

SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY: 25-29 SEPTEMBER 2006

The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS-V) was held in Budapest, Hungary, from 25-29 September 2006. The event drew 415 participants from governments, UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), convening under the theme “Chemical Safety for Sustainable Development.”

The main agenda item at IFCS-V was consideration of the future of the IFCS in light of the final agreements on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Agreement was reached to establish a working group to draft a decision on the Future of IFCS to be presented at IFCS-VI.

Other agenda items where progress was made included: precaution; toys and chemical safety; and heavy metals, which were also addressed in a side event prior to the meeting. A report on the heavy metals side event can be accessed online at <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/ifcs5/heavymetals>.

Diametrically opposite views regarding the use of scarce financial resources and the well-worn debate over the pros and cons of applying voluntary or regulatory approaches proved to be a test for participants’ flexibility and willingness to reach compromise. At the end of the meeting, participants headed home with a feeling of success, in particular the agreement on the Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium, and the identification of a series of potential next steps to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition (CEITs) with tools and approaches for applying precaution in the domestic decision-making processes.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IFCS

The concept of an intergovernmental forum to address chemical safety originated during preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, when the UNCED Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) identified the collaborative

efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), within the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), as the nucleus for international cooperation on the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. The PrepCom invited the IPCS to identify possible intergovernmental mechanisms for risk assessment and chemicals management. In response, UNEP, ILO and WHO convened an expert meeting in London, UK, in December 1991 to consider priority areas for an international strategy and proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for the environmentally sound management of chemicals. The meeting

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resulted in a recommendation to establish an intergovernmental forum on chemical risk assessment and management that was forwarded to UNCED.

At UNCED, delegates adopted Agenda 21, a programme of action for sustainable development. Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 addresses the “Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products,” and contains an international strategy for action on chemical safety with six priority Programme Areas: expanding and accelerating international assessment of chemical risks; harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals; information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks; establishment of risk reduction programmes; strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals; and prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products. Chapter 19 also calls for the establishment of an intergovernmental forum on chemical safety.

FORUM I: In April 1994, UNEP, ILO and WHO convened the International Conference on Chemical Safety in Stockholm, Sweden. The Conference established the IFCS and constituted the first meeting of the Forum (Forum I). The Conference adopted a resolution with detailed recommendations on Priorities for action in implementing Agenda 21, and the Terms of Reference for the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), establishing IFCS as a mechanism for cooperation among governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote chemical risk assessment and the environmentally sound management of chemicals.

FORUM II: Forum II, held in February 1997 in Ottawa, Canada, made recommendations on the programme areas identified in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, and on emerging issues such as endocrine-disrupting chemicals and pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTs). Delegates reached agreement on a number of actions regarding the structure and function of the IFCS. The Forum Standing Committee (FSC) was established as a mechanism for responding to new developments and advising on preparations for future meetings.

FORUM III: Forum III was held in October 2000, in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, under the theme “In Partnership for Global Chemical Safety.” Delegates reviewed the IFCS, assessed progress made on implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, reached agreement on the Priorities for Action Beyond 2000, and issued the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety. The Bahia Declaration lists six priorities for review at future Forums, as well as key goals with target dates for their achievement. The Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 include recommendations that are linked to these goals and organized according to the six Programme Areas set forth in Agenda 21. Forum III also considered: the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products; barriers to information exchange; information exchange for chemical production decision making; PRTs and emissions inventories; a capacity-building network for the sound management of chemicals; awareness raising and

the prioritization of chemicals management capacity-building issues at the political level; and the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

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), a framework for action to implement the UNCED commitments that includes a number of new commitments. The issue of chemicals management is addressed primarily in Chapter III on Changing Unsustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption, which reflects a renewed commitment to the sound management of chemicals. Chemicals-related targets contained in the JPOI 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 of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) based on the Bahia Declaration and IFCS Priorities for Action beyond 2000; and the national implementation of the new GHS, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

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

In February 2002, at its seventh Special Session/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the UNEP GC agreed in decision UNEP/GCSS.VII/3 that a SAICM was needed. Decision UNEP/GCSS.VII/3 requests UNEP Executive Director to develop a SAICM 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 the IOMC.

The 22nd session of the UNEP GC, held in February 2003, reached agreement on a number of chemicals-related issues. Delegates adopted decision UNEP/GC.22/4 endorsing the concept of an international conference, with preparatory meetings, as the basis for developing a SAICM.

FORUM IV: Forum IV convened in November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand, 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, focusing on topics relating to: children and chemical safety; occupational health and safety; hazard data generation and availability; acutely toxic pesticides; and capacity building. Delegates also considered and took decisions on the GHS, and illegal traffic.

In response to UNEP GC decisions UNEP/GCSS.VII/3 and UNEP/GC.22/4 IV, Forum IV discussed the further development of a SAICM, and forwarded a non-negotiated compilation report on its work to SAICM PrepCom-1 addressing, *inter alia*: life-

cycle management of chemicals since Agenda 21; new and ongoing challenges; gaps in life-cycle chemical management; and resources for capacity building and implementation.

SAICM: SAICM was developed over the course of three meetings of the Preparatory Committee: PrepCom-1 (9-13 November 2003, Bangkok, Thailand); PrepCom-2 (4-8 October 2004, Nairobi, Kenya) and PrepCom-3 (19-24 September 2005, Vienna, Austria). SAICM was adopted at the International Conference on Chemicals Management (4-6 February 2006, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) and includes a High-level Declaration, an Overarching Policy Strategy and a Global Plan of Action.

IFCS-V REPORT

The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS-V) opened on Monday morning, 25 September 2006. Suwit Wibulpolprasert, IFCS-V President, opened Forum V, noted that transparency and equality are crucial elements of the IFCS decision-making process, and introduced the keynote speakers.

