



SAICM PREPCOM2 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2004

On the opening day of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom2), delegates heard opening statements, elected a new PrepCom President and bureau members to fill vacancies, and discussed future work on the development of SAICM, focusing on its structure and scope.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The session opened with the recognition by Kenya's Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, of three Kenyan scientists, Shem Oyoo Wandia, Helen Njenga and Konchora Guracha, for their work in the area of chemicals. In his opening address, Musyoka reminded delegates of the challenges of managing chemicals to balance health, environmental and economic concerns in a developing country such as Kenya. He underlined the role of SAICM in providing the world with a road map for sustainable chemicals management.

Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, welcomed participants on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer. He said this is a busy year for chemicals, with progress made at the first Conference of the Parties of the Rotterdam Convention. Highlighting UNEP's role in global chemicals management, he stressed that with only one more preparatory meeting remaining, it is important to move forward rapidly in agreeing on a structure and important elements such as the strategic vision, goals and objectives, and oversight and implementation arrangements of SAICM activities to 2020.

Robert Visser, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), spoke on behalf of the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), stating that IOMC is the preeminent mechanism for coordinating international actions to achieve the sound management of chemicals. He highlighted two key issues to be addressed at SAICM PrepCom2: the integration of chemicals management into all relevant government sectors; and capacity building and technical assistance.

Suwit Wibulprasert, Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) President, highlighted decision 22/4 of the 22nd session of the UNEP Governing Council, which recognizes the need for an open, transparent and inclusive process. He noted that greater efforts are required to further enhance the inclusiveness of the process and encourage the participation of all stakeholders, including civil society. Stressing that chemical safety is a multi-sectoral responsibility, he challenged donors and inter-governmental organizations to ensure the participation of governments and society at all levels.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE BUREAU: Delegates elected Viveka Bohn (Sweden) as bureau member from the Western European and other countries (WEOG), and President of the PrepCom. President Bohn commended the work carried out by former President Halldor Thorgeirsson and the Secretariat, and said SAICM should aim for a life-cycle approach for chemicals managements, keeping the WSSD commitments in mind. She expressed confidence in the success of the meeting, and in ensuring an inclusive, open and transparent process. In the afternoon Plenary, and following regional consultations, Adisak Thomgkaimook (Thailand) was elected bureau member from the Asia and Pacific group and Vice President of the PrepCom.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Delegates adopted the agenda (/1/Rev.1) by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: Delegates agreed to meet every day from 4-8 October 2004, and to hold regional group meetings in the morning, as needed.

REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT ON INTERSESSIONAL WORK REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE: The Secretariat introduced five documents: *Compilations on concrete elements and strategic elements, headings and sub-headings identified during the first session of the Committee* (/2); *A possible matrix structure for mapping interrelationships among SAICM actions* (/2/Add.1); *Comments on the compilations of concrete elements and strategic elements, headings and sub-headings identified during the first session of the Committee* (/3) and additional comments thereto (/3/Add.1 and /Add.2).

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A SAICM

The Secretariat presented a note on the approaches and objectives for PrepCom2 (/INF/1), suggesting that delegates begin by considering the first three of the ten headings used to structure discussions at PrepCom1: statement of a political strategic vision; statement of needs; and goals and objectives. The document also drew attention to the three-tiered structure supported by several participants at PrepCom1: a strategic vision, global plan of action, and high-level declaration.

In the discussion that followed, SWITZERLAND invited participants to build on the intersessional work of the African group and GRULAC, and with the PHILIPPINES and the US, supported the three-tier structure. The NETHERLANDS, on behalf of the EU, expressed opposition to the development of a legally binding SAICM, but said it remains possible that SAICM may lead to certain legally binding instruments for specific substances or areas. He said that there should be no new institutional framework for SAICM, and called for a strengthened dialogue between all donors. PAKISTAN, for the G-77/CHINA, invited participants to build on the recommendations from the



African Regional Meeting in Abuja. GRULAC presented the consensus of regional consultations on the eve of PrepCom2, adding that it will be necessary to make use of existing financial mechanisms. He called for consideration of the role of regions in SAICM. AUSTRALIA, supported by the US, urged participants to move quickly to substantive matters.

The INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS suggested that improvements in chemicals management in industrialized countries could be undertaken in forums such as the OECD, and global policy used to transpose regimes to developing countries and economies in transition. The G-77/CHINA highlighted the importance of new and additional financial mechanisms, as well as management, monitoring, regulation and evaluation. The BASEL CONVENTION SECRETARIAT summarized its activities, including those on waste management, which he said constitute a pillar of the global chemicals regime.

IFCS introduced a document prepared by its Standing Committee to serve as a thought starter on vision, goal and objectives (/INF/10), stressing that it is not meant to be prescriptive. TOGO pointed to the lack of participation by industry representatives at the meeting. WHO introduced the document on further inputs on health aspects of chemical safety (/INF/14), and invited participants to a meeting on Tuesday to reach agreement on key health issues related to chemicals safety.

