



THIRD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: 19-24 SEPTEMBER 2005

The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom-3) opens today in Vienna, and will continue until 24 September 2005. Delegates are expected to discuss the SAICM high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy and global plan of action, including "concrete measures" for implementing SAICM. The primary objective of PrepCom-3 is to produce final text to be forwarded to the "International Conference on Chemicals Management," to be held from 4-6 February 2006 in Dubai.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAICM

The concept of SAICM has been discussed by the UNEP Governing Council (GC), and reflected 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 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 OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL: 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, based on the *Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000* adopted by the IFCS Forum at its third session. This process was to entail an "open-ended consultative meeting involving representatives of

all stakeholder groups," jointly convened by UNEP, IFCS and the IOMC.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD): The WSSD convened from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and adopted, among other instruments, 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 SAICM based on the IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000; and
- the national implementation of the new Globally Harmonized System for 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 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 requested UNEP to compile possible draft elements of SAICM for consideration by PrepCom-1, and invited 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. Delegates 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, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labor Organization (ILO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNEP, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Participants also heard an update by UNEP on PrepCom-1 documents, and a presentation on progress achieved in the compilation of possible draft elements for 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, SAICM. The decision urges member states



to take full account of the health aspects of chemical safety in the development of SAICM and requests the WHO Director-General to, *inter alia*, contribute to 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: At its 91st session in June 2003, the ILO's International Labor Conference adopted conclusions calling on ILO to contribute to the further development of SAICM, to ensure the 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 IFCS (Forum IV) took place from 1-7 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand, under the theme "Chemical Safety in a Vulnerable World." Forum IV took stock of 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. Participants 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 SAICM, and forwarded the outcome to SAICM PrepCom-1 in the form of a *Report on SAICM-Related Work at IFCS Forum IV* (SAICM/ PREPCOM.1/INF/3). This non-negotiated compilation report addressed:

- 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 building and implementation; and
- increased coordination and linkages.

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

SAICM PREPCOM-1: PrepCom-1 took place from 9-13 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand. Participants provided initial comments on potential issues to be addressed during the development of SAICM, examined ways to structure discussions, and considered possible outcomes of the SAICM process. There was widespread agreement among participants that the overarching objective of 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-tiered 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. Participants generated a preliminary list of action items, and considered using a matrix proposed by UNIDO to set out the action items and indicate interrelations among them.

SAICM PREPCOM-2: PrepCom-2 was held from 4-8 October 2004, in Nairobi, Kenya. PrepCom-2 discussed elements for an overarching policy strategy for international chemicals management, made progress in creating a matrix of possible concrete measures to promote chemical safety, and provided comments on an initial list of elements to be included in a high-level political declaration.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

POPs COP-1: The first Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs),

held from 2-6 May 2005, in Punta del Este, Uruguay, adopted a broad range of decisions required to set the Convention's implementation in motion. These decisions relate to: providing for the evaluation of the continued need for DDT use for disease vector control; establishing a review process for entries in the register of specific exemptions; adopting guidance for the financial mechanism; establishing a schedule for reporting; establishing arrangements for monitoring data on POPs; adopting rules of procedure and financial rules; adopting the budget for the Secretariat; and establishing the POPs Review Committee. Other matters discussed included: the format for the DDT Register and the Register of specific exemptions; the process for developing guidelines to assist Parties in preventing the formation and release of unintentionally produced POPs; and guidelines on best available techniques and best environmental practices.

SECOND AFRICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SAICM: The second African regional consultation on SAICM was held in Saly, Senegal, from 15-18 March 2005 (SAICM/ PREPCOM.3/INF/23). The group agreed on proposed amendments to the overarching policy strategy dealing with scope, statement of needs and objectives. On financial considerations, delegates agreed to set up a contact group to continue intersessional work on developing a proposal on internalizing costs of chemicals management and the costs associated with their use. The group adopted a table on concrete measures, identified further concerns, and set up a working group to work on a regional plan for implementation of concrete measures intersessionally.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SAICM: The Asia-Pacific regional consultation on SAICM was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4-7 April 2005 (SAICM/ PREPCOM.3/INF/24). The consultation adopted revised text on the overarching policy strategy, concrete measures in the global plan of action, and the high-level declaration. Discussion on concrete measures focused on prioritization of the concrete measures.

SECOND LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SAICM: The second Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) regional consultation on SAICM, held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 27 to 29 April 2005 (SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/25), agreed on proposed text for the overarching policy strategy and for the high-level declaration. The group also agreed to a proposed executive summary with consolidated text for concrete measures. The group also prepared a submission to the second meeting of the Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas (held from 14-19 June 2005, in Mar del Plata, Argentina).

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SAICM: The Central and Eastern European regional consultation on SAICM was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 17-19 May 2005 (SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/26). Delegates agreed on amended draft text on financial considerations, implementation and institutional aspects, and other aspects of the draft overarching policy strategy. The group also agreed on amendments to the executive summary of concrete measures proposed by GRULAC, and agreed amendments to the content of the concrete measures table.

CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AND JAPAN, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, SWITZERLAND, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NORWAY AND NEW ZEALAND (JUSSCANNZ) ON SAICM: The consultation between the EU and JUSSCANNZ on SAICM was held in Paris, France, from 6-7 June 2005 (SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/27). The group discussed the high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy, concrete measures, principles and approaches, multilateral work not yet reflected in SAICM, and a phased implementation of SAICM. The group agreed on a revised statement of needs. A working group was formed to discuss the objectives section, and to report to the regional consultation immediately preceding PrepCom-3.