Katalin Szili, President of Parliament, Hungary, emphasized the increased responsibility to prevent threats to public health and welfare from chemical sources. Lajos Molnár, Minister of Health, Hungary, described some of the measures being undertaken to generate further advancement in chemical safety. Miklós Persányi, Minister of Environment and Water, Hungary, said IFCS' capacity should continue to be used to support the sound management of chemicals.

Following the keynote speakers, there were expert presentations, followed by the presentation of awards. Fatemeh Vaez Javadi, Vice President and Minister of Environment, Iran, noted the widening gap between developed and developing countries in terms of capacity to manage chemical threats to human health and security. Joel Forman, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, spoke on the early and delayed consequences to children's health due to early exposure to chemicals. Virgie Dammay, Alliance of Peasants in the Cordillera Homeland, the Philippines, described a sustainable traditional farming system that does not use any synthetic chemicals. Anabela Lemos, Environmental Justice, Mozambique, reported on civil society efforts to improve local chemical disposal policies in Mozambique.

HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol of Thailand and the Chulabhorn Research Institute were awarded the Special Recognition Award for building capacity for chemical safety and for research to prevent the negative impacts of chemicals in all areas of development. Roy Hickman, Canada, and Ulrich Schlottmann, Germany, were presented with the Award of Merit.

Jules de Kom (Suriname) was elected as Rapporteur of IFCS-V. Vice Presidents elected at Forum IV were the US, the Russian Federation, Chile, Tanzania, and the Philippines. Additional coverage of the opening ceremonies can be found online at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol15/enb15137e.html>

During the course of the week, delegates met in plenary sessions, in regional group meetings and in *ad hoc* working groups. This report summarizes the discussions and outcomes based on the agenda of the IFCS-V.

PRESIDENT'S PROGRESS REPORT

President Wibulpolprasert presented a report entitled "12 Year IFCS and President Progress Report for Forum V, 2006." The report highlighted the progress made on the fulfillment of commitments and agreed targets in the Bahia Declaration, Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 and other Forum recommendations and action items. He underscored IFCS' work as one of the key factors for the success of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. On the future of global chemical safety, he noted the need for: promoting multi-sectoral and multi-party participation; balancing "greed growth-based" development with "efficiency-based" development; and increasing the number of grassroots women's alliances around the world. He especially complimented Georg Karlaganis (Switzerland), Jamidu Katima (Tanzania) and Romeo Quijano (the Philippines) on their contributions to the global chemicals agenda.

FUTURE OF IFCS

Georg Karlaganis presented the "thought starter on the Future of IFCS" paper (IFCS/FORUM-V/02-TS) in plenary on Monday. IFCS President Wibulpolprasert established an *ad hoc* working group that met daily from Monday through Thursday. On Thursday, the group made an interim report to plenary. On Friday, a draft resolution was presented to plenary and adopted without amendment.

On Wednesday, the plenary also initially considered future topics for the Forum under this agenda item. An additional agenda item was subsequently created for this matter and a summary of the discussions follows below, under the heading "Topics for the Future Forum of IFCS."

Discussions on the future of IFCS focused on the appropriate role and institutional arrangements for the Forum given the adoption of SAICM by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) in February 2006. Developing countries, many European states and most NGOs strongly supported the continuation of IFCS, praising its open, transparent and inclusive process that promotes interaction between governments and stakeholders. The Africa Region added that IFCS bridges a gap between policy and science and should not be replaced by a high-level political body such as the ICCM. The US called for a detailed plan of action on the future of IFCS, and suggested "sunsetting" IFCS or merging IFCS with SAICM. The Africa Region noted that SAICM still lacks a secure financial mechanism, and Germany emphasized that IFCS is still needed given SAICM's current lack of effective working structures. Switzerland and Norway advocated a mutually supportive approach for SAICM and IFCS.

Delegates agreed on the need to avoid duplication of functions between IFCS and SAICM, and to achieve efficient institutional arrangements that maximize synergies and cost effectiveness. There were differing views on which arrangements would

best achieve this, and two proposals emerged. The first, which included steps towards creating a joint executive body and joint secretariat for IFCS and SAICM, was supported by the US, Japan and some industry NGOs. The second, maintaining IFCS as a separate institution with tasks including interacting with SAICM and contributing to its implementation, was favored by most other countries and NGOs. In the end, elements of both proposals were incorporated into the final resolution, which establishes a working group to prepare a draft decision on IFCS' future role and functions.

The US voiced concern about a likely future lack of funding for IFCS. Germany, Switzerland and Thailand announced significant financial contributions to IFCS for 2007. Modest contributions were pledged by Trinidad and Tobago, Tanzania, the Philippines, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), and the Asia-Pacific Association of Medical Toxicologists (APAMT). A number of private individuals and NGOs also pledged symbolic contributions.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on the future of IFCS, preambular language notes the unique role that the Forum has played as a flexible, open and transparent brainstorming and bridge-building forum for governments, IGOs and NGOs, and recognizes the desirability of continuing such a Forum. The preamble also notes the need to use human and financial resources efficiently and to avoid duplication of functions and work areas, in order to enhance the implementation of SAICM.

The resolution, *inter alia*:

- requests the IFCS Secretariat to establish a close working relationship with the SAICM Secretariat, and invites the SAICM Secretariat to participate in IFCS organized meetings;
- establishes a working group to prepare a draft decision on the future role and functions of the IFCS for consideration at Forum VI, including options for its institutional arrangement and consideration of a joint secretariat with SAICM;
- decides that participation in the working group shall be limited to the members of the FSC, and that the five regional SAICM focal points shall also be invited to participate;
- urges that consideration be given to holding IFCS Forum meetings back-to-back with other relevant international meetings, such as ICCM; and
- invites governments, IGOs and NGOs, including from the private sector, to provide voluntary financial and in-kind resources in support of the IFCS Secretariat.

