



SUMMARY OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY: 15-20 OCTOBER 2000

The Third Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (FORUM III) was held from 15-20 October 2000, in Salvador, Brazil. The Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) is a mechanism for cooperation among governments for promoting the environmentally sound management of chemicals, and the theme of FORUM III was "In Partnership for Global Chemical Safety." Over 220 delegates from more than 80 countries, including representatives of IGOs and NGOs, attended the six-day meeting. Delegates conducted a review of the IFCS and assessed progress made on implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21. The meeting reached agreement on IFCS Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 and issued the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety. Delegates to FORUM III also considered: prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products; barriers to information exchange; information exchange for chemical production decision making; pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) and emission inventories; a capacity building network for the sound management of chemicals; raising awareness and raising the priority of chemicals management capacity-building issues at political levels; and the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

The IFCS justifiably takes pride in its role as the overarching coordinating mechanism for international cooperation on chemical safety. While negotiations for legally binding conventions on issues such as POPs may have a higher public profile, the IFCS's steady work in the wings gained momentum at FORUM III as governments, international organizations, and NGOs tackled key existing and emerging issues. As one participant observed, the IFCS was consciously designed to function in a broad consensus-building mold and, as such, is for the most part living up to expectations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IFCS

The concept of an intergovernmental forum to address chemical safety originated during preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), when the UNCED Preparatory Committee identified the collaborative effort of

the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) within the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) as the nucleus for international cooperation on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. The Preparatory Committee invited the IPCS to identify possible intergovernmental mechanisms for risk assessment and management of chemicals. In response, UNEP, ILO and WHO convened an expert meeting in London in December 1991 to consider priority areas for an international strategy and possible proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for the environmentally sound management of chemicals. The meeting resulted in a recommendation to establish an intergovernmental forum on chemical risk assessment and management. This recommendation was forwarded to UNCED.

At UNCED, delegates adopted the programme of action, Agenda 21, which directly addresses the role of chemicals management in Chapter 19, "Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and

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Dangerous Products.” Agenda 21 also addresses the use of chemicals in a number of other chapters, including those on changing consumption patterns, the promotion of sustainable agriculture and rural development, the protection of human health, oceans, freshwater and the atmosphere. Chapter 19 contains an international strategy for action on chemical safety with six priority Programme Areas:

- (A) expanding and accelerating international assessment of chemical risks;
- (B) harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals;
- (C) information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks;
- (D) establishment of risk reduction programmes;
- (E) strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals; and
- (F) prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products.

Chapter 19 also calls for the establishment of an intergovernmental forum on chemical safety.

FORUM I: In April 1994, UNEP, ILO and WHO convened the International Conference on Chemical Safety in Stockholm, Sweden. The Conference established the IFCS and constituted the first meeting of the Forum (FORUM I). The Conference adopted Terms of Reference that established the IFCS as a non-institutional arrangement through which government representatives would meet to consider issues, provide advice and make recommendations to governments, UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs involved in chemical safety. The role of the IFCS, as defined by the Terms of Reference, is to provide clear and consistent advice for cost-effective, integrated risk assessment and management of chemicals and to improve delineation and mutual understanding of roles, initiatives and activities both within and among governments and IGOs which have responsibility for chemical safety. FORUM I also took steps to provide financial and administrative arrangements for the IFCS and adopted a resolution containing detailed recommendations on priorities for action in implementing Agenda 21.

ISG-1 and 2: The IFCS Terms of Reference established the Intersessional Group (ISG) to meet between FORUM sessions in order to provide advice to the cooperating organizations of the IFCS. The ISG made recommendations to the FORUM, studied special problems and advised on the implementation of strategies and programmes as approved by the FORUM. The ISG was comprised of the officers of the FORUM and not more than 26 government participants elected by the FORUM.

The first meeting of the ISG (ISG-1) was held in Bruges, Belgium, in March 1995. Participants recommended an inventory of programmes, activities and projects related to chemical safety carried out by IGOs, as well as an inventory of bilaterally supported initiatives in chemicals management. The second meeting (ISG-2), held in March 1996, in Canberra, Australia, established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group for the Agenda of FORUM II and made a number of recommendations under each of the six priority Programme Areas.

FORUM II: At the second session of the IFCS (FORUM II), held from 10-14 February 1997, in Ottawa, Canada, delegates made recommendations on five of the six Programme Areas: expanding and accelerating international assessment of chemical risks; strengthening national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals; harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals; information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks; and establishment of risk reduction programmes, including the disposal of obsolete chemicals and pesticide risk reduction. FORUM II also made recom-

mendations on emerging issues such as endocrine disrupting substances and on PRTRs. Delegates reached agreement on a number of actions regarding the structure and function of the IFCS. The Forum Standing Committee (FSC) was established as a mechanism to respond to new developments and to give advice in preparing for future meetings. For a complete report, see *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 1 <<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/chemical/ifcs/enb1501e.txt>>.

ISG-3: The third meeting of the Intersessional Group (ISG-3) of the IFCS was held from 1-4 December 1998, in Yokohama, Japan. ISG-3 resulted in approximately 25 agreed action items and recommendations on risk assessment, obsolete chemicals and pesticides, capacity building, harmonization of classification and labelling, support for NGO participation in FORUM activities, preparations for FORUM III, longer term issues, funding, and the year 2000 computer problem. A report of this meeting is available at: <<http://www.iisd.ca/sd/isg3/sdvol20no1e.html>>.

PIC: The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade was adopted at a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam on 10 September 1998. The Convention was opened for signature in Rotterdam on 11 September 1998. To date, the Convention has been signed by 72 States and one regional economic integration organization, and ratified by eleven States. It will enter into force once 50 instruments of ratification are deposited. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-6) was held from 12-16 July 1999, in Rome. The first meeting since the adoption of the Rotterdam Convention, INC-6 gathered approximately 300 delegates from 121 countries to address arrangements for the interim period prior to entry into force of the Convention and for implementation of the interim PIC procedure. INC-6 resulted in the adoption of outline draft decisions on the definition and provisional adoption of PIC regions, the establishment of an Interim Chemical Review Committee and the adoption of draft decision guidance documents for already identified chemicals. For a full report, see *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 20 <<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/vol15/enb1520e.html>>. The seventh session of the INC will be held from 30 October to 3 November 2000, in Geneva.

POPS: The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4) for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) met from 20-25 March 2000, in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 500 representatives from 121 countries, international organizations and NGOs participated in INC-4, and continued preparation of an international legally binding instrument for implementing international action on certain POPs grouped into three categories: 1) pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; 2) industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and 3) unintended byproducts: dioxins and furans. For more information, see *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 34 <<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/vol15/enb1534e.html>>. INC-5 will take place from 4-9 December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Conference of the Plenipotentiaries will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 21-23 May 2001.

REPORT OF FORUM III

IFCS President Roy Hickman (Canada) opened FORUM III at 2:30 pm on Sunday, 15 October 2000. He 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 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's hosting the FORUM will allow an exchange of knowledge and experience that will assist efforts within Brazil to promote chemical safety.

