



SAICM PREPCOM1 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2003

Delegates convened in Plenary throughout the day to comment on the further development of the SAICM, while a contact group met to consider the rules of procedure.

PLENARY

Opening the Plenary, Chair Halldor Thorgeirsson (Iceland) announced that the Bureau had selected Abiola Olanipekun (Nigeria) as Rapporteur.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A SAICM: Comments on the further development of the SAICM responded to the Secretariat's note on the proposed structure of the report (6), focusing on policy aspects, coordination, capacity building and development assistance, and implementation.

On implementation, many supported a concrete action plan containing timeframes and indicators, and some stressed the need for technical and financial mechanisms to support implementation. CANADA called for a global plan of action incorporating a review period that coincides with the 2010-2011 Commission on Sustainable Development implementation cycle concerning chemicals, among other issues. NEW ZEALAND supported the development of a political document that will serve as an overarching framework that integrates existing instruments. He also recommended keeping open the possibility for further elaboration of legal frameworks. EGYPT said the SAICM should be a general framework and not entail legal commitments. MALAYSIA urged a flexible timeframe that recognizes the limitations of developing countries.

On coordination, many delegates stressed that the SAICM should avoid duplication with other international agreements, and called for implementation of and synergies among existing chemicals-related agreements. Many also stressed the need for synergies among government agencies. A number of participants stressed the importance of linking the *IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000* to the WSSD 2020 target. NIGERIA requested that this PrepCom give greater consideration to IFCS outcomes. The WORLD BANK suggested controlling additional chemicals within the context of existing agreements or, if new instruments are developed, ensuring their harmonization. FIJI called for coordinated budget programmes for chemicals management at the international level.

On capacity building and development assistance, many developing countries said the SAICM should prioritize capacity building concerns and called for resources to bridge the widening gap. SIERRA LEONE, UGANDA and others called for transfer of clean technologies to developing countries. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION emphasized support for countries with economies in transition to implement existing conventions. CANADA called

for greater collaboration with the GEF, and said the SAICM should address cross-cutting issues, such as poverty eradication and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. NEW ZEALAND, FIJI and others emphasized the importance of integrating chemicals management into the development agenda. FINLAND announced its financial contribution to the SAICM.

On policy aspects, delegates highlighted the need to consider a range of issues, including principles and approaches, cleaner production, information management and dissemination, monitoring, and waste. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA and IPEN called for preventive measures and, with JAMAICA, the ICFTU, the PHILIPPINES, WWF and others, supported the inclusion of the precautionary principle. Many supported the life-cycle approach.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for developing centers of cleaner production, and enhancing information dissemination on best available practices and alternatives. With MADA-GASCAR and others, she said the SAICM should reflect specific regional concerns. BRAZIL stressed the need to generate and disseminate information on the eco-toxicological effects of chemicals and focus on clean-up operations. JAMAICA called for monitoring mechanisms, and supported ISRAEL's request to develop indicators for chemical exposure and its effects on human health.

The BASEL CONVENTION said the SAICM should consider strategies that apply science-based precautionary measures throughout the entire life-cycle of chemicals. She stressed the need to streamline and mobilize resources for both chemicals and waste-related issues, and with others, highlighted the contribution of the Basel Convention Regional Centers to capacity building. The ICFTU stressed the importance of addressing workplace chemicals, and said the SAICM should incorporate: full industry accountability; the right to know; and adequate training on risks and alternatives.

SLOVENIA called for consideration of emissions reduction strategies, including through changing consumption patterns. BOTSWANA called for industry participation, and supported AUSTRALIA's call for priority setting. He highlighted the need for raising awareness on chemical risks, and liability and compensation regimes. With INDONESIA, CHILE and others, he called for addressing the issue of polluting technologies and industries migrating to the developing world. HAITI urged reasonable measures that developing countries could adopt.

GREENPEACE identified substitution and the phasing out of dangerous substances by 2020 as critical to achieving chemical safety. With WWF and ICFTU, he called for inclusion of the most problematic chemicals, such as endocrine disruptors and substances that are persistent bioaccumulative and toxic, and carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic. He stressed the importance of establishing rules of procedure that allow for transparency and



the broad participation of all relevant stakeholders. WWF urged further research on existing chemicals and safer alternatives. He said a paradigm shift was needed to achieve the WSSD 2020 target.

The IUF called on the SAICM to reduce severe pesticide poisonings of agricultural workers. The PHILIPPINES recommended that the SAICM: embrace the public right to know; address illegal traffic; involve the trade, agriculture, education and information sectors in discussions; create strong links between NGOs and governments; and strengthen the capacity of medical experts.

The ICCA said the SAICM is an opportunity to build new partnership approaches, remove trade barriers, streamline regulatory approaches, and promote industry's voluntary initiatives.

The ILO noted 438,000 workplace fatalities resulting from inadequate chemical safety practices, and called for the ratification and implementation of relevant ILO instruments. BELARUS proposed using the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change as a model for the SAICM, and limiting the range of chemicals to be governed.