TOPICS FOR THE FUTURE FORUM OF IFCS

Georg Karlaganis presented a list of possible future topics for the Forum in plenary on Wednesday. On Thursday, plenary discussed an expanded list, adding further suggestions. On Friday, a final list was presented to plenary, and the process for preparing the future Forum agenda was discussed.

During discussions, President Wibulpolprasert reminded delegates of the resolution adopted by ICCM (SAICM/ICCM.1/7, Annex IV, Resolution 1/3), which invites IFCS to discuss issues of common interest as well as new and emerging issues. The US called for consensus on the list of future topics

and, with Switzerland, cautioned against duplicating the work of other institutions. Participants highlighted topics including nanotechnology and nanoparticles, opportunities for substitution, electronic waste (e-waste) such as mobile phone and computer waste, health hazards associated with chemicals and metals, and water chemistry. Norway supported continuing the discussions on sound management of chemicals and poverty reduction, and the widening gap between countries.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) advocated examining topics in the list of activities not agreed for the development of SAICM (referred to by participants as "Table C" from the draft global plan of action (SAICM/ICCM.1/4)). Japan noted that those items are highly political, and expressed reluctance to undertake such discussions at IFCS. Norway agreed on the need to avoid continuing negotiations on Table C within IFCS, suggesting discussion instead focus on "themes" of Table C. France suggested examining Table C in a "free spirit."

Outcome: IFCS-V noted that under the IFCS Terms of Reference, the FSC sets the topics for the Forum sessions, and that the FSC would consider the list of topics and plenary discussions when preparing the agenda for Forum VI. The list of topics for the future Forum of IFCS includes:

- nanoparticles, nanomaterials, and nanotechnology;
- persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances;
- metals, including arsenic, chromium, nickel, mercury, lead and cadmium;
- substitution and alternatives;
- e-waste;
- chemical contamination of drinking water;
- illegal traffic in dangerous and toxic substances;
- prioritization of chemicals for action under SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy (OPS) and SAICM Global Plan of Action (GPA);
- preparation of information to support ICCM consideration of "Table C" items; and
- follow-up of existing active topics.

SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND POVERTY REDUCTION

This issue was taken up in plenary on Monday afternoon with expert presentations followed by discussion. Lynn Goldman, Johns Hopkins University, reviewed the "thought starter" paper on poverty reduction and the sound management of chemicals (IFCS/FORUM-V/04-TS), highlighting the disproportionate vulnerability of the poor to exposure to hazardous materials. She called for efforts to increase interaction between chemical managers and the designers and implementers of poverty reduction strategies. Jill Hanna, European Commission, noted that since chemicals compete for donor funding with many other challenges such as bad governance and gender inequity, it is important to link chemicals issues to the Millennium Development Goals. She also suggested that studying the costs incurred by the absence of sound chemical management would build a strong case for donor support.

Sarojani Rengam, Pesticide Action Network (PAN), emphasized the role of efficient and gender-equitable land tenure systems, and the need for capacity building and empowerment to allow the participation of peasants, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers, the urban poor and women in the elaboration and implementation of poverty reduction policies. Nelson Manda, Zambia, highlighted that health crises caused by PCB pollution from electrical industries, many of which are owned by governments, can result in resources being diverted from poverty reduction.

The issue of management of chemicals and poverty reduction was included in the list of topics for the future forum of IFCS.

APPLYING PRECAUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF CHEMICAL SAFETY

The item was first discussed on Tuesday, 26 September, in plenary, with the introduction of the “thought starter” paper on tools and approaches for applying precaution in the context of chemicals safety (IFCS/FORUM-V/01-TS). An *ad hoc* working group was established and convened on Tuesday and Thursday. The plenary discussed and adopted a resolution on Friday, 29 September.

Joel Tickner, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, said that the Forum would focus on tools and approaches for applying precaution, rather than on the definition of precaution. His opening remarks were followed by expert presentations. Franz Xaver Perrez, Switzerland, described different views on precaution and its status in international law, and emphasized the importance of developing and applying tools and approaches. Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate, presented a web-based tool to facilitate the application of precaution by industry, developed with stakeholder participation. John Shoaff, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), highlighted EPA’s Chemical Review Process. Jesús Marín Ruiz, National Toxicology Center, Nicaragua, noting acute contaminations caused by specific pesticides, highlighted a study on their toxic and environmental effects, agricultural efficiency and on the availability of alternatives. Romeo Quijano, PAN, presented the Community-Based Pesticides Action and Monitoring Project and said that the only way to prevent pesticide pollution is to avoid pesticide use and to practice ecological farming.

Tickner presented the background paper on tools and approaches for applying precaution in the context of chemical safety (IFCS/FORUM-V/6 INF), underlining its purpose as a scoping exercise.

Discussion included:

- involvement of trade unions and consideration of workers’ interests;
- importance of developing alternatives to toxic chemicals;
- enforcement of international and national environmental legislation as a tool for applying precaution;
- weight given to community-based monitoring and research; and
- ways to apply precaution in the absence of information, tools or regulations.

PAN stressed raising awareness of the impacts of chemicals. Senegal expressed interest in learning more about risk assessment tools that could be used internationally. Nigeria urged IFCS to promote capacity-building initiatives in developing countries for applying precaution at the national level. IPEN underscored the limitations of risk-assessment models. ICFTU noted the limitations of labelling and safety data sheets. Cyprus, supported by Thailand, Austria and Switzerland, proposed the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group to elaborate on this issue. Argentina and the US said that it was premature to form a working group.