Otto Alencar, Vice Governor of the State of Bahia, highlighted the development of Bahia's petro-chemical and other initiatives and noted the objective of good governance and progress made in meeting commitments.

Brazilian Vice President Marco Maciel noted his pleasure in attending the meeting on behalf of Brazilian President Fernando Henrique 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 called for sustainable development that supports economic growth, addresses social problems, and is environmentally integrated. He underscored the participation of non-governmental actors and the importance of partnership and generating awareness. Maciel stressed the FORUM's importance for Brazil in its management initiatives and underscored Brazil's contribution to, *inter alia*, sustainable development and social justice. He also presented the Second IFCS Award of Merit to Professor Michel Mercier for his contribution to and encouragement of collaboration in chemical safety, and his effective work in implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

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 opening for signature of the Rotterdam Convention; the international development and promotion of PRTRs; and the preparation of National Profiles.

ROUND TABLE: IN PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL CHEMICAL SAFETY

Moderator Horst Otterstetter (former Director of the Environmental Health Division, Pan American Health Organization) introduced the panelists for the Round Table. Jean Belanger, National Round Table on the Environment and Economy (Canada), 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.

Carlos Mariani Bittencourt, ABIQUIM (Brazil), 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, Ministry of Public Health (Thailand), 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 expressed Thailand's interest in hosting FORUM IV in 2003.

Jim Willis, Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOCC) of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), described partnerships formed by 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. Ravi Agarwal, SHRISHTI/Toxic Links (India), emphasized that in order to ensure chemical safety, especially for those most vulnerable in society, community capacity must be raised and partnerships built. He said 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 (USA), stressed that the public must be viewed as an integral stakeholder in any partnership and that public NGOs have demonstrated that they can be valuable resources for information and expertise.

Reg Green, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), stated that chemical safety in the workplace is the first step to chemical safety beyond the workplace. He noted that neither regulation and legislation, nor voluntary agreements, are sufficient on their own for chemical safety. He said that: chemical safety needs legislation, regulation and voluntary initiatives to be credible; unions must participate; ICEM-International Council of Chemical Associations (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.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

On Monday, 16 October, Chair Hickman drew participants' attention to organizational matters and reported on preparations for FORUM III. Alberto Suburu (Argentina), Ousmane Touré (Mali), Geum-So Seog (Republic of Korea) and Gyorgy Ungvary (Hungary) served as Vice-Presidents. Participants then agreed to designate Rolf Hertel (Germany) as Rapporteur. Delegates then adopted the Agenda (IFCS/FORUMIII/01w) and the Time Schedule (IFCS/FORUMIII/04w). During the week, delegates met in Plenary, Regional Groups and *ad hoc* Working Groups on the Bahia Declaration, Priorities for Action Beyond 2000, and Illegal Traffic.

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Participants then turned to IFCS Administrative Items in the document "Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety: Organization of Work and Terms of Reference (TOR)" (IFCS/FORUM III/06w) and first considered the IFCS TOR. Chair Hickman directed participants to Annex I that tabulates the 1994 Terms of Reference and proposes changes. Highlighting the principal changes, he identified: the reference to future sessions; the Forum Standing Committee (FSC) proposal to discontinue the Intersessional Group (ISG) and devote those resources to FORUM meetings; the FSC proposal to elect five Vice-Presidents, one from each region, and an independent President, and to delete reference to the Rapporteur; an expanded role for the FSC; and provision for National Focal Points and an administering organization concerning Secretariat services. Participants then commented on the TOR, taking into account discussions in Regional Groups, related to purpose and aims, participation, regional roles and responsibilities for Vice-Presidents, and National Focal Points.



Hungary and the Republic of Korea pointed out a lack of regional representation in the FSC. Hungary, with others, called for greater FSC membership. Chair Hickman identified the difficulty in enlarging the FSC, in that much of the work is by teleconference in English, but said the FSC would consider the issue and report back.

On budget and expenses, delegates added language providing that the FORUM, through the Secretariat, mobilize financial assistance in order to ensure the participation of representatives of developing countries, countries with economies in transition and NGOs.

On Tuesday, 17 October, Chair Hickman noted that the FSC had discussed changes to FSC membership and recommended that its composition be amended so that each Regional Group, except Western Europe and Others (WEOG), is assigned one additional member. He noted that this would increase FSC membership from 21 to 25, and stated his belief that the advantages of greater participation will outweigh the increase in size. Plenary approved this amendment.

Chair Hickman then read a message from Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The message noted that the 1992 Rio Earth Summit had identified the sound management of chemicals as a major issue for the international community and that Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 identified a number of critical issues for international cooperation. The message highlighted the major contribution made by the IFCS to international cooperation and invited IFCS input into the preparations for the Rio+10 meeting in 2002.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT: On Sunday, 15 October, IFCS Executive Secretary Judy Stober summarized the "Financial Statement" (IFCS/FORUMIII/07w), which presents information on: the IFCS Trust Fund (organization and administrative arrangements); other contributed resources; and the IFCS Twinning Fund and bilateral twinning assistance. She highlighted financial contributions to the IFCS Trust Fund, in-kind resources, and the Twinning Fund. She noted that expenditures were below the approved budget, and that the action requested of FORUM III was to provide advice regarding longer-term arrangements for both administrative costs and twinning arrangements.

On Thursday, 19 October, Stober presented the IFCS "Financial Statement" (IFCS/FORUMIII/07w) for adoption by Plenary. She acknowledged that in-kind and financial contributions are key to the success of the FORUM and that Plenary was requested to approve the budget for 2001-2003. Brazil proposed that the budget be kept up-to-date in light of new contributions and new initiatives resulting from FORUM III and FSC discussions. Germany, supported by the US, appealed to all countries, institutions and NGOs to increase spending on the IFCS process since it is helpful for all stakeholders in making chemical safety global. Plenary approved the budget as presented, taking into account Brazil's suggestion to keep it up-to-date.

LOCATION OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS: On Thursday, 19 October, Chair Hickman noted that the IFCS had received two official offers to host FORUM IV from Thailand and Hungary. He informed delegates that the matter of location had been resolved by having Thailand offer to host FORUM IV in 2003 and Hungary host FORUM V in 2005 or 2006. These offers were accepted.

IFCS PRIORITIES FOR ACTION BEYOND 2000

On Monday, 16 October, IFCS Vice-President Gyorgy Ungvary introduced the document, "IFCS Priorities for Action Beyond 2000" (IFCS/FORUMIII/09w). He noted that in Programme Areas A to F the FORUM needed to update the Priorities for Action because they were

formulated in 1994 and additional challenges have surfaced since then. He described the procedure by which the updated Priorities were produced, noting criteria including: the potential to improve chemical safety at all levels; the need to prevent or reduce adverse health and environmental effects of any chemical at any stage during its lifecycle; realistic yet challenging priorities; and the availability of tools that enable rapid application at the national level.

