



## FORUM III HIGHLIGHTS SUNDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2000

On the first day of FORUM III, delegates met in an afternoon Plenary for the opening ceremony. During the ceremony the second IFCS Award of Merit was presented to Professor Michel Mercier. After the IFCS President's analysis of progress since the establishment of the FORUM, participants listened to a round table session titled "In Partnership for Global Chemical Safety."

### OPENING CEREMONY

Roy Hickman, IFCS President, welcomed participants and said the beautiful and vibrant location of Salvador will be conducive to productive discussions.

José Carlo Carvalho, acting Brazilian Minister of the Environment, welcomed participants and noted the extensive and broad participation at the meeting. He also noted this is the first time the FORUM has met in the southern hemisphere and, more specifically, Latin America and Brazil. Highlighting Brazil's significant chemical production, he stressed the importance of chemical safety for Brazil. Carvalho underscored that Brazil hosting the FORUM will allow an exchange of knowledge and experience that will assist efforts within Brazil to promote chemical safety. He noted that such efforts are consistent with Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 and highlighted Brazil's involvement in the initiatives on POPs, PIC, the Basel Convention on transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, and climate change. After noting the goals of commitment and responsibility for FORUM III, he expressed his hope for a successful meeting.

Otto Alencar, Vice Governor of the State of Bahia, said the government of Bahia is honored by the presence of FORUM participants. He stressed the fundamental importance of chemical safety and underscored the State of Bahia's concern for and progress in environmental protection. He highlighted the development of Bahia's petro-chemical and other initiatives and noted the objective of good governance and progress made in meeting commitments. Alencar welcomed all and hoped the session would enhance chemical safety around the world.

Marco Maciel, Vice President of Brazil, noted his pleasure in attending the meeting on behalf of Brazilian President Cardoso. He noted the broad context of globalization and said it enables the development of values that will enhance quality of life for the new millennium. He observed that enhancing this will require democratic solutions and a process of development that allows economic competitiveness and social balance. He called for sustainable development that supports economic growth,

addresses social problems, and is environmentally integrated. Maciel stressed the importance of ecological awareness for enabling preservation of the environment and noted Brazil's efforts in meeting Agenda 21 goals. He underscored the participation of non-governmental actors and the importance of partnership and generating awareness. Maciel praised the contributions of Professor Hickman and stressed the FORUM's importance for Brazil in its management initiatives. He also stressed greater regional integration in MERCOSUR and underscored Brazil's contribution to, *inter alia*, sustainable development and social justice.

### PRESENTATION OF SECOND IFCS AWARD OF

**MERIT:** Roy Hickman described the IFCS Award of Merit as the Nobel Prize in the field of chemical safety. Congratulating the winner, Professor Michel Mercier, he stressed that like the Nobel Prize, the award does not discriminate as to nationality and is given to the most worthy recipient.

Marco Maciel presented the award and lauded Professor Mercier's contribution to and encouragement of collaboration in chemical safety, and his effective work in implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

Professor Mercier indicated his honor and pride in receiving the award. He underscored that the FORUM developed from the collective efforts and vision of a small group of people believing in a global mechanism, and dedicated the award to them. Stressing the outstanding progress, catalyzing effects and limited funds of the FORUM, Mercier thanked all those involved in its establishment and elaboration. He highlighted Roy Hickman's instrumental past contributions and stressed the pertinence of FORUM III's theme since it summarizes the FORUM's objectives and is a message which should be at the forefront in the future. In concluding, he underlined raising awareness, reinforcing cooperation to enhance risk information and minimization, and cooperation between different partners.

### PRESIDENT'S ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS:

Roy Hickman briefly outlined the findings in the document "IFCS President's Analysis of Progress" (IFCS/FORUMIII/08INF). He summarized progress made in each of the six Programme Areas, including, *inter alia*: the creation of 286 new risk assessments and the commitment from the chemical industry to produce 1000 assessments by the year 2004; the negotiation of a non-binding agreement and implementation mechanism for the harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals; the adoption and

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opening for signature of the Rotterdam PIC Convention; the international development and promotion of pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs); and the preparation of national profiles.

### **ROUND TABLE: IN PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL CHEMICAL SAFETY**

Horst Otterstetter, moderator of the Round Table, introduced the panelists.

Jean Belanger, National Round Table on the Environment and Economy, noted that partnership has two essential constituents: mutual respect by participants and responsibility for the eventual success of the process. In discussing key principles for the chemical industry regarding the Responsible Care programme, he stated that industry has to be seen as part of the solution, not just as part of the problem. He emphasized the importance of an external advisory process to monitor progress, assess public concerns and verify performance.