In the *ad hoc* working group on precaution, participants identified a series of potential next steps. On Wednesday, 27 September, a draft text was circulated summarizing the discussions of the working group. The text identified potential next steps to assist developing countries in their capacity to apply tools and approaches for implementing precaution in chemical safety within their domestic context. The text also requested a feasibility study by an expert working group established by the FSC regarding a plan of action to implement the identified steps.

On Thursday this issue was discussed in the regional groups and then reported to the plenary. Some countries supported the option of a feasibility study. The Central and Eastern Europe Region, Africa Region, Asia and Pacific Region, PAN and Germany supported the establishment of a working group to develop a plan of action for the implementation of the identified next steps without a feasibility study. The US objected to both options, saying that they will lead to dispute, consume resources, and delay the work. Instead it proposed to invite participants to voluntarily contribute their experiences, expertise and information. The *ad hoc* working group met again in the evening and agreed upon a compromise text.

Final Resolution: The final text outlines two general areas for potential next steps:

- provision of information to developing countries and countries with economies in transition on tools and approaches for making decisions in the face of uncertainty and/or applying precaution in the domestic context, including: a portal combining tools from various stakeholders; tool-kits; practical case examples, and a list of contact points;
- capacity-building and skill-sharing initiatives, including: capacity-building workshops; on-going dialogue for sharing lessons, tools and approaches; and pilot projects.

In the resolution, the Forum requests that actions be undertaken between now and Forum VI to implement the identified next steps with the intention of contributing to the implementation of the SAICM. It invites and encourages IFCS participants to make available the information, assistance, and tools and approaches described above.

HEAVY METALS - NEED FOR FURTHER GLOBAL ACTION?

Discussions on heavy metals and the need for further global action were held on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in plenary. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, an *ad hoc* working group

met and prepared a statement on the issue, entitled the Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium, which was adopted by plenary on Friday.

Discussions centered on addressing the challenges posed by heavy metals, which include further work by IFCS on understanding heavy metals and approaches for managing them, including the possibility of adopting voluntary instruments or initiating a process towards a global convention on mercury and other metals. Some participants, including the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) and the US, favored partnerships as the most effective means to address the issue, while the European Community (EC), the Asia and Pacific Region and the Africa Region supported development of a legally-binding global instrument. Japan, Canada and the US expressed concern about the outcome document being called a “declaration,” while Iran favored the word “commitments.”

Final Statement: The Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium, *inter alia*:

- urges IFCS participants to initiate and intensify actions, as appropriate, to address the excess supply of mercury on a global scale through a variety of possible measures, such as an export prohibition, preventing excess mercury from re-entering the global market, and a global phase-out of mercury primary production;
- invites the UNEP GC to: initiate and strengthen voluntary actions at the global level for mercury, lead and cadmium, including partnerships and other activities; give high priority to considering further measures to address risks to human health and the environment from mercury, lead and cadmium; and to consider a range of options including the possibility of establishing a legally-binding instrument, as well as partnerships; and
- calls upon developed countries and other countries to support these activities.

ADDRESSING THE WIDENING GAP AMONG COUNTRIES IN FOLLOWING THE CHEMICAL SAFETY POLICIES

This issue was raised on Monday by keynote speaker Fatemeh Vaez Javadi, and further discussed in plenary on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, Sayed Ali Mohammad Mousavi, Iran, presented a progress report from the FSC on “Addressing the widening gap among countries in following chemical safety policies,” (IFCS/FORUM-V/4 INF) noting that as a result of this work, the SAICM OPS includes recommendations for facilitating strengthened country capacity building for the sound management of chemicals.

Lilian Corra, ISDE, reported on a side event on South-South cooperation, noting that much useful expertise resides in NGOs and professional associations in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) said that South-South cooperation often does not occur effectively and suggested that the “gap” is widening further. Iran noted that addressing the widening gap cannot rely solely on South-South cooperation, and urged donor countries to take action. Tanzania noted that donors fund the “best developed proposals,” thereby skipping over those most in need of capacity building, and called for a roster of experts to

assist developing funding proposals. China said that developed countries should not transfer obsolete technologies to developing countries.

Thailand, supported by Nigeria, called upon IFCS to provide a platform for developing countries to share expertise and experiences, and suggested an expanded Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals (INFOCAP) as one potential method. President Wibulpolprasert reported that the SAICM and IFCS Secretariats had met and begun the process of transferring INFOCAP to SAICM.

Discussion on this issue will be summarized in the IFCS-V final report and referred to the SAICM Regional Groups for their consideration in their deliberations towards ICCM-2.

TOYS AND CHEMICAL SAFETY

The agenda item on toys and chemical safety was first introduced in plenary on Wednesday, 27 September. It was subsequently addressed in an *ad hoc* working group, chaired by Katherine Shea, IFCS, on Wednesday and Thursday and in plenary on Thursday. A resolution was adopted by plenary on Friday, 29 September.

Discussions started in plenary with the presentation of the “thought starter” paper on toys and chemical safety (IFCS/FORUM-V/03-TS), and expert presentations. Ravi Agarwal, Toxics Link, highlighted a recent study on lead and cadmium in soft plastic toys in India, and noted the US\$100 billion global toy market. Emphasizing that the level of chemical exposure considered “safe” continues to decrease, he advocated substitution of dangerous materials. Julio Monreal Urrutia, Ministry of Health, Chile, explained Chile’s experience with toys containing toluene, which affected a significant number of children and prompted new regulations on toys and child products in his country. Steve Clarkson, Health Canada, elaborated on Canada’s Hazardous Products Act.

Mexico called for tests to establish the chemical content of toys. IPEN called for a global market surveillance programme. Israel advocated a harmonized approach to addressing chemicals in toys. Denmark stressed the need for precaution. Zambia suggested global action to ban the inclusion of toys in donations. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) highlighted the importance of labelling.