The European Commission summarized its proposals regarding Priorities for Action. He described major problems in EU chemical policy, including, *inter alia*, a lack of knowledge regarding risks associated with chemical use and a system where the burden of proof falls on authorities and not on industry. He stated that the new EU initiative is to remedy these shortcomings with the overriding goal of sustainable development, with consideration of the following elements:

- the need to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment for future and present generations;
- the precautionary principle;
- reduction of dangerous substances;
- a balance of economic, ecological and social development;
- the need to increase transparency;
- the need for technical innovation incentives;
- avoiding duplication of testing involving animals; and
- fulfillment of national obligations such as those derived from UNCED.

The WHO outlined its recent activities in pursuit of the Priorities for Action, including, *inter alia*, consolidation of relevant data in a database available on CD-ROM and the Internet. He noted that the IPCS is working with countries toward: the harmonization of risk assessment methodologies; the collection of precisely defined human toxicology data; the establishment of poison information centers and development of harmonized national and regional systems for data collection; and collection of harmonized human health data for the purpose of follow-up on exposed individuals.

On Tuesday, 17 October, Chair Hickman noted the establishment of an *ad hoc* Working Group on Priorities for Action Beyond 2000, with Chair Maria Cristina Cardenas Fischer (Colombia) and Rapporteur Gunnar Bengtsson (Sweden). Pesticides Action Network (PAN), on behalf of public interest NGOs, proposed that health and environmental protection be the primary objective of IFCS work and the framework for the details under discussion. ICCA, on behalf of industry NGOs, noted that the FSC guidelines for proposing priorities should be taken into account. These guidelines note that priorities should be, *inter alia*, realistic yet challenging, and suitable for implementation.

On Thursday, 19 October, Working Group Chair Cardenas summarized the previous night's Working Group discussions. Regarding reference to the precautionary approach, the US, with Belarus, Canada and the Russian Federation, supported text stating that the approach be "considered." Norway, supported by numerous countries, preferred text stating that the approach be "applied." After a show of hands, "applied" was accepted. Chair Hickman suggested that a footnote be added to indicate that not all delegations approved of the reference to the precautionary approach being "applied," due to the potential implications of this terminology. In the paragraph on efficient coordination, delegates agreed to delete a reference to the role of public authorities in monitoring and assessing substances of major concern.



The revised "Priorities for Action beyond 2000" are contained in Annex VI to the Final Report of FORUM III (IFCS/FORUM/III/23w). The recommended priorities are described under the six Programme Areas of Chapter 19 and are preceded by a series of introductory paragraphs.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS: The introduction notes that the recommended priorities deal with: Priorities for Action by governments; work by which international bodies may develop effective tools for governments' use; and ways for stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to chemical safety. It notes that the FORUM: supports international cooperation and national implementation of international agreements; and encourages IOMC organizations to coordinate activities aimed at strengthening capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The introduction stresses efficient coordination of chemical safety endeavors and states that active participation of employers and workers, mobilization of the NGO sector and strengthening of community "right to know" are important facets in increasing chemical safety.

It also stresses that manufacturers, importers, formulators and industrial users should assume primary but differentiated responsibility for generating and assessing data and providing adequate and reliable safety information on products, and notes public authorities are responsible for establishing the framework for risk assessment procedures and controls.

The introduction further recommends that additional educational programmes be arranged at national and regional levels in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to provide a core of trained technical staff and policy makers. It also recommends close integration of chemical and pollution control initiatives and that the precautionary approach should be applied. The full range of risk reduction options should be considered, including encouraging replacing more dangerous with less dangerous chemicals or using alternative approaches.

The introduction states that special attention should be given to occupational health and safety concerns and that chemical safety issues regarding susceptible groups of the public need to be addressed in risk assessment and management. The valuable role of public interest NGOs as communication conduits is identified and the importance of technical and financial assistance and technology transfer is recognized. The introduction also highlights the need to strengthen and broaden bilateral and multilateral assistance and to provide technical and financial assistance in a non-discriminatory way.

PROGRAMME AREA A: EXPANDING AND ACCELERATING THE INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF CHEMICAL RISKS: The Priorities for Action under Programme Area A recommend that, by 2004, IPCS and IOMC participating organizations should have ensured that recommendations for common principles for harmonized approaches are available for terminology, cancer, and reproductive and developmental toxicology. Common principles for the approach to other specific toxicological endpoints such as immunotoxicology, endocrine disruption, and ecotoxicology should be adopted wherever possible. They recommend that hazard evaluations should be carried out in accordance with internationally recommended methodologies and in an open and transparent manner. They note that, in addition to ongoing evaluation programmes, 1000 additional chemical hazard assessments will be provided through an industry initiative by 2004, and the resulting information will be made available to the public in a timely manner.

The Priorities also recommend seeking the cooperation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to ensure that all relevant data, including exposure data required to assess human and environmental risks, is developed and assessed. In order to make appropriate data available to the public detailing inherent hazards of chemicals in commerce and to give highest priority to hazard information for chemicals having greatest potential for substantial exposures, it is recommended that the FSC develop a proposal for an additional Priority for Action to be discussed at FORUM IV, which should address:

- the role of industry in generating and assessing data;
- the role of industry and governments in making results of tests available and accessible to the public;
- the desirability of reducing the use of animals for toxicity testing where other methods are available; and
- possible approaches for ensuring that relevant data becomes available to the public and authorities as soon as possible.

PROGRAMME AREA B: HARMONIZATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS: The Priorities for Action under Programme Area B recommend that the GHS be agreed to by the IOMC coordinating group on harmonization of chemical classification systems and fully adopted by ECOSOC before FORUM IV. They recommend that guidance and other tools necessary for GHS implementation be made available to interested parties before FORUM IV and encourage countries to implement the GHS as soon as possible with a view to full operation by 2008. They also recommend that all countries, subject to their capacities and capabilities, should take account of the GHS development in any proposed changes to existing classification and labelling systems, and in implementation and enforcement of their chemicals legislation.

PROGRAMME AREA C: INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON TOXIC CHEMICALS AND CHEMICAL RISKS: Priorities for Action under Programme Area C recommend that by 2005, at least five countries in each region, and by 2010, most countries should have fully operational arrangements in place for information exchange on hazardous chemicals. On the role of the Rotterdam Convention in information exchange on toxic chemicals, they recommend encouraging all governments to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible, and that all efforts should be made to ensure that countries can successfully implement the Convention in a prompt manner. They also recommend that by 2004, most countries should have procedures in place to ensure that any hazardous material put into circulation is accompanied, at a minimum, by appropriate and reliable safety information, consistent with the safety data sheets of the 1990 ILO Chemical Convention (No. 170), and taking into account the development of the GHS.