Carlos Mariani Bittencourt, ABIQUIM, summarized important concepts for partnership, such as: mutual trust; identification and knowledge of common goals and objectives; sharing of benefits and risks; and decisions based on better quality instead of lowest costs.

Pakdee Pothisiri, Thai Ministry of Public Health, noted the work of the IFCS in linking government authorities, IGOs, NGOs and industry in order to solve international chemical problems. He described the POPs process as a good example of the spirit of cooperation and as an innovative mechanism for treaty negotiations. He outlined the strategic challenges associated with negotiations: consultation, construction, criticism and commitment. He expressed Thailand's interest in hosting FORUM IV in 2003.

James Willis, Inter-Organization Organizing Committee (IOCC) of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), described partnerships formed from the IOMC, such as a series of joint workshops with the FAO, WHO and UNEP, linking integrated pest and vector management programmes to address POPs. He highlighted positive patterns of broader participation and coordination and increasing engagement of NGOs as partners.

Ravi Agarwal, SHRISHTI/Toxic Links, stated that while partnerships are the way forward, we must understand barriers to progress. He outlined the perspective of developing countries and noted that their chemical sector is growing but that byproducts and wastes are dumped into soil and groundwater. He outlined Toxic Links': work on information exchange on toxicity, especially with grassroots groups; interaction with government on the development of policy; and their partnerships with the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), the Basel Action Network, and WHO. He emphasized that in order to ensure chemical safety, especially for those most vulnerable in society, community capacity must be raised and partnerships built. He stressed that true partnerships need trust and equal recognition of each other's strengths and contributions, yet government and IGOs often work closely with industry, but not with NGOs. He concluded by stating that the challenge is to recognize the public sector as a key stakeholder in chemical safety processes and to provide resources, capacity assistance and access to technical expertise for public interest groups and NGOs.

Karen Perry, Physicians for Social Responsibility, discussed bringing the public into chemical safety partnerships. She stressed that the public and communities are at risk from chemical hazards and noted that an estimated 80,000 chemicals are in production or

use today. She pointed out that chemical hazards may arise from many sources, including accidents, stockpiles, routine releases and long-range transport. She noted that partnerships involve close cooperation between parties having joint rights and responsibilities and that effective partnerships include equal opportunity for meaningful input, participation and access to information. The public must be viewed as an integral stakeholder in any partnership and public NGOs have demonstrated that they can be valuable resources for information and expertise. She outlined the case of IPEN, a global network of more than 300 NGOs in 65 countries and stated that public information is needed for effective partnerships and effective responses to chemicals hazards.

Reg Green, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Union (ICEM), discussed union and industry cooperation for chemical safety, and noted that cooperation requires partnership. He stated that chemical safety in the workplace is the first step to chemical safety beyond the workplace. He stressed that cooperation is a two-way process implying mutual commitment and respect and that occupational health and safety and environmental protection are common goods. He noted that neither regulation and legislation, nor voluntary agreements, are sufficient on their own for chemical safety. He highlighted the joint advisory committee set up by ICEM and the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) on Responsible Care. He concluded by stating that: chemical safety needs legislation, regulation and voluntary initiatives to be credible; unions must participate; ICEM-ICCA cooperation on Responsible Care provides an opportunity for both sides to have improved performance of industry; and cooperation can only work if there are commitments from and benefits to both sides of industry.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates voiced divergent and ranging expectations for FORUM III. Some developing country participants are seeking progress on the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products, a topic being discussed for the first time in the context of the IFCS, and anticipating the establishment of a new capacity building network for the sound management of chemicals. Other delegates stressed the importance of developing IFCS priorities beyond 2000, to be reflected in the Bahia Declaration issued at the end of the meeting, while some public interest NGOs were looking for statements of support for the completion of a strong POPs convention in December. Some observers highlighted that the three-year gap since the last FORUM in 1997 has resulted in many new faces at this meeting. It remains to be seen whether this will surface as inexperience or bring added enthusiasm to the week's deliberations.

### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

Plenary will convene at 9:00 am in the Iris room, and will be chaired by Roy Hickman. Participants will discuss organizational and administrative matters for FORUM III and consider IFCS Priorities for Action Beyond 2000. A lunchtime presentation on "Multistakeholder Success Stories: Sustainable Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals" will take place, sponsored by public interest NGOs. Regional Groups will meet in the afternoon. There will be an evening workshop dinner on "Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers: Opportunities and Challenges from the Perspective of Developing Countries and Countries with Economies in Transition."