Discussions in the *ad hoc* working group focused on actions on three main areas: precaution; harmonization of standards; and information sharing.

NGOs, opposed by developed countries, advocated a global market surveillance system. Developing countries proposed references to the informal toy-manufacturing sector.

Final Resolution: The final resolution on toys and chemical safety proposes recommendations for action, including:

- encouraging designers, manufacturers, governments and regulators of toys to use a full range of tools and approaches, including prevention and precaution, to ensure that toys are safe;
- encouraging dialogue among governments, manufacturers and other stakeholders to identify chemicals of concern and

potential substitution options, develop strategies for sharing information, encourage countries to develop surveillance of chemical content of toys, and promote research and increase awareness; and

- encouraging work toward developing guidance for toy safety and harmonization of international standards, including determination of the chemical content of toys, actions towards elimination of lead and mercury in toys, and safety labelling.

ELECTION OF IFCS OFFICERS AND FORUM STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

IFCS plenary elected the candidates presented by the regional groups. Zoltán Szabó, Hungary, was elected President of the IFCS. The five elected regional Vice Presidents were Iran, Slovenia, Suriname, Switzerland and Tanzania.

The following countries and organizations were elected to FSC seats: Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Germany, Latvia, Republic of Korea, Thailand, US, Zambia, ISDE, International Council of Chemical Associations, PAN and the resulting organization after ICFTU merges with another organization in October 2006. Angola, Argentina, Haiti, Indonesia, Japan, Malawi and Samoa were elected as IFC alternates.

OTHER BUSINESS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT: The Forum adopted the financial statement (IFCS/FORUM-V/04w). PAN International reported on fund-raising, pledges and cash collections. A total of US\$276,000 was pledged.

DUMPING OF HAZARDOUS WASTES IN COTE

D'IVOIRE: Nigeria read an African Statement on the recent dumping of hazardous wastes in Côte d'Ivoire. She said the shipment originated in Estonia, was rejected by the Netherlands, and was subsequently illegally dumped in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, resulting in the poisoning of 16,000 people, causing six deaths and affecting more than 70,000 people.

Finland, on behalf of the European Union, said the issue is on the EU ministerial agenda and is being investigated by the governments of Estonia and the Netherlands.

Switzerland, WHO, IPEN, the Basel Convention Secretariat and others expressed sympathy for Côte d'Ivoire. Switzerland appealed to all countries to accede to, and ratify, the Basel Convention Protocol on Liability and Compensation. WHO reported on its rapid response on the ground and ongoing work with other agencies to establish a surveillance system to follow up on affected people.

DDT: Zambia, Peru, PAN, IPEN, ICFTU and others expressed concern over WHO's press release giving DDT a clean bill of health for controlling malaria. Several countries and NGOs called for an internal investigation on how the decision to promote DDT use was taken in WHO. Physicians for Social Responsibility and Peru said that WHO's statement undermines the Stockholm Convention. Mexico offered to share experiences and information on the gradual elimination of DDT use. WHO underlined that the change is not a reversal of policy and is in accord with the Stockholm Convention. President Wibulpolprasert said that, as a member of WHO's executive

board, he will request an investigation, adding that if the issue is a misunderstanding it needs to be explained, and if it is a misconception, it needs to be addressed.

FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE FORUM

Participants accepted Senegal's offer to host the next session of the Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday afternoon, Rapporteur de Kom presented the draft report of the meeting (IFCS/FORUM-V/05w). The report was adopted by plenary with amendments.

President-elect Szabó highlighted the challenging opportunity of presiding over IFCS, and underscored the importance of cooperation with other forums and organizations, such as SAICM.

President Wibulpolprasert thanked the Government of Hungary for its hospitality and all participants for their hard work and, expressing joy he will not be the last IFCS President, closed the meeting at 3:53 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF IFCS-V

During a week of summery weather in beautiful Budapest, participants of the fifth session of the International Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS-V) found themselves inside air-conditioned rooms discussing the future of sound management of chemicals. Delegates had a wide range of hopes for the meeting, with some hoping to continue IFCS as an open and transparent forum and others preferring to shift towards discussing chemicals issues in the more formal setting of the International Conference on Chemical Management (ICCM) and UNEP Governing Council (GC). However, the battle over the future role and institutional arrangements of the Forum did not prevent meaningful progress on substantive issues, in particular the initiation of actions to address health and environmental impacts of mercury, lead and cadmium, and the identification of tools to apply precaution when managing chemicals. This analysis will focus on those two items. It will also consider the implications of the debate on the future of IFCS and its place in the international chemical policy arena.

HEAVY METALS

Heavy metals have taken a gradually higher profile during recent years in discussions in multilateral environmental agreements and chemicals policy, with many sharing views that an international approach is required to address the risks to human health and the environment posed by three heavy metals (mercury, lead and cadmium). Various international institutions and processes have begun to address heavy metals, including UNEP's scientific data review to provide for a possible future informed decision on the need for global action on lead and cadmium, the UNEP Mercury Programme, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which makes reference to heavy metals. As some delegates highlighted, there is strong scientific evidence on the global environmental transport of mercury, which they say supports the need for international measures. This situation is not the

case for lead and cadmium, which exhibit different transport characteristics and, in the opinion of several participants, require further investigation as to their global circulation.

