



SAICM PREPCOM2 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2004

On the second day of the meeting, participants at SAICM PREPCOM2 convened in Plenary in the morning to decide on a structure for discussions, and to provide comments on the overarching policy strategy and concrete measures. In the afternoon, discussions on the overarching policy strategy continued in Plenary, while a contact group considered concrete measures and a drafting group worked on the scope of SAICM.

PLENARY

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A SAICM: Based on the comments and proposals discussed on the previous day, President Viveka Bohn (Sweden) proposed five elements for discussion on the SAICM overarching policy strategy:

- scope;
- statement of needs;
- objectives, with four subheadings: risk reduction; knowledge and information; governance; and capacity building, including financing and technical cooperation;
- principles and approaches; and
- implementation and taking stock of progress.

On capacity building, BRAZIL, supported by the INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) and EGYPT stressed the difference between capacity, resources and development, and proposed they be considered under separate subheadings. AUSTRALIA suggested changing the subheading to capacity building, resources and technology cooperation. EGYPT, supported by ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA, NIGER, MOROCCO and ALGERIA said a separate heading for financial considerations would reflect the importance of financing. The NETHERLANDS on behalf of the EU, suggested a flexible approach to the headings to take the concerns raised into consideration. HAITI emphasized the importance of technical assistance.

President Bohn suggested dividing the subheading on capacity building into two: capacity building and technical cooperation; and financial considerations. BRAZIL suggested financial mechanisms instead of financial considerations. The US, supported by UGANDA, said financial considerations is more acceptable and covers a wider range of possibilities.

ZAMBIA, supported by a number of countries, said financial considerations should form a new heading and not a subheading under objectives. The GAMBIA suggested placing capacity building under that new heading. NEW ZEALAND, supported by SWITZERLAND, SOUTH AFRICA and the EU, suggested resources as a separate heading, with financial considerations, capacity building and technology transfer as subheadings. SWITZERLAND said ensuring adequate financial resources to implement the goals of SAICM should also be included under objectives. Stressing the importance of risk assessment and management, SIERRA LEONE suggested adding scientific knowledge and technical cooperation to the capacity building subheading. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO called

for addressing risk reduction under capacity building. CANADA said financial issues relate to implementation, and suggested discussions on financing continue after concrete actions have been addressed. NIGERIA, supported by NORWAY, said objectives on the provision of financial and technical assistance to developing countries should be defined clearly. EGYPT proposed adding a subheading on priority measures under objectives. ZIMBABWE said the objectives are based on national priority issues. Delegates agreed to introduce a new heading on financial considerations, and to reformulate the fourth subheading under objectives as capacity building and technical cooperation. CHINA suggested including a reference to promoting the goals of other international agreements on chemicals management in the objectives.

Delegates then engaged in a discussion on concrete measures, guided by the matrix contained in the report of the African regional meeting on development of SAICM (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/8) and the document submitted by the EU on possible options for the prioritization of concrete measures (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/CRP.6). President Bohn asked delegates to comment on the column headings used in the matrix. She stressed the need to reflect the overarching chemicals policy strategy in the concrete measures. NEW ZEALAND agreed, but urged flexibility to allow for the incorporation of areas not reflected in the overarching policy statement.

SWITZERLAND, supported by NORWAY, proposed the inclusion of a column on implementation. Delegates agreed on the inclusion of columns on implementation and on vision, reflecting the matrix structure in the EU's document.

Delegates considered whether concrete measures and scientific activities could be merged into one heading, or whether two distinct columns are required. It was decided to keep two columns, but to rename the second "activities." ARGENTINA proposed, and delegates accepted, that the heading "responsible authority" be replaced with "main actors."

ZAMBIA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, suggested that indicators of progress be broken up into intermediate indicators. The ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FUND expressed concern that many of the topics listed under the heading on concrete measures were in fact topic areas rather than actual measures.

AUSTRALIA urged moving forward to substantive discussions with the matrix structure remaining flexible to incorporate arising issues. ICFTU questioned the logic of deciding upon concrete measures without a clear understanding of the global strategy.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Plenary continued discussions based on the structure for the overarching policy strategy agreed in the morning (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/CRP.9).

On scope, President Bohn invited Jean-Louis Wallace (Canada) to chair an open-ended drafting group and report back to the Plenary on Wednesday.



On statement of needs, NIGERIA drew attention to the issues identified in Annex III of the report of the African regional meeting (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/8), including the implementation of international legally binding instruments and the development of sound, clean and sustainable technologies. President Bohn said the list, with written comments provided by other delegations, could form the basis for a draft document prepared by the Secretariat. AUSTRALIA noted the aim of the section on statement of needs should be to identify why SAICM is necessary. The EU proposed that the statement of needs address gaps in chemicals management, implementation and assistance, as well as governance, including integration, legislation and implementation. CANADA suggested adding understanding and knowledge of chemicals. SWITZERLAND, supported by NORWAY, said the statement should include positive elements, such as the beneficial role of chemicals in raising the standard of living.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for the harmonization of definitions of risk, and drew attention to the lack of accessible databases on the toxicity of chemicals. The INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME ON THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS (IOMC) noted such databases exist and listed, among others, the globally accessible data repository for hazard data on high production volume chemicals prepared by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/18). The PHILIPPINES said the statement of needs should address national and regional coordination.

