chemicals since Agenda 21;
- new and ongoing challenges;
- chemicals management regimes;
- gaps in life-cycle chemicals management;
- resources for capacity development and implementation; and
- increased coordination and linkages.

It also contains an overview of the main discussion points raised in Forum IV, and an annex containing tables that identify key themes in the *IFCS Bahia Declaration* and *Priorities for Action Beyond 2000*.

**SAICM PREPCOM1:** The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a SAICM took place from 9-13 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand. More than 400 participants representing over 120 countries, 14 UN bodies, four IGOs, 24 NGOs and other observers provided initial comments on potential issues to be addressed during the development of a SAICM, examined ways to structure discussions, and considered possible outcomes of the SAICM process. There was widespread agreement among delegates that the overarching objective of the SAICM should be to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, as agreed in the JPOI.

There was also broad support for a three-tier approach for SAICM, which would comprise: a global programme of action with targets and timetables; an overarching chemicals policy strategy; and a high-level or ministerial declaration to adopt the former two. Discussions were structured around ten headings:

- 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 and development; and
- implementation and taking stock of progress.

Delegates generated a preliminary list of action items, and considered a matrix proposed by UNIDO to set out the action items and indicate their interrelations.

#### **INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

**AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAICM:** An African regional meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 26 May 2004, to facilitate African regional coordination on the development of SAICM. Delegates adopted a report comprising a draft decision for consideration by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the *Abuja Statement on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management*, and the African position on SAICM. The Abuja Statement calls, *inter alia*, for SAICM to serve as a general framework to guide and assist countries in dealing safely with hazardous chemicals, substances and products, and enhance their ability to implement existing multilateral environmental agreements without creating additional legally binding commitments. The African position on SAICM includes two appendices listing concrete measures with targets and timeframes on scientific activities and capacity building for the global programme of action.

#### **10TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN 10):**

The draft decision proposed by the African regional meeting in Abuja was adopted by AMCEN 10 in Sirte, Libya, in June 2004. The decision emphasizes the need for African governments to prioritize sound chemicals management in national, subregional and regional planning, encourages multi-stakeholder participation in the development of SAICM, and calls for financial cooperation, capacity building and mechanisms to strengthen institutions to facilitate the implementation of national action plans. In addition, delegates adopted the *Sirte Declaration on the Environment for Development*, which calls for further commitment to prioritize the SAICM process.

**ROTTERDAM CONVENTION COP-1:** The first Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (COP-1), held from 20-24 September 2004 in Geneva, adopted decisions required to make the legally binding prior informed consent (PIC) procedure operational. The PIC Procedure aims to promote shared responsibility between exporting and importing countries in protecting human health and the environment from the harmful effects of the trade in certain hazardous chemicals. Among other things, delegates at COP-1 took decisions on the addition of 14 new chemicals to the existing list of 27 chemicals subject to the PIC Procedure. They highlighted the need for synergies between the Rotterdam Convention and other international and regional processes, including SAICM, and adopted a decision calling on the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat to feed information on enabling implementation in developing countries to the SAICM process.

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) CONSULTATION ON SAICM:** The GRULAC consultation on SAICM was held from 2-3 October 2004 in Nairobi, on the eve of PrepCom2. Delegates discussed, among other things, the need: to operationalize existing agreements on chemicals management and to contribute to synergies between the various existing instruments; for SAICM to avoid becoming a bureaucratic instrument, and the importance of funding and capacity building in developing countries; and to increase the participation of the scientific and academic communities in the implementation of international agreements on chemical management. They discussed elements in a draft document on the Latin American and Caribbean position on the development of SAICM, including the political strategic vision, scope, objectives, principles, and a liability regime. It is expected that the report, with the position document as an annex, will be adopted this morning at a reconvened GRULAC session.