Discussions on addressing heavy metals kept delegates working late into the night most of the week, with views differing on the suitability of using long-term legally-binding instruments versus short-term voluntary measures. The European Union, the Asia and Pacific Group and the Africa Group favored the initiation of a process to negotiate a new convention on mercury, while the US and the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Group (GRULAC) preferred not to go down such a road. The US advocated concentrating efforts on partnerships that bring immediate results and supporting the UNEP Mercury Programme. The wary approach of the US to developing prescriptive or legally-binding measures is consistent with its views in other recent environment-related negotiations, including SAICM and other chemicals negotiations, where it has highlighted a preference for voluntary partnerships and instruments. GRULAC reasoned that a convention on mercury would not have practical immediate results and would not suffice to address global chemicals management. GRULAC preferred to wait for the global assessments on cadmium and lead that will be reported to the UNEP Governing Council in 2007 and advocated expanding the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants to include methyl mercury.

Financial issues were also a topic of debate with developing countries requesting mention of financial assistance mechanisms to support global mercury activity. This was omitted from the final document due to opposition from many developed countries who asserted their lack of a mandate to discuss financial issues.

In the end, the final Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium succeeded in integrating most views by inviting UNEP GC to consider further measures to address risk to human health and the environment from mercury, lead and cadmium. This outcome goes further than some might have expected, given that as well as considering additional partnerships and other voluntary activities, it includes the possibility of establishing a legally-binding instrument – an option that some developed countries have previously been reluctant to even put on the agenda.

PRECAUTION

Delegates at IFCS-V avoided the typical stalemate that occurs when negotiating on precaution by not discussing the thorny issue of defining the precautionary principle, but focusing instead on identifying tools to apply precaution when managing chemicals. Developing countries, countries with economies in transition (CEITs) and most developed countries considered this issue to be a high priority. Supporters favored establishing a working group to develop a plan of action to implement identified steps for making decisions in the face of uncertainty, identifying tools and approaches, and promoting capacity-building and skill-sharing initiatives. Noting that establishing a working group would lead to dispute and controversies, consume resources, and cause delays, the US instead proposed limiting

the scope of the decision to invite participants to voluntarily contribute and share their experiences and expertise during IFCS meetings.

The resulting compromise text accommodated US concerns by inviting and encouraging IFCS participants to make available existing tools and approaches to developing countries and CEITs. While the text left out the wishes of developing countries to establish a working group to develop a plan of action for precaution, the resolution still represents a positive outcome for developing countries and countries with economies in transition as it promotes the possibility of adapting existing tools and approaches to assist them to incorporate precaution into their national approach to SAICM implementation.

THE FUTURE: RIDING OFF INTO THE SUNSET?

The adoption of SAICM in February 2006 altered the position of IFCS within the international chemicals arena in two ways. The first stems from SAICM's prioritization of a range of international objectives and approaches for chemicals management, which in the eyes of some delegates, has relegated IFCS chemicals discussions to a secondary role. The second may arise as many countries are likely to reallocate a significant amount of funding from IFCS to SAICM, requiring a major adjustment to IFCS institutional arrangements. While for most IFCS participants, the value of the Forum is not in doubt, all recognized that IFCS must adapt and demonstrate its usefulness to SAICM and ICCM, as well as the benefits of its independent function.

Participants' opinions on the future of IFCS were divided into two very different camps. The US led the charge to "sunset" IFCS, stating that efforts and resources should be focused on achieving concrete SAICM actions and on avoiding duplication of tasks. Japan was not prepared to abolish IFCS entirely, but favored an eventual merger of IFCS and SAICM, resulting in a joint executive body and a joint secretariat administered by UNEP for the implementation of SAICM and IFCS activities.

By contrast, most European countries, CEITs, developing countries, and NGOs were not prepared to lose IFCS' unique value as a flexible, independent, open and transparent arena for in-depth discussion of political and scientific chemicals issues by a variety of stakeholders, including NGOs, IGOs, the private sector and governments. These countries emphasized that ICCM and SAICM cannot replace IFCS because the latter has a unique role to play, which goes beyond the sole mandate of governments, and SAICM has a restricted mandate, as well as uncertain funding and work arrangements. They strongly opposed merging the governing bodies and the two secretariats.

Furthermore, delegates recalled that many statements at ICCM described SAICM as a work in progress that must be built on in the future. One developing country noted that ICCM still lacks decisions on issues such as participation, rules of procedure, and financial mechanisms, and reasoned that IFCS is crucial, in this intersessional period, for assisting ICCM in crafting its permanent rules of procedure. Most participants also reiterated the important contribution that NGOs and the private sector make to chemical safety policy through the IFCS. At least one

participant expressed concern that phasing out IFCS could allow governments to control the chemicals debate, and said that IFCS must continue to shine an independent and transparent light on both existing and emerging issues.

As debate heated up, so did the metaphors, with the US stressing that “the house was on fire” and warning that future funding was unlikely to be sufficient to guarantee the survival of the IFCS. Indeed, while few countries were prepared to be as vocally pessimistic, it may be that financial actions speak louder than words, with a number of observers in the corridors quietly fearing a shift in many governments’ funding priorities from IFCS to SAICM. Although quite a number of member countries, organizations and individuals made financial commitments or contributions, IFCS’ ability to mobilize further resources in the coming years will be critical.

CONCLUSION: THE SUN STILL SHINES ON IFCS

For now, the sun continues to shine on IFCS, thanks to a compromise resolution, which establishes a working group to prepare a draft decision on the future role and functions of IFCS, including options for a joint secretariat with SAICM, for consideration at IFCS-VI. Furthermore, IFCS-V’s enthusiastic listing of future topics for the Forum such as nanoparticles, electronic waste, and substitution of dangerous chemicals, and the progress made on issues such as precaution and heavy metals, demonstrate that the body still has substantive as well as institutional vitality. In particular, this Forum added to IFCS’ contribution to chemicals management with the Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium that combines the possibility of strengthening the use of voluntary instruments for the three heavy metals and the opportunity to consider a legally-binding instrument for mercury to address the risks it poses to human health and the environment. Another feather in IFCS V’s cap relates to reaching consensus on identifying further steps for assisting developing countries and CEITs to take precaution into account when making chemical management decisions.