EGYPT said the statement should include the current actual needs of countries as well as the reasons for SAICM. BRAZIL suggested additions to the list in the African Regional report, including the rehabilitation of contamination sites.

On objectives, SWITZERLAND suggested an introductory paragraph listing the WSSD 2020 goal as the overall objective. CUBA, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean group (GRULAC), drew attention to the objectives listed in the report of the GRULAC regional meeting (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/25).

On risk reduction, NIGERIA, supported by AUSTRALIA, proposed that the objectives listed in the ICFS document (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/10) form a basis for discussion. NORWAY, supported by the EU and the Center for International Environmental Law, suggested the elimination of risks from particular classes of chemicals such as endocrine disruptors, and introducing goals such as the promotion of corporate social responsibility and the protection of vulnerable groups. The EU, supported by ICFTU, suggested using the term risk management rather than risk reduction. Following a series of exchanges on the respective merits of risk elimination, risk reduction and/or risk management, AUSTRALIA proposed a compromise formula: minimizing human and environmental exposure to problem classes of chemicals while recognizing the possibility of phasing some of them out. BRAZIL, supported by CANADA and AUSTRALIA, highlighted risk prevention, preparedness and emergency response in developing countries.

FINLAND suggested adding risk communication through labeling of hazardous chemicals, and the objective of ensuring implementation of the Globally Harmonized System. The INTERNATIONAL POPs ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) called for: the phasing out of production and use of persistent or bio-accumulative chemicals, and a cessation of their release; the substitution of hazardous chemicals, products and processes; and waste reduction at source.

Responding to divergent views on whether illicit trafficking should go under risk reduction or governance, President Bohn proposed including this issue as a new objective, in brackets for further discussion. IRAN proposed a new subheading on relocating industries to developing countries.

On knowledge and information, CANADA called for an objective on standardized approaches to risk assessment, including the generation of information. SWITZERLAND highlighted risk communication, and proposed including a section stating that information on all chemicals for sale or in goods must be sufficient

to ensure safe handling throughout their life-cycle. IPEN called for recognition of a right to know the effects of chemicals on human health and the environment. The PHILIPPINES linked information and knowledge to the precautionary principle. ALGERIA called for a strategic approach to assist developing countries and economies in transition to compile updated lists of chemicals and, *inter alia*, maintain registers.

President Bohn said the Secretariat would prepare a draft document on the overarching policy strategy based on the views expressed, for further discussion.

CONTACT GROUP ON CONCRETE MEASURES

A contact group on concrete measures convened on Tuesday afternoon and was chaired by Jamidu Katima (Tanzania), with Wanda Hoskin (Canada) as rapporteur. The group was asked, by President Bohn, to begin with the measures set out in the matrix in the report of the African regional meeting on SAICM (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/8) and to incorporate material from other related documents. They were mandated to: develop and improve on the individual measures; make clear statements on aspects for each column, as appropriate; reduce and eliminate duplication; add missing measures; and group and organize similar related measures. The group undertook to group the concrete measures in tables for each of the four objectives that form part of the overarching policy strategy.

Working from the report of the African regional meeting on development of SAICM (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/8), delegates allocated each concrete measure to one or more of the four objectives. With the aim of identifying and including any issues that are not covered in the African region's document, delegates then conducted a review of the compilation of concrete elements and strategic elements, headings and sub-headings identified during PrepCom1 (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/2). Addressing the widening gap was identified as an issue to be included in the final compilation of concrete actions.

It was agreed that the rapporteur would merge the concrete measures included in the African region's document and the Secretariat's compilation under the four objectives, with one table for each objective using the headings agreed in Plenary on Tuesday morning. Delegates will use this document as a basis for further discussion in the contact group on Wednesday, with the aim of reviewing other relevant documentation to ensure consideration of all proposed concrete measures, and clarifying activities to be undertaken under each measure.

DRAFTING GROUP ON SCOPE

A drafting group chaired by Jean-Louis Wallace (Canada) met in the afternoon to discuss the scope of SAICM. Participants agreed on the need for a broad and flexible approach. There was disagreement over whether issues managed by other international agreements should be included, with one developed country pointing out that SAICM is meant to provide a framework for existing chemicals-related processes. Participants agreed on text based on GRULAC's proposal for SAICM's scope (SAICM/PREPCOM.2/INF/16). The final text to be considered by Plenary includes: chemicals at all stages of their life-cycle, including in products; industrial and agricultural chemicals; and various aspects of chemical safety, as initially proposed by GRULAC.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

As discussions shifted up a gear toward more substantive issues, some participants expressed optimism at the widespread agreement on the absolute need for a SAICM. Others have commented that progress has been slow, and are eager to cut to the chase to address substantive issues sooner rather than later, given that a number of regional groups have already submitted concrete proposals. Views are mixed on what to expect in the coming days, with predictions of heated debate once substantive discussions get underway on 'principles and approaches' competing with expectations of further delays as delegates get to grips with the implications of proposals on SAICM's structure.