PROGRAMME AREA D: ESTABLISHMENT OF RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMMES: The priorities recommend that:

- by 2004, most countries should have in place integrated and ecologically sound pest management strategies and, where appropriate, specific strategies for vector control;
- by 2004, countries should have established relevant action plans for obsolete stocks, stockpiling and final disposal of pesticides, and at least two countries in each region should have commenced implementation of their National Action Plans with respect to disposal of chemicals;
- the POPs convention should be: agreed to by the end of 2000; adopted by May 2001; and ratified and in force as soon as possible, preferably by 2004;



- by 2002, 70 or more countries should have implemented systems aimed at preventing major industrial accidents and for emergency preparedness and response;
- by 2002, poison centers should be established in 30 or more countries that do not yet have centers, and further strengthened in 70 or more countries where they already exist;
- by 2004, at least two additional countries in each IFCS region should have established a PRTR/emission inventory and that countries without such an inventory should consider initiating an inventory design process.

The Priorities request that the FSC provide initial input on the extent of the problem of acutely toxic pesticides and provide guidance for sound risk management and reduction. Countries are urged to apply the existing mechanisms under the Rotterdam Convention in order to notify the PIC Secretariat of severely hazardous pesticide formulations under conditions of use in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Following adoption of the revised FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides at its Biennial Conference, the Priorities recommend that the IFCS support and encourage governments to observe the Code, and work with the FAO and all stakeholders to enable them to play an active role in monitoring implementation of the Code.

PROGRAMME AREA E: STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS:

Priorities for Action under Programme Area E recommend that: by 2002, National Profiles, based on a multi-stakeholder process, should have been developed by most countries, and that all countries should have designated an appropriate contact point (IFCS National Focal Point). They note that although risk reduction activities are primarily national responsibilities, regional and international risk reduction programmes are warranted for those problems that are sub-regional, regional and international in scope. They recommend that: by 2005, national policies and action plans with targets for improving chemicals management should have been developed in most countries and regions; OECD countries, other IFCS participants, non-profit organizations, and other institutions should begin to work immediately to mobilize sufficient financial resources and technical assistance for the sound management of chemicals, providing opportunities to all countries to support activities under all FORUM programmes of action; and the FSC should review assistance given to countries to support capacity building and report back to FORUM IV. They note that FORUM III supports the development of an Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals within the framework of the IFCS by 2003.

PROGRAMME AREA F: PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS: The Priorities for Action for Programme Area F, taken as recommendations from FORUM III, are outlined below under "Prevention of Illegal International Traffic."

PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC

On Tuesday, 17 October, Chair Hickman introduced "Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products" (IFCS/FORUMIII/10w). Facilitator Jallow Ndoeye Fatoumata (The Gambia) stressed that the problem applies to all regions and that illegal entry into territories can occur if adequate measures are not in place.

Jim Willis, UNEP, distinguished criminal laws from the consensual and good faith character of treaties. He noted the consideration of illegal traffic under conventions such as Basel, CITES and the Montreal Protocol and their illustrative value. Willis anticipated the operation of Article 17 of the Rotterdam Convention in 2002, addressing compliance issues, upon the attainment of 50 ratifications of that Convention. He highlighted that the issue will be considered at the upcoming PIC INC-7.

Ibrahima Sow, African Regional Group, stressed the lack of management capacity in Africa and identified legal instruments in place to tackle the issue. On why illegal traffic occurs, Sow identified: internal limits, including delays in implementing legislation and a lack of synergy between actors; and external limits, including lack of coordination and understanding of relevant conventions. He also highlighted relevant African conventions, including the Bamako Convention, and stressed a lack of expertise in ascertaining toxicity levels and lack of control at the borders.

Pakdee Pothisiri, Asia-Pacific Regional Group, noted that although there is little data about illegal trafficking in Asia, many cases are covered by the media and NGOs. He identified common methods of illegal traffic, including lack of knowledge and misleading labelling. He stated that the problems must be solved through sustainable prevention, and that Programme Area F targets are meaningless unless they lead to measures at the international level.

Jacqueline Alvarez, Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group, highlighted recommendations, including: links to international agencies; involvement of the World Customs Organization (WCO) toward more precise control of products; disclosure of national decisions to the international community; and increased support mechanisms and technical assistance for countries that produce and export chemicals.

Jana Kovacicova, Central and Eastern European Regional Group, recommended, *inter alia*: programmes to detect target organizations involved in illegal trafficking; implementation of the Rotterdam Convention; efficient cooperation among border control agencies; and comprehensive evaluation of Programme Area F.

Michael Penders, WEOG Regional Group, emphasized the importance of technology for tracking hazardous chemicals. He highlighted successful international partnerships for reducing illegal trafficking, and reiterated the importance of integrating customs data with environmental compliance data.

Delegates then commented on the paper "Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products" (IFCS/FORUMIII/10w). Belarus suggested that links should be made with IGOs such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which have sufficient experience in addressing illegal traffic. Germany proposed the FORUM consider initiating a working group on illegal traffic with IOMC and the IFCS, pointing out that the POPs negotiations started in the same manner. Nigeria pointed out that the Rotterdam Convention, even when it comes into force, would not protect developing countries and countries with economies in transition from illegal traffic. Sweden said that a good role for the FORUM would be to direct the overall international agenda on chemical issues, without getting involved in activities that would be financially burdensome.

Belgium noted that despite the positive uses of the Internet, in some instances it could be a means of illegal traffic. The European Commission suggested cooperation with international customs organizations, especially regarding harmonized codes for chemicals. Thailand emphasized the importance of differentiating between chemicals



and hazardous wastes, and noted that illegal trafficking is a lucrative business. The US summarized recommendations from WEOG, including the involvement of the WCO and looking to UNEP for IFCS financing. Plenary then established an *ad hoc* Working Group to further consider this issue, co-chaired by The Gambia and Germany.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates adopted recommendations under Programme Area F as proposed by the Working Group and to be included in the final Priorities for Action Beyond 2000. The recommendations state that the FORUM:

- requests that the IOMC Participating Organizations establish a working group on illegal trafficking, which shall assess illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous substances, review measures to detect and prevent illegal traffic, and make recommendations as to how its participating organizations may advance, add value to, and help integrate the work undertaken by other organizations, with assessments and recommendations to be considered by FORUM IV; and
- recommends that governments elaborate national strategies of prevention, detection, and control of illegal traffic, by enhancing information systems, and in particular, giving appropriate support to initiatives taken by the WCO members aiming at the attribution of specific harmonized system codes for certain chemicals.

BARRIERS TO INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

On Wednesday, 18 October, Chair Hickman opened the afternoon Plenary with a discussion on "Barriers to Information Exchange for the Sound Management of Chemicals" (IFCS/FORUMIII/11w). Facilitator William Sanders (US) stated that having access to the Internet is an integral component of capacity building but is insufficient on its own. He noted a key proposal calling for FORUM III to sponsor global efforts to assure that the world's government officials responsible for chemicals management have and use Internet access. In conclusion, Sanders provided an update on the US/UNEP Internet access pilot project that has been highly successful in Mali, noting that training in Nigeria, Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire is to take place in the near future.

Jim Willis, UNEP, said that the US/UNEP pilot project addresses a clear capacity building need in developing countries. Willis suggested that future steps: take stock of the lessons learned; find additional countries to participate in the project; look at broadening the scope of the work; use the focal points of other IOMC organizations; integrate hazardous waste issues; and ensure project sustainability. Mali outlined its experience with the pilot project and the benefits of training and sharing experience. He highlighted the use of the Internet as a tool and stated that the biggest hurdle in developing countries is communication.