As some delegates noted, the efforts made by most IFCS-V participants have ensured that the Forum continues to exist – neither to rise nor to set – for now. But in the coming years, IFCS must be able to prove that it plays a unique role and is performing functions that other forums or mechanisms do not. This will be the key to IFCS’ future success and its continued existence.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION REGIONAL AWARENESS-RAISING WORKSHOP ON THE GUIDELINES ON BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND WEST ASIA:

This meeting will take place in Brno, Czech Republic, from 2-4 October 2006. For more information, contact the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

ADVANCED SEMINAR ON POLLUTION PREVENTION AND HAZARDOUS WASTE POLLUTION: This seminar will be held from 2-6 October 2006, in Barcelona, Spain. The objective of this seminar is to contribute to the effective reduction of contamination in the Mediterranean generated by industrial toxic and hazardous wastes through alternative treatment options and minimization at source. For more information, contact: Government of Catalonia and Spanish Agency for International Cooperation; tel: +34-93-415-1112; fax: +34-93-237-0286; e-mail: cleanpro@cema-sa.org; internet: http://www.gencat.net/mediamb/cprac/eng/03_activitats_projectes_01.htm#s3

JOINT FAO/WHO MEETING ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES (JMPR): This meeting will take place in Rome, Italy, from 3-12 October 2006, sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). For more information, contact: WHO International Programme on Chemical Safety; tel: +41-22-791-3590; fax: +41-22-791-4848; e-mail: mereditht@who.int; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/JMPR/JMPRmeetings.htm>

WORKSHOP ON ILLEGAL TRAFFIC OF HAZARDOUS AND OTHER WASTES: This workshop will be held from 3-5 October 2006, in Bratislava, Slovakia. For more information, contact: Basel Convention Regional Centre in Bratislava, the Technical Assistance Information; tel: +42-12-5464-1398/5443-2061; fax: +42-12-5464-1398; e-mail: sbc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int>

THIRD MEETING OF THE EXPANDED BUREAU OF BASEL CONVENTION COP-7: This meeting is scheduled for 6-7 October 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Basel Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: sbc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int/meetings/frsetmain.php>

1ST MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION AD HOC TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION: This Stockholm Convention meeting will take place from 9-13 October 2006, in Brno, Czech Republic. For more information, contact the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

THIRD MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION (PIC COP-3): This conference will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 9-13 October 2006. For more information, contact: Rotterdam Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8296; fax: +41-22-917-8082; e-mail: pic@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.pic.int>

16TH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CHEMICAL ACCIDENTS: This OECD-organized meeting will be held from 16-17 October 2006, in Varese, Italy. For more information, contact: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); tel: +33-1-45-249-316; fax: +33-1-45-241-675; e-mail: EHS.contact@oecd.org; internet: <http://www.oecd.org/ehs/>

OECD-EC WORKSHOP ON RISK ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTAL RELEASES:

This workshop will be held from 18-20 October 2006, in Varese, Italy. For more information, contact: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); tel: +33-1-45-249-316; fax: +33-1-45-241-675; e-mail: EHS.contact@oecd.org; internet: <http://www.oecd.org/ehs/>

SAICM MEETING OF THE QUICK START PROGRAMME (QSP) TRUST FUND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (TFIC):

This meeting will be held on 18 October 2006, in Paris, France. The committee of representatives of the Inter-Organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) will review and approve projects submitted for funding under the QSP trust fund. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals, tel: +41-22-917-8334; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/implementation.htm>

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION REGIONAL AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOP ON THE GUIDELINES ON BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES FOR AFRICA:

This event will take place from 18-20 October 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHEMICAL HAZARD COMMUNICATION AND GHS IMPLEMENTATION FOR COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA:

This event will take place from 24-26 October 2006, in Bled, Slovenia. For more information, contact: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); tel: +41-22-917-8166; fax: +41-22-917-8047; e-mail: jonathan.krueger@unitar.org; internet: <http://www.unitar.org/cwg/dbase/eyear.aspx>

INTERNATIONAL MERCURY CONFERENCE - "HOW TO REDUCE MERCURY SUPPLY AND DEMAND": This event will take place from 26-27 October 2006, in Brussels, Belgium. For more information, contact: European Commission; tel: +32-2-743-8949; fax: +32-2-732-7111; e-mail: michel.lepropre@ecotec.com or geraldine.ferdinand@ecotec.com; internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/conference.htm>

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHEMICAL HAZARD COMMUNICATION AND GHS IMPLEMENTATION FOR COUNTRIES OF THE ARAB REGION:

This event will take place from 30 October-2 November 2006, in Alexandria, Egypt. For more information, contact: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); tel: +41-22-917-8166; fax: +41-22-917-8047; e-mail: jonathan.krueger@unitar.org; internet: <http://www.unitar.org/cwg/dbase/eyear.aspx>

WORKSHOP ON THE BASEL PROTOCOL ON LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION:

This event will take place from 30 October - 1 November 2006, in Cairo, Egypt. For more information, contact: Basel Convention Regional Centre in

Cairo; tel: +20 25719 688; fax: +20 25717 565; e-mail: basel_cairo@baselegypt.com; internet: <http://www.baselegypt.org/en/general/general.php?page=Questionnaire>

EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL: MOP-18 will take place from 30 October 2006 to 3 November 2006, in New Delhi, India. For more information, contact: Ozone Secretariat; tel: +254-20-762-3850/1; fax: +254-20-762-4691; e-mail: ozoneinfo@unep.org; internet: <http://ozone.unep.org/index.asp>

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION REGIONAL AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOP ON THE GUIDELINES ON BAT AND BEP FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