TONGA drew attention to the vulnerabilities of small Pacific island States to chemical risks. KENYA suggested moving away from a "piecemeal" approach toward a holistic broad-based agenda that addresses cross-cutting issues and protects future generations. Calling for a toxic-free world, IPEN stressed the need to protect children from chemical exposure, noting that for some chemicals, such as lead, there are no known safe threshold limits.

CHINA recommended that the SAICM: consider differing levels of economic development; address new chemicals; develop an international framework for information exchange; and help reconcile national chemical management standards. CHILE called for developing and using cleaner technologies and products.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO requested that industry take responsibility for ensuring chemical safety, including through additional research on the hazardous effects of chemicals. PERU emphasized the need to address chemical accidents and obsolete stocks. PAKISTAN recommended that the SAICM address the use and safe disposal of chemicals in different sectors, emphasizing the importance of action on the ground. URUGUAY highlighted responsibility and accountability of all actors at all levels. Noting that agricultural workers are the most affected by pesticides and that they remain marginalized in policy making, PAN recommended meaningful participation of all sectors and stakeholders in the SAICM, and a mechanism to "make the SAICM more relevant at the grassroots level."

BOLIVIA recommended considering a role for the civil protection and defence sectors in responding to chemical accidents, and called for research on clean-up and rehabilitation of contaminated areas, with industry participation. WOMEN IN EUROPE FOR A COMMON FUTURE called for eliminating substances that pose environmental and health threats, and for chemicals producers to generate data on intrinsic chemical properties.

FAO highlighted its International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides as a framework for pesticide management. UGANDA called for: industry and producing countries to assume responsibility; mechanisms for evaluating progress; and community awareness raising. WHO referred to its report (/8), and noted that 56 countries agreed on gaps, needs and priorities on the health aspects of the SAICM.

SIERRA LEONE called for raising awareness in the workplace. MEXICO urged research on safer products and technologies, and cooperation between scientific centers to improve knowledge on chemicals. GUINEA proposed: including cradle-to-cradle and cradle-to-grave approaches and the polluter pays principle; cleaning up of contaminated sites; and elaborating a list of activities that use chemical products. ZAMBIA urged the use of safer alternatives and actions to prevent the building up of stockpiles.

In summarizing the comments, Chair Thorgeirsson noted calls for an overarching political strategic vision, stating that this could take the form of a ministerial declaration. He then proposed the following six headings to structure further discussions on the policy aspects of the SAICM outcome report: statement of needs; goals and objectives; principles and approaches; scope; scientific basis, assessment and monitoring; and action items.

On coordination, he noted delegates' emphasis on implementing existing agreements, coherence and synergies, cooperation and voluntary initiatives. On capacity building and development assistance, he recognized calls for strong links to poverty eradication, addressing the widening gap, and clean technology transfer. On implementation, he noted the support for monitoring progress and resource mobilization. He also acknowledged the call for an open, transparent and inclusive process.

In discussions on the way forward for PrepCom1, SWITZERLAND introduced its proposal, co-sponsored by Argentina, Croatia, Iran, Norway and Slovenia, for a possible structure of the SAICM (/CRP.1), emphasizing that this proposal does not conflict with the Chair's or the Secretariat's proposed structures. He suggested that the SAICM consist of: a global programme of action that identifies concrete measures and actions, targets and timetables, and criteria and indicators; and an overarching chemicals policy strategy that describes basic challenges, policy goals and guiding principles, mechanisms to ensure coherence and linkages, and a framework for addressing gaps in the existing regime and for formulating further actions.

AUSTRALIA said deliberations on the action items should not be discussed separately from those on capacity building. LEBANON called for establishing a funding mechanism to enable developing countries to implement the SAICM. The PHILIPPINES suggested prioritization in terms of cross-cutting themes. Italy, on behalf of the EU, said capacity building is important, but emphasized that work remains to be done to achieve sound chemicals management in developed countries. AUSTRALIA proposed one working group on risk-related issues, such as acutely toxic pesticides, stockpiles and illegal traffic, and another on integration, which he said could address the "wish of countries to broaden the classical chemical safety paradigms," and consider issues such as the life-cycle approach, cleaner technology, and polluter pays principle. Chair Thorgeirsson said he would discuss the way forward with the Bureau, and report back to Plenary on Tuesday morning.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While the Plenary prepared to embark the "SAICM boat," a contact group on rules of procedure navigated through uncharted waters to decide who would be onboard. Despite the determined efforts of one country to drown language on participation, the contact group surfaced with a consensus on the SAICM's draft rules, which some described as "groundbreaking." Although Nigeria's proposal for an Expanded Bureau was thrown overboard, the rules do, by and large, allow NGOs and the private sector to participate in the SAICM process on a level playing field with governments. One NGO enthusiastically noted that this "puts meat on the bones" of the Århus Convention. Another delegate exclaimed that with everyone now rowing together, he has high hopes for a successful voyage.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will convene at 9:00 am in the ESCAP Hall. Participants will be briefed on progress made in the contact group on rules of procedure, and informed of the working groups established by the Bureau.