In the ensuing discussion, Nigeria thanked the US for initiating and funding the pilot programme and highlighted the importance of information dissemination and access. The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) stated that NGOs must have as much access to information as possible, but that industry confidentiality agreements sometimes act as barriers to information. She called on the FORUM to propose greater NGO access to information.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates adopted the following recommendations on barriers to information exchange. As a matter of priority, proposed targets for a FORUM-sponsored effort include: designated National Authorities for implementation of the Rotterdam Convention; Focal Points for the IFCS; Focal Points for a POPs convention; and other relevant Focal Points and National Competent

Authorities designated by countries on related issues. FORUM III also agreed to sponsor a global effort to ensure that government officials responsible for chemicals management have Internet access, requesting that: the participating organizations find the needed funding and implementation mechanisms; and one IOMC organization take the lead for such an effort.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR CHEMICAL PRODUCTION DECISION-MAKING

On Wednesday, 18 October, Facilitator Pep Fuller (US) presented the paper on "Information Exchange for Chemical Production Decision-making" (IFCS/FORUMIII/13w). He noted the basic problem is lack of access to information on best practices in the design and development of new, or expansion of existing, chemical facilities to minimize health and safety problems and environmental risks associated with the manufacture of chemicals.

Frederick McEldowney (ICCA) noted that members have been asked to implement the globalization of Responsible Care encompassing all basic elements including management practice codes. He stressed that companies need consistent standards in all facilities or they create a management nightmare, and highlighted principles for technology transfer. He underscored the responsibility of both government and industry in establishing facilities.

Brazil, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group, proposed text amendments to the requested actions. Mali, on behalf of the African Regional Group, stressed the problem of the use of confidentiality as a shield for providing valuable information. The Republic of Korea noted the Asia-Pacific Group's proposed amendments to requested actions, including, with regard to industry providing advance notification, deletion of a reference to conformity with Responsible Care principles. The International Council on Metals and the Environment (ICME) noted an example of cooperation between different partners in information exchange. ICCA opposed the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group's suggestion to delete a reference to taking account of local regulations and requirements, relating to companies applying best practices. The Russian Federation noted the paper's lack of reference to countries with economies in transition.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates adopted FORUM III recommendations on information exchange, as contained in IFCS/FORUMIII/23w. FORUM III:

- recommends to IOMC Participating Organizations to further develop the concepts for information exchange for chemical production decision-making aimed at preventing adverse human health and environmental impacts and to consider the means for its implementation;
- requests the chemical industry to commit to providing advance notification about new production facilities or expansions, in conformity with national laws and regulations, and with principles for sound management of chemicals as established by international agreements and guidelines;
- urges chemical companies to apply their corporate health, safety and environmental principles, standards, and "best practices" in all stages of design, construction, operations, and decommissioning, including those in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and
- requests IFCS National Focal Points to take leadership roles in mobilizing means to use the information available to ensure that all appropriate measures are in place to protect workers, communities, and the environment, as well as to prepare for emergencies.



EMISSION INVENTORIES

On Wednesday, 18 October, Facilitator Achim Halpaap (UNITAR) expressed his hope for a set of precise action-oriented recommendations for use by those involved in PRTR development. John Harman (US EPA) noted the benefits of PRTRs, including: identification of pollutant sources and hotspots; tracking of progress for chemicals of national and international concern; and identification of opportunities for pollution prevention and reduction.

Peter Acquah (Ghana) described examples of progress in PRTR development, and identified the common denominator as the protection of human health and the environment through provision of information to governments and the public.

ICCA referred to his organization's position paper on PRTRs, and noted that they can provide valuable information and can help communication to key audiences. Proyecto Fronterizo de Educacion Ambiental recommended: the promotion and recognition of PRTRs as building blocks for sustainable development; partnerships in the development and management of PRTRs, especially regarding information sharing; and the creation of an online discussion group on PRTRs. Zambia recommended that the FORUM promote bilateral cooperation between developing countries or countries with economies in transition and developed countries. Ecuador, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group, recommended, *inter alia*: dissemination of methodologies; public participation in the development of information systems; and the establishment of selection criteria.

Canada suggested that the ICCA report back to FORUM IV regarding implementation of ICCA policies on voluntary PRTRs. ICME warned that focusing on transfer, rather than on emissions, might skew data and impair progress toward objectives.

On Friday, 20 October, Harald Sorby (Norway) introduced the PRTR/Emission Inventory Action Plan (IFCS/FORUM III/23w, Annex 7). Delegates approved the document, which recommends that FORUM III:

- calls for the establishment of a PRTR/emission inventory in at least two additional countries in each IFCS region by 2004 and encourages countries without PRTR systems to take steps to consider initiating a national PRTR/emission inventory design process;
- calls upon countries to involve all affected and interested parties as participants in PRTR/emission inventory design processes;
- urges countries to link reporting requirements under international agreements to national PRTRs/emission inventories;
- calls upon the multilateral and bilateral donor community to provide financial and technical assistance in response to national requests for PRTR/emission inventory related assistance;
- calls upon UNEP and UNITAR to increase technical and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- requests ICCA to report to FORUM IV on progress achieved in implementing ICCA policy on PRTRs/emission inventories; and
- requests the IOMC PRTR Coordinating Group to: prepare a report for FORUM IV which summarizes the status and progress of PRTR/emission inventories development; investigate opportunities to engage non-OECD member countries; and prepare a consolidated report for review and possible further action at FORUM IV.

RAISING AWARENESS AND RAISING THE PRIORITY OF CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT CAPACITY BUILDING ISSUES AT POLITICAL LEVELS

On Wednesday, 18 October, Facilitator Ulrich Schlottmann (Germany) noted that chemicals management does not rank highly on government agendas. Matthias Kern (Germany) stressed the importance of strengthening national capacities and capabilities toward sound management of chemicals. He stated that implementation of capacity-building projects is only possible when funding is available, and called for dialogue with politicians, administrators and the general public.

Siriwat Tiptarodol (Thailand) recommended: support for civil society in terms of technical and financial roles; strengthening and involvement of media; and creation and establishment of global chemical safety reports.

Karel Bláha (Czech Republic) stated that governments should: create national profiles; develop national chemical safety programmes; prepare national legal frameworks; and establish infrastructure ensuring the enforcement of regulations. He recommended extending projects supporting chemical safety to countries in need of help and supporting and facilitating the exchange of information and experience within the region.

Viraj Vithoontien (World Bank) highlighted the Bank's initiatives on environmental issues and discussed experiences and lessons learned on data collection and development of national action plans under the Montreal Protocol. He stressed that development of national action plans should be a dynamic process requiring both good information and the infrastructure to track progress and improve the plan. He underscored the benefit of an integrated approach, and noted recent Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund efforts to ensure implementation strategies that allow effective use of resources.