This workshop will take place from 31 October - 2 November 2006, in Mexico City, Mexico. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

SECOND MEETING OF THE PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (POPRC):

This Stockholm Convention meeting will take place from 6-10 November 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

SYMPOSIUM ON ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND WASTE:

This symposium in support of SAICM will take place from 6-8 November 2006, in Prague, Czech Republic. The symposium will focus on sharing of information on the size and nature of the problem with illegal traffic and the range of measures to counter illegal traffic. For more information, contact: UNEP DTIE - Chemicals Branch; tel: +41-22-917-8334; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/unepsaicm/default.html>

SECOND SESSION OF THE FAO PANEL OF EXPERTS ON PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT:

This event will take place from 7-10 November 2006, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: Plant Protection Service, Pesticide Management Unit, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); tel: 39 06 570 55757/52753/53441; fax: 39 06 570 56347; e-mail: brenda.jones@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp/pesticid/Code/Meetings.htm>

20TH MEETING OF THE OECD WORKING GROUP ON PESTICIDES:

This meeting will take place from 13-14 November 2006, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: OECD; tel: +33-1-45-249-316; fax: +33-1-45-241-675; e-mail: EHS.contact@oecd.org; internet: <http://www2.oecd.org/iomc/reports/EventReport.aspx?reports=true> and <http://www.oecd.org/ehs/>

40TH JOINT MEETING OF THE OECD CHEMICALS COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY ON CHEMICALS, PESTICIDES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY:

This meeting will take place from 14-15 November 2006, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: OECD; tel: +33-1-45-249-

316; fax: +33-1-45-241-675; e-mail: EHS.contact@oecd.org; internet: <http://www2.oecd.org/iomc/reports/EventReport.aspx?reports=true>

MEETING ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PESTICIDES AND BIOCIDES: The Technical Committee on Classification and Labelling of Dangerous Substances is meeting from 14-16 November 2006, in Arona, Italy. For more information, contact: Institute for Health and Consumer Protection; tel: +39-0332-785959; fax: +39-0332-785730; e-mail: ihcp-contact@jrc.it; internet: http://ecb.jrc.it/classlab/agenda/7706_ag_Pesticides-Biocides_1106.htm

SAICM REGIONAL MEETING: The EU-JUSSCANNZ regional meeting will take place from 20-22 November 2006, in Barcelona, Spain. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals, tel: +41-22-917-8334; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/regionalmeetings.htm>

SECOND MEETING OF THE DDT EXPERT GROUP: This meeting, held under the auspices of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, will take place from 20-23 November 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP-8) TO THE BASEL CONVENTION: COP-8 will take place from 27 November - 1 December 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya. One of the key issues will be to examine innovative solutions for the management of electronic wastes. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Basel Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: sbc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int>

SECOND MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES: This expert group of the Stockholm Convention will meet from 4-9 December 2006, in Beijing, China. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int>

SAICM REGIONAL MEETING: CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: This meeting will take place from 4-6 December 2006, in Riga, Latvia. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals, tel: +41-22-917-8334; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/regionalmeetings.htm>

12TH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE GHS: This meeting of experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals will take place from 12-14 December 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: UNECE; tel: +41-22-917-2456; fax: +41-22-917-0039; e-mail: info.ece@unece.org; internet: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc4/c4age.html>

24TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: This meeting will take place from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: Secretary for UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-20-762-1234; fax: +254-20-762-4489/90; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; internet: <http://www.unep.org>

6TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY: This event will take place in Dakar, Senegal, probably in 2009, although dates have to be confirmed. For more information, contact: IFCS Secretariat; tel: +41-22-791-3873; fax: +41-22-791-4875, e-mail: ifcs@who.ch; internet: <http://www.who.int/ifcs>

GLOSSARY

APAMT	Asia-Pacific Association of Medical Toxicologists
BAT	Best Available Technologies
BEP	Best Environmental Practices
DDT	Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane
FSC	Forum Standing Committee of the IFCS
GHS	Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICMM	International Council on Mining and Metals
IFCS	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
INFOCAP	Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for Sound Management of Chemicals
IOMC	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
IPEN	International POPs Elimination Network
ISDE	International Society of Doctors for the Environment
OPS	Overarching Policy Strategy (SAICM)
PAN	Pesticide Action Network
PCBs	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PRTRs	Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
Phthalates	Group of chemical compounds used, <i>inter alia</i> , as plasticizers (substances added to plastics to increase their flexibility)
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
Toluene	An aromatic hydrocarbon widely used as a solvent

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VOLUME 95, No. 5, MONDAY, 7 JUNE 2004

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES - RENEWABLES 2004: 1-4 JUNE 2004

The International Conference for Renewable Energies (*renewables 2004*) took place from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 3600 participants from 154 countries attended the Conference, including several Heads of State, 121 Ministers and representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific community and the private sector.

The *renewables 2004* programme consisted of nine Plenary Sessions, including a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and a Ministerial Segment. The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue addressed: the value of, and opportunities for, renewable energy - policy frameworks and regulatory certainty; and promoting renewable energy - finance and capacity for the future. Other Plenary Sessions addressed best-practice examples and success stories.

The Ministerial Segment included three Ministerial Roundtables that considered policies for renewable energy market development, financing options, and strengthening capacities, research and policy



Members of major groups and delegations in the main plenary room.

developing countries, and the mobilization of financial resources for new and renewable sources of energy. However, it was only following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that renewable energy issues began to feature more promi-

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Dr. Heinrich Schneider
Conference Secretariat
International Conference for
Renewable Energies, Bonn 2004

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For further information or to make arrangements for IISD Reporting Services to cover your meeting conference or workshop, contact the Managing Director:

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