



## SAICM PREPCOM1 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2003

The morning Plenary heard a brief report on the progress of the contact group on rules of procedure. Morning and afternoon Plenary discussions focused on possible ways to structure deliberations on the SAICM, and on potential action items to be considered in the SAICM. Following these discussions, a break-out group was established to consider the details of a global plan of action, while the Plenary focused on coordination aspects.

### PLENARY

Facilitator of the contact group on rules of procedure, Cam Carruthers (Canada) reported that provisional agreement was reached the previous day, and said the contact group would reconvene that morning to consider the revised draft rules.

On possible ways to structure discussions on the SAICM, Chair Thorgeirsson (Iceland) outlined his proposal on the *Possible Headings for SAICM* (SAICM/PREPCOM.1/CRP.3), which comprises five headings: policy aspects; coordination aspects; capacity building, development assistance and related aspects; implementation aspects; and further development of the SAICM as an open, transparent and inclusive process. The policy aspects comprise six sub-headings: statement of needs; goals and objectives; principles and approaches; scope; science-based activities to support decision-making; and action items. He highlighted two other conference room papers circulated by SWITZERLAND and AUSTRALIA on a *Possible Structure of SAICM* (/CRP.1) and a *Non-paper on SAICM Working Groups* (/CRP.2) respectively. He suggested advancing discussions by considering science-based activities and action items under policy aspects.

Highlighting that the proposals do not conflict with one another, SWITZERLAND noted that its paper focuses on the possible structure of the SAICM, while the Chair's proposal organizes discussions. SWITZERLAND also supported the Secretariat's proposed structure (/6), and suggested that its own proposal be included in the Annex of the PrepCom1 report. AUSTRALIA supported the Chair's proposal, noting that it organizes the work efficiently and addresses capacity building in an integrated manner.

In response to a question by Italy, on the behalf of the EC, its member States and acceding countries, Chair Thorgeirsson explained that implementation aspects are generic, while action items under policy aspects are specific. SENEGAL stressed the need to clearly define the scope and framework of the SAICM at the earliest stage. SLOVENIA supported the establishment of a coordination group to prepare the structure of the report, bearing in mind the different proposals and IFCS Forum IV's outcomes.

The AFRICAN GROUP, BRAZIL, EGYPT and SENEGAL stressed that the lack of interpretation services in parallel groups would limit some countries' participation in the SAICM discus-

sions. Chair Thorgeirsson suggested raising the issue of interpretation in Plenary on Thursday under the agenda item on further development of the SAICM. EGYPT announced he would submit a proposal on behalf of participating Arab countries, stressing that the SAICM should be a set of general non-binding principles. ARGENTINA emphasized the need to define what the SAICM is, why and how it is to be developed, and who will be responsible for its implementation. NEW ZEALAND outlined a suggestion to merge elements of the various proposed documents as a way forward. Adding to New Zealand's proposal, SWITZERLAND recommended five action areas for further consideration: implementation of the GHS; life-cycle considerations; prioritization of chemical safety in development cooperation; education; and the development of synergies between relevant existing processes and institutions.

On possible action items, ISRAEL stressed the need to monitor adverse effects on humans from exposure to hazardous chemicals. ECUADOR called for a regime to manage chemicals in protected areas. Underscoring the need for a holistic life-cycle approach, the ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FUND urged consideration of waste reduction at source for all consumer products containing chemicals, not just hazardous chemicals.

The BASEL CONVENTION proposed three categories for concrete measures and actions: minimization of chemical wastes; promotion of their environmentally sound management; and promotion of cleaner production techniques. HAITI emphasized the need to address the uncontrolled release of waste into coastal areas. JAMAICA called for an action item on increasing awareness among mothers and caregivers to prevent accidental poisoning of children. The IUF stressed the need to address acutely toxic pesticides, particularly paraquat, and highlighted relevant ILO instruments that could be of assistance.

AUSTRALIA cautioned against generating another list of items and proposed structuring deliberations under three headings: incomplete tasks; extending the current agenda; and new problems needing urgent attention. Supported by FAO, he called for implementing existing instruments and stressed the need for regulatory systems to provide frameworks for chemicals management.

Recognizing the need for risk assessment, KENYA and BURUNDI underscored the need to develop cost effective and durable equipment for on-site analyses. CHILE stressed the need for risk management and capacity building to implement existing agreements.

NORWAY, the EU, GRULAC, FAO, the US and others emphasized the role of the IFCS decisions and Thought Starter in steering discussions on the SAICM. Stating that the SAICM is dynamic and should go beyond implementing existing chemicals agreements, NORWAY supported broadening the scope of chemicals-related policies to address new and emerging issues, such as life-cycle management and consideration of heavy metals, endocrine



disruptors, and substances that are persistent bioaccumulative and toxic, and carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction. NIGER called for the sound management of pesticides and stockpiles. UNIDO and others supported a focus on cleaner production, waste minimization and product design.

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MINING AND METALS recommended the development of tools and instruments that differentiate between organic and inorganic chemicals, noting that some heavy metals, such as iron, pose little concern. GRULAC recommended focusing on obsolete stockpiles, illegal traffic, emergencies, and new innovative chemicals. BURUNDI said the SAICM could encompass all chemicals and all related conventions. BENIN and ECUADOR urged the consideration of cleaning up contaminated sites.

Chair Thorgiersson summarized the discussions, noting the calls for concrete actions and measures for the SAICM. He also noted the need for targets and timeframes, and proposed a break-out group to focus on these questions.

**COORDINATION ASPECTS:** The afternoon Plenary considered coordination aspects at the international, regional and national levels.

Many delegates stressed the importance of building on, ratifying, implementing and enhancing synergies among existing instruments and initiatives. AUSTRALIA, supported by SWITZERLAND, suggested that the Secretariat present information on the outcomes of the International Environmental Governance process. The US recommended: coordination among MEAs, including their co-location and administrative efficiencies; and inter-institutional cooperation, noting the IOMC as a positive example. He also recommended considering the future role of the IFCS within the SAICM. URUGUAY requested clarification of the relationship between IFCS and the SAICM.

TONGA suggested providing assistance to existing regional centers in the Pacific for