In the ensuing discussion of the document under consideration, IFCS/FORUM III/15w, IPEN stressed that agencies funding public interest NGOs place low priority on chemicals and this should be addressed as part of raising political awareness. Trinidad and Tobago stressed greater support for worker protection in the future work of the FORUM. Ghana underscored the success of the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol and called for funding of this kind.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates adopted recommendations on raising awareness, contained in IFCS/FORUM III/23w. FORUM III:

- recommends that each donor country designate a contact point with respect to chemicals management to facilitate information exchange related to funding and associated issues;
- requests governments and international development agencies to link chemicals management to other important health and environment topics as well as to other relevant development cooperation programmes in the fields of agriculture and industry;
- recommends establishment of capacity-building programmes needed by developing countries and countries with economies in transition leading to the implementation of national emissions inventories, strategies, and procedures;
- urges the various Convention secretariats, IOMC organizations, and donors to greatly increase coordination in capacity-building programmes;
- strongly recommends that worker safety remain an ongoing focus for FORUM activities, and that cooperation is strengthened between IFCS and the ILO to ensure the highest levels of chemical safety at work;
- urges the implementation of national committees and institutional



strengthening as essential for required progress in national profile development, awareness raising, and participation of all sectors;

- recommends that all international organizations and donor agencies provide support to strengthen public interest NGOs active in the field of chemical safety; and
- urges representatives of major donor agencies and coordination groups to participate in IFCS meetings and efforts.

CAPACITY BUILDING NETWORK

On Thursday, 19 October, Facilitator Achim Halpaap, UNITAR, introduced "Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals: Discussion on and Possible Adoption/Endorsement of a Draft Terms of Reference (TOR)" (IFCS/FORUMIII/12w). He noted the international review meeting held in January 2000, resulting in draft TOR, and summarizing proposals from the meeting. Proposals for operation of the network include: designation of points of contact by participating countries and organizations; establishment of a Network Steering/Advisory Group with FSC assistance; IOMC organizations to seek a location for a Central Coordinating Node (CCN); and minimal resource requirements. The Czech Republic, supported by Slovakia, suggested that UNITAR be the CCN. On location of the CCN, Facilitator Halpaap suggested that UNITAR might not be an ideal location. Judy Stober said the Secretariat could act as CCN in an interim capacity and provide limited resources in a guiding role. International Union of Food, Agricultural and Allied Workers Associations (IUF), Cameroon and others supported the Secretariat's offer.

The FAO, supported by UNEP, proposed as a more accurate title: Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

UNEP stressed coordinating development of the network with similar initiatives such as the capacity assistance network emerging under the POPs negotiations and cautioned against duplication and premature launching of the network. He also noted the network would be highly useful for Article 16 of the Rotterdam Convention on technical assistance. A representative of a participating IPEN organization noted strong support for the network from public interest groups and stressed close coordination in its establishment. UNITAR noted that, in light of UNEP's comments, it would be premature to adopt the TOR.

Chair Hickman noted agreement on, *inter alia*: designating points of contact; proceeding in a manner consistent with related initiatives; FSC assistance in Steering Group establishment; an interim and limited IFCS Secretariat role as CCN; amendment of the title by the FAO; and request for a report on lessons learned for FORUM IV.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates adopted recommendations on "Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals" (IFCS/FORUMIII/23w). In order to initiate concrete action by FORUM IV, FORUM III:

- calls upon the FSC to assist in establishing a Steering/Advisory Group for the Network;
- recommends that the IFCS Secretariat serve as the CCN for the Network during its start-up phase;
- requests the IFCS Secretariat, in coordination with the IOMC Participating Organizations and the World Bank, to establish the Network;
- encourages countries and organizations to provide support for initiating the startup phase for the Network;
- requests countries and organizations to designate points of contact for the Network and to provide information relevant to implementing the objectives of the Network; and

- requests that a report on progress made and lessons learned during the startup phase is made available at FORUM IV for consideration and possible further action.

GLOBAL HARMONIZATION OF CHEMICAL CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING

On Thursday, 19 October, Facilitator Anna-Liisa Sunquist (Finland) outlined the status of the work and plans for implementation of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). She highlighted: the benefits and principles of harmonization; tools required and plans for international implementation; and form and structure of the GHS.

Roque Puiatti (Brazil) emphasized the importance of commitment by all countries, especially developing ones and highlighted the need for capacity building. Guy Ethier (ICME) discussed partnership in the development and implementation of the GHS. Reg Green (ICEM) noted that all workers have the right to information regarding chemicals, and called for a major capacity-building programme and a campaign to promote the benefits of the GHS. Achim Halpaap (UNITAR) advocated immediate initiation of work at the country level and establishment of pilot projects to initiate GHS action plans.

Brazil noted work underway by his government and emphasized translating it into concrete initiatives. The US anticipated completion of the harmonization work and implementation before FORUM IV. The Gambia inquired whether factors of local language and illiteracy had been taken into consideration.

On Friday, 20 October, delegates to FORUM III noted progress made toward GHS on agreeing to classification criteria for chemicals, and in establishing an implementation mechanism through the UN ECOSOC. The FORUM noted it was essential that the GHS should be fully and effectively implemented in all countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition. UNITAR and ILO would take the lead in: encouraging and assisting countries to adopt and implement the GHS; providing appropriate capacity-building assistance; and developing the appropriate mechanisms and strategies to bring interested countries to an operational level.

BAHIA DECLARATION

On Monday, 16 October, delegates in Plenary established an *ad hoc* Working Group on the Bahia Declaration, co-chaired by Australia and the US. On Thursday, 19 October, Peter Burnett (Australia), Co-Chair of the *ad hoc* Working Group introduced amendments made to the draft Bahia Declaration by the Group, as of 18 October (IFCS/FORUMIII/09w, Annex II). Germany, supported by the Netherlands, Belarus, the US and Brazil, said the declaration was long and bureaucratic and emphasized the importance of a shorter document for the purposes of external consumption. The US suggested moving detailed material to an appendix. Chair Hickman requested, and the Working Group agreed, to shorten the declaration using an annex approach.

On Friday, 20 October, the FORUM reviewed the final version of the Bahia Declaration submitted by the *ad hoc* Working Group. Burnett noted the final text was shorter and more focused and reiterated that the key goals were shortened versions of those outlined in the Priorities for Action. Iran, supported by India, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Colombia and others, called for recognizing the necessity and importance of providing technical and financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to enable them to accomplish the FORUM III priorities beyond 2000. Delegates agreed to include this reference.



Text was also amended to reflect concerns raised by ICCA and others that the challenges set out in Rio by Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 should be reaffirmed. Denmark, supported by Germany and others, added a reference to risk reduction to qualify the types of initiatives to be taken by 2003 on other chemicals of major concern.

Regarding the 2004 goal on recommendations to establish common principles and harmonized approaches addressing matters related to immunotoxicology, endocrine disruption and ecotoxicology, Australia proposed instead more inclusive language referring to "risk methodologies on specific toxicological endpoints." This was accepted.