UNITAR introduced its submission on experience gained in supporting countries to develop Integrated National Programmes for the Sound Management of Chemicals (INP) (/INF/17), and invited participants to a side event on Tuesday to discuss the relevance of INPs to SAICM. CHINA emphasized the need for capacity building in developing countries, and said the global plan of action should be targeted at management or administrative issues rather than specific chemicals.

The PHILIPPINES suggested the use of a matrix developed during the African regional meeting to structure discussions on concrete measures. NORWAY highlighted the need for capacity building and technical assistance, integration of chemicals management into other issues, and addressing outstanding and new challenges in the field, such as mercury and endocrine disrupting chemicals. The SOUTH AFRICAN CHEMICAL WORKERS UNION stressed the role of workers in chemicals management. The US said the matrix prepared by the Secretariat could provide a good base for discussions.

AUSTRIA urged incorporation of the life-cycle approach and cleaner production in SAICM. BRAZIL highlighted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and stressed the need for a clear vision regarding possible financial mechanisms. LIBERIA called for training and capacity building and highlighted public awareness, education and communication. Stating that developing countries face the most serious chemicals-related problems, SOUTH AFRICA said SAICM will herald "business as usual" unless the gap between developed and developing countries is bridged. MADAGASCAR supported IFCS's submission on the widening gap (/INF/6). EGYPT and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA stressed the importance of capacity building. SWITZERLAND said the SAICM should, *inter alia*, address gaps in existing regimes, and promote implementation and capacity building through an effective mechanism.

Delegates agreed to adopt the three-tiered approach for organizing their work at PrepCom2. China sought clarification on certain components of the approach, in particular the high level declaration. BRAZIL cautioned against prejudging the outcome of the SAICM, as it is still not clear what the three tiers entail.

Delegates then engaged in a discussion on the overarching policy strategy, with the debate structured around elements identified in the document on the approaches and objectives for PrepCom2 (/INF/1). Noting that pharmaceuticals and food additives are already covered by existing processes, AUSTRALIA stressed the need to clarify SAICM's scope. EGYPT urged limiting the scope to the civil use of chemicals, excluding chemicals related to military and political issues. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA stressed that SAICM should focus on a limited range of priority chemicals.

CANADA, supported by ARGENTINA, NORWAY and SWITZERLAND, cautioned against too narrow a scope, urging that it remain flexible to allow the incorporation of emerging issues. ENVIRONMENT HEALTH FUND, with BAHAMAS, EU and KENYA, advocated a broad scope. ENVIRONMENT HEALTH FUND further stressed the need to include solid wastes within the SAICM, following the life-cycle approach. SOUTH AFRICA said certain use categories covered under specific international and national efforts should be excluded.

BAHAMAS stressed the need for all delegations to have a clear sense of what SAICM seeks to achieve. The EU said one of the SAICM outcomes should be a clear road map for reaching the WSSD 2020 goal, which requires strengthening goals and timetables and engaging all stakeholders. CANADA proposed a three-pronged approach to deal with the SAICM's needs, goals and objectives, consisting of: the efficient implementation of existing multilateral environmental agreements; a strategic approach to sustainable capacity building; and information sharing. EGYPT, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed that the Secretariat prepare a document including the overarching themes for discussion.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO addressed the need for chemicals exporters to supply complete information and label products. ALGERIA supported Egypt on the scope of SAICM and called on participants to agree on the definition of the SAICM approach, its legal status and the question of whether it will employ coercive measures. INDIA said SAICM could help close the gap between developed and developing countries. He argued that SAICM should neither hamper the growth of the chemical sector, nor become a non-tariff trade barrier, and called for a focus on the serious health risks to children from chemicals exposure.

The President informed participants that she would adjourn the meeting and discuss how to proceed with the PrepCom Bureau. She noted the circulation of a conference room paper (CRP) on possible options for prioritization of concrete measures (/CRP.6) submitted by the EU, and a paper on the next steps to develop SAICM (/CRP.7) submitted by Argentina, Croatia, Iran, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Switzerland and Uruguay. SWITZERLAND and NORWAY noted that Argentina and Uruguay should be deleted from the CRP, since they had not fully supported the proposal.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

Some non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives are discussing the possibility of challenging SAICM PrepCom2 to 'walk the talk' of openness and transparency for all stakeholders. Citing the 'unique' opportunity opened up by the rules of procedure for stakeholder participation agreed *ad referendum* at PrepCom1, some NGO representatives in Nairobi have been disappointed to find that only some groups are prepared to throw open the doors to their regional consultations and welcome full NGO participation. Other regional groups have reportedly refused entry, with one offering to convene a meeting to report to NGOs. It remains to be seen whether the NGOs' generous interpretation of the rules of procedure will be vindicated.