

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: 17-21 SEPTEMBER 2012

The 3rd Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-3) opens today at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya, and continues until 21 September 2012. Discussions at ICCM-3 are expected to review progress in implementing the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), evaluate financial and technical resources for implementation of SAICM and its trust fund, address emerging policy issues and consider new activities for addition to the Global Plan of Action (GPA). Delegates will also consider recommendations from the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme (QSP) on the future of the Programme. A high-level segment, two roundtable discussions as well as other special events and various side events are also taking place.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAICM

The issue of chemicals management and the idea of a SAICM have been discussed by the UN Environment Programme Governing Council (UNEP GC) and reflected in various forms since the mid-1990s.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT: The Summit was convened from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and delegates adopted the Johannesburg Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The JPOI's chemicals-related targets include:

- the aim to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
- the development, by 2005, of a SAICM based on the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) Bahia Declaration, and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000; and
- the national implementation of the new Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

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." In response to GC decisions SS.VII/3 and 22/4, 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 chemicals management; and resources for capacity building and implementation.

PREPCOM-1: SAICM 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 also broad support for a three-tiered approach for SAICM, which would comprise: a global programme of action with targets and timetables; an overarching policy strategy; and a high-level or ministerial declaration.

PREPCOM-2: SAICM PrepCom-2 was held from 4-8 October 2004, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates discussed elements for an overarching policy strategy for international chemicals management, made progress in developing a matrix of possible concrete measures to include in the global plan of action, and provided comments on an initial list of elements for a high-level political declaration.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Regarding chemicals management, delegates resolved to promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle, including hazardous wastes, with the aim that, by 2020, chemicals are "used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment." They resolved to implement a voluntary strategic approach to international management of chemicals, and to support developing countries in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes.

PREPCOM-3: SAICM PrepCom-3 was held from 19-24 September 2005, in Vienna, Austria. Delegates discussed the SAICM high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy, and global plan of action, but did not reach agreement on several elements in the three documents, including: principles and approaches; the description of SAICM as "voluntary"; financial considerations; and the timing and frequency of future ICCM sessions.

ICCM-1: The first International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-1) was held from 4-6 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Delegates completed negotiations and adopted SAICM, which is made up of the



Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, an overarching policy strategy, and global plan of action. In the Declaration, participants committed to strengthening the capacities of all concerned in order to achieve the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes at all levels, and mobilizing national and international financing from public and private sources. They also reaffirmed the goal to minimize the significant adverse effects on human health and the environment by 2020. SAICM is a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral policy framework. The multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral ICCM was tasked with undertaking periodic reviews of SAICM.

IFCS FORUM V: This meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary, from 25-29 September 2006. The main agenda item at Forum V was consideration of the future of IFCS in light of the final agreements on SAICM. Agreement was reached to establish a working group to draft a decision on the future of IFCS to be presented at IFCS-VI.

IFCS FORUM VI: This meeting took place from 15-19 September 2008 in Dakar, Senegal. The main agenda item for the meeting was the future of IFCS. After debating the options and whether to maintain the institutional independence of IFCS, delegates agreed to invite the ICCM to integrate the Forum into the ICCM as an advisory body, as stated in the Dakar Resolution on the Future of IFCS. They also reached consensus on the three functions and key elements for operation of the Forum, and decided that its role is to provide an open, transparent and inclusive forum for considering new and emerging issues related to sound chemicals management.

OELTWG-1: The first meeting of the Open-Ended Legal and Technical Working Group (OELTWG) of the ICCM and informal discussions on preparations for ICCM-2, were held from 21-24 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. The OELTWG discussed the rules of procedure for the ICCM, and although some progress was made on the composition of the Bureau, delegates were unable to reach agreement on the entire text. The informal discussions included preparatory dialogue on issues to be considered at ICCM-2, including: emerging policy issues; modalities for SAICM reporting; financial and technical resources for SAICM implementation, including evaluating the performance of financing of SAICM; review and update of SAICM; and the relationship between IFCS and SAICM.

ICCM-2: ICCM-2 took place from 11-15 May 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. It considered new emerging policy issues, rules of procedure, the need for an intersessional body, and matters related to finance. Delegates adopted nine resolutions and reached agreement on, *inter alia*: rules of procedure; emerging issues such as nanotechnology and chemicals in products; a process for considering emerging issues; the establishment of an open-ended working group; and financial resources. ICCM-2 took the decision not to integrate IFCS as a subsidiary body of the ICCM, and left IFCS to determine its own future.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES WITHIN THE LIFECYCLE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS:

This meeting was held from 29-31 March 2011 in Vienna, Austria. The workshop considered ways to advance national and international efforts to reduce the life-cycle impacts of hazardous substances in electronic and electrical products. It provided a number of key messages as well as recommendations for reducing the upstream, midstream and downstream life-cycle impacts of hazardous substances.

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION COP5: This meeting took place from 25-29 April 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 30 decisions were adopted, including on: listing endosulfan in Annex A of the Convention; financial and technical assistance; synergies; and endorsing seven new Stockholm Convention regional centres, in Algeria, Senegal, Kenya, South Africa, Iran, India and the Russian Federation.

PIC COP5: The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP5) to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade met from 20-24 June 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates adopted a number of decisions, including on: the addition of aldicarb, alachlor and endosulfan to Annex III of the Convention (chemicals subject to the PIC procedure); technical assistance; synergies; information exchange; trade; and the work of the Chemical Review Committee.

BASEL CONVENTION COP10: This meeting took place from 17-21 October 2011 in Cartagena, Colombia. Twenty-five decisions were adopted during the COP, including on: a new strategic framework for the Convention; the Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres (BCRCs); capacity building; the Partnership Programme; and technical matters. Delegates also adopted the Cartagena Declaration on Prevention and Minimization of Hazardous Wastes.

OEWG-1: The first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group of the ICCM (OEWG-1) took place from 15-18 November 2011, in Belgrade, Serbia. The OEWG considered the implementation, development and enhancement of SAICM and decided to forward four draft resolutions on nanotechnologies and manufactured materials, amending the time limit of fund disbursements under the QSP, emerging policy issues, and new emerging policy issues for consideration by ICCM-3.

UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (UNCSD or Rio+20): Rio+20 convened from 20-22 June 2012, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The section on chemicals and waste in the outcome document of the meeting, "The Future We Want," reaffirms the commitment to the 2020 goal and calls for the strengthening and effective implementation of SAICM. It also urges increased coordination and cooperation among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as well as with SAICM. The text calls for: developing and implementing policies urging resource efficiency and environmentally-sound waste management; countries and other stakeholders to take all possible measures to prevent the unsound management of hazardous wastes and their illegal dumping; a successful outcome to the negotiating process on a global legally binding instrument on mercury; and a phase-down in the consumption and production of HFCs.

INC TO PREPARE A GLOBAL LEGALLY BINDING

INSTRUMENT ON MERCURY: The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury has met four times (June 2010, January 2011, November 2011 and June-July 2012). Clear progress has been made on some issues like storage, wastes and contaminated sites, and narrowing options on other issues, such as information and reporting. Yet on the most crucial issues, compliance, finance and control measures for products and processes, divergent views prevail. By the conclusion of INC4, contentious text remained around topics that will require political resolution at the next, and last, session of the INC in January 2013.