The final text of the Bahia Declaration, adopted by acclamation, states that the participating partners in the IFCS:

- reaffirm their commitment to the Rio Declaration;
- recommit to challenges set out by Agenda 21, Chapter 19;
- note progress made since the 1994 establishment of the FORUM;
- emphasize the role of sound chemicals management in sustainable development and the protection of human health;
- recognize the responsibility of all sectors to work together;
- acknowledge the diverse needs of different countries; and
- recognize the importance and necessity of the provision of technical and financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries and economies in transition to accomplish FORUM priorities beyond 2000.

Furthermore, it states that the partners understand that:

- knowledge of the effects of exposure remains very incomplete;
- continued research and vigilance are needed;
- new challenges will demand new responses;
- cooperation and partnership are essential to developing appropriate policies and infrastructure for chemicals management; and
- an informed public is vital.

The Declaration states that the FORUM calls on all partners to join in accomplishing the following priorities set for review at FORUM IV, FORUM V and beyond:

- promoting global cooperation for chemicals management, pollution prevention, sustainable agriculture, and cleaner processes, materials and products;
- increasing the flow of information regarding the safe use of chemicals, risks involved in manufacture, release and disposal, and the means to avoid or reduce risks;
- ensuring that all countries have the capacity for sound chemicals management, particularly through coordinated national policies, legislation and infrastructure;
- ratifying and implementing chemicals conventions and agreements and ensuring efficient and effective coordination between related organizations and activities;
- marshalling resources to remedy international safety problems, such as illegal trafficking in toxic and dangerous products; and
- increasing access to information, knowledge, and skills development, recognizing that communities have a right-to-know about chemicals in the environment and to participate meaningfully in decision-making.

The FORUM agreed that much still remains to be done in order to accomplish Chapter 19's intent, since:

- many countries are still struggling to establish the essential infrastructure for chemical safety;
- chemical safety standards in much of the world fall short of those

- needed to adequately protect human health and the environment;
- insufficient international resources have been mobilized and insufficient local resources exist to properly manage and dispose of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals; and
- international assessments have not reached targets set out at FORUM I in 1994.

In order to build on progress and to meet objectives set out, the participants commit to: greater emphasis on cooperation and coordination, seeking synergies and pooling of resources; identifying innovative solutions; seeking ways of securing greater and more stable flows of resources; and promoting the entry into force of related international treaties and agreements as early as possible.

As set out in the Priorities for Action, the FORUM set the goal of the adoption of the POPs convention by 2001. The FORUM also set the following goals by 2002:

- development of National Profiles on chemicals management;
- ensured national coordination and designation of an IFCS National Focal Point by most countries;
- implementation of systems aimed at preventing major industrial accidents and systems for emergency preparedness and response by 70 or more countries; and
- establishment of poison centers in 30 or more countries.

By FORUM IV in 2003, the following goals were set:

- entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention;
- adoption of the GHS;
- operation of an effective Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals;
- consideration of recommendations for prevention of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products, and elaboration of national strategies by countries;
- preparation of a report on the problem of acutely toxic pesticides and severely hazardous pesticides with recommendations for sound management options; and
- reporting by countries on risk reduction initiatives taken on other chemicals of major concern.

By 2004, the following goals were set:

- recommendations to establish common principles and harmonized approaches for risk methodologies on specific toxicological endpoints;
- completion and availability to the public of an additional 1000 chemical hazard assessments;
- entry into force of the POPs convention; and
- establishment of a PRTR or emissions inventory by at least two additional countries in each IFCS region.

Additionally by 2004, most countries should have: procedures in place to ensure hazardous materials carry appropriate and reliable safety information; integrated and ecologically sound pest and vector management strategies; and established action plans for safe management of obsolete stocks of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals.

By 2005, the following goals were set: at least five countries in each IFCS region will have full arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals; and most countries will have developed national policies with targets for improving chemicals management. Beyond FORUM V (expected in 2005 or 2006), the GHS will be fully operational and most countries in each IFCS region will have fully operational arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals.



CLOSING SESSION

On Friday, 20 October, delegates convened in Plenary to review the conclusions and recommendations of FORUM III and adopt the Final Report of the meeting (IFCS/FORUMIII/23w). Chair Hickman drew participants' attention to the Annexes of the Final Report in order to review the FORUM's Conclusions and Recommendations. In Annex I (IFCS Terms of Reference), the Russian Federation proposed strengthening language describing the IFCS purpose and the FSC was invited to consider strengthening the language. On Annex II, Regional Roles and Responsibilities for Vice-Presidents, Chair Hickman pointed out new points on promoting FORUM recommendations and working closely with the IFCS National Focal Points. On Annex III, Guidelines for National Focal Points, Chair Hickman highlighted the addition of text on intersectoral coordinating efforts. On Annex IV, FSC Terms of Reference, Chair Hickman pointed out the addition of one representative for all IFCS regions except WEOG. Iran noted an inconsistency between text in Annex IV on the principle of consensus and text in Annex I regarding the possibility of a vote. The reference in Annex IV was deleted, and Annexes I-V were approved.

Chair Hickman turned to the Final Report: Executive Summary and Meeting Summary. In the section regarding Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals, slight text changes were made regarding the "provisional" adoption of the TOR and consultation with the stakeholder groups represented in the IFCS. The section was approved as amended.

In the section on Raising Awareness and Raising the Priority of Chemicals Management Capacity Building Issues at Political Levels, references were added regarding: a decision in the section on Information Exchange; occupational health and safety; and consumer safety. The Executive Summary as a whole was adopted. Rapporteur Hertel outlined the Meeting Summary and the document was adopted.

France announced results from the Election Facilitating Committee, noting that Brazil was elected President and Ecuador, Hungary, Japan, Senegal and Sweden were elected Vice-Presidents until the end of the next FORUM.

Regarding the location of FORUM IV, Thailand thanked Hungary and Gyorgy Ungvary for their spirit of cooperation, and expressed anticipation of working with everyone at FORUM IV. Trinidad and Tobago suggested the use of screens and less waste of paper for future meetings. Chair Hickman thanked, *inter alia*: the FSC, Rolf Hertel, Judy Stober, the Brazilian organizing committee, the interpreters and translators, local staff, and the hosts of FORUM IV and V.

In a closing address, Izabella Teixeira (Brazil) noted that the meeting provided a good opportunity to exchange experiences. She said these events are significant to sub-regional, regional, national and global efforts toward chemical safety as established under Chapter 19. She expressed her hope that excellent levels of progress could be presented at Rio+10. She congratulated the Secretariat and the FSC, thanked the authorities of Salvador and Bahia, and stated that all paper from the conference would be recycled in support of the children's cancer hospital in Salvador.

Chair Hickman introduced the new FORUM President, Henrique Brandao Cavalcanti, who expressed his honor in representing his country and thanked all participants for their support. He stated his admiration for past presidents, and thanked the acting Brazilian Minister of the Environment and the Vice-Governor of the State of Bahia for speaking at the conference and thereby sensitizing the public to the issue of chemical safety. Chair Hickman wished the participants a safe journey home, and declared FORUM III closed at 3:15 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF FORUM III

The IFCS justifiably takes pride in its role as the overarching coordinating mechanism for international cooperation on chemical safety. While negotiations for legally binding conventions on issues such as POPs may have a higher public profile, the IFCS's steady work in the wings gained momentum at FORUM III as governments, international organizations, and NGOs tackled key existing and emerging issues. As one participant observed, the IFCS was consciously designed to function in a broad consensus-building mold and, as such, is for the most part living up to expectations. This analysis considers some recurring issues in the IFCS, outlines new initiatives, and examines the IFCS in a broader context.

RECURRING CHEMICAL THEMES: A key element in the work of the IFCS is partnership. This theme was consolidated at FORUM III through participants' open and frank exchanges on the issues and their underscoring of the fundamental importance of "partnership for global chemical safety" for future IFCS work. Highlighting the inclusive and participatory nature of the FORUM, numerous participants voiced genuine appreciation of the less formal and less politically-charged atmosphere of the meeting, compared to its sister UN convention negotiations. However, some cautioned that convening only one FORUM meeting every three years, while providing time for implementation of recommendations and analysis of progress, risks loss of momentum. And with the FORUM III decision to discontinue meetings of the Intersessional Group (ISG), it is clear that there will need to be other modes of networking as well as increased effort by the enlarged Forum Standing Committee (FSC) if the work of the IFCS is to remain focused and dynamic. While one participant noted "you don't change the world just by having the IFCS," it was reinforced by others that the IFCS provides a forum not otherwise available, especially for developing countries, to place issues on the agenda of an intergovernmental body and emphasize special needs and concerns with respect to improving chemicals management.

The important fact is that participation, inclusiveness and accessibility continue to characterize the IFCS *mode de travail*, which bodes well for a mechanism designed to foster cooperation. With the preconditions for cooperation and progress firmly in place, it is not surprising that new initiatives taken at FORUM III were seen by many as being even more concrete than those taken at previous meetings.

VARIATIONS ON A CHEMICAL THEME: Several important new initiatives were initiated or endorsed at FORUM III. Proposals to establish an information exchange network for capacity building met with support, particularly from developing countries, although some delegates expressed concern that initiation of its operations was not happening as swiftly as it should. Some interventions during the meeting highlighted that such a network would have clear links to capacity-building initiatives under the Rotterdam Convention and the POPs process and that areas of overlap and duplication should be avoided. One participant stressed that the need for synergy should not in itself be a reason for impeding the launch. It remains to be seen whether the network will become entrenched as a key element of initiatives directed at improving capacity for chemicals management.

Another new and pressing action of particular importance to developing countries, especially from Africa, was FORUM III's consideration of the dilemma of illegal traffic within the rubric of the IFCS. The establishment of a working group to make an assessment and recommendations in this area for consideration at FORUM IV now fulfills the mandated task of the IFCS to address all six Programme Areas of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.



A welcome variation was the streamlining and updating of the Priorities for Action. Considerable work went into this task and participants rallied to produce a set of current priorities considered appropriate for beyond 2000. Consolidating progress in these areas was the key political outcome of the meeting: the Bahia Declaration. As well as enhancing external understanding and support for the IFCS, it will provide important overarching guidance to the IFCS regarding goals to be achieved by FORUM V in five to six years time. With progress made in these areas, the departing mood was one of optimism, although participants were cognizant of the ongoing barrier of limited resources for assisting implementation of IFCS goals and Declaration objectives.

CHEMICALS IN CONTEXT: In spite of the relatively broad mandate of the IFCS, initiatives on global chemical safety do not take place in a vacuum. While the significant time devoted to discussion of IFCS Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 is indicative of the increased importance of chemicals management at national, regional and international levels, related debates on the international stage occasionally surfaced during the FORUM. For example, different opinions about how to reference the precautionary approach in the Priorities for Action echoed similar disagreements in related areas such as biosafety. Nevertheless, chemical safety remains an important link in a mutually reinforcing chain of sustainable development – a chain that is only as strong as its weakest link. With Rio+10 on the horizon, FORUM III has evidenced that the IFCS is continuing to play a crucial role in strengthening the chemicals management link.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

SEVENTH PIC INC MEETING: The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Preparation of the Conference of Parties of the Rotterdam Convention for the Application of the PIC Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (INC-7) will be held from 30 October – 3 November 2000, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Niek Van der Graaff, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-3441; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; e-mail: Niek.VanderGraaff@fao.org; or Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals; tel: +41-22-917-8111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int/>

FIFTH SESSION OF THE INC ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (POPs): The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (INC-5) will take place from 4-9 December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals (IRPTC); tel: +41-22-979-9111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: dodgen@unep.ch; Internet: <http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/>

12TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL: MOP-12 is scheduled to take place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 11-15 December 2000. The 32nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund will be held prior to this, from 4-8 December, also in Ouagadougou. For more information, contact: the Ozone Secretariat; tel: +254-2-62-1234; fax: +254-2-62-3601; e-mail: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/12mop.htm>

FIFTH CONSULTATION ON THE PREVENTION AND DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE AND UNWANTED STOCKS OF PESTICIDES: This meeting is scheduled for 2001 in Rome, Italy. Participants will consider new provisions for the prevention and disposal of obsolete stocks and update/prepare various technical guidelines in support of the FAO Code of Conduct. For more information, contact: Ale Wodageneh, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-5192; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; e-mail: A.Wodageneh@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Events/c.htm>

MEETING OF THE INTERIM CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (ICRC) OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION: The second session of the ICRC will meet from 19-23 March 2001, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: Gerold Wyrwal, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-2753; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; e-mail: gerold.wyrwal@fao.org; or Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals, Geneva; tel: +41-22-917-8111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int/>

DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (DIPCON): The diplomatic conference for the signing of the POPs convention will take place from 21-23 May 2001, in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information, contact: Jim Willis, UNEP; tel: +41-22-979-9111; e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops>

JOINT FAO-WHO MEETING ON PESTICIDES RESIDUES: The 26th Session of the Joint Meeting of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the WHO Expert Group on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) will take place from 10-28 September 2001, in Geneva. The 27th Session is scheduled for 20-29 September 2002 in Rome. These meetings are expected to produce reports and monographs summarizing the assessments of certain pesticides. For more information, contact: Amelia Tejada, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-4010; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/events/c.htm>

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON UPDATING THE FAO CODE OF CONDUCT ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF PESTICIDES: This consultation is tentatively scheduled for October 2001, in Rome, and will consider the draft revised FAO International Code of Conduct on Distribution and Use of Pesticides. For more information, contact: Niek Van der Graaff, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-3441; e-mail: Niek.VanderGraaff@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Events/c.htm>

FOURTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY (IFCS): FORUM IV is scheduled to be held in Thailand in 2003, with FORUM V taking place in Hungary in late 2005 or 2006. For more information, contact the Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety; tel: +41-22-791 3650/4333; fax: +41-22-791 4875; e-mail: ifcs@who.ch; Internet: <http://www.who.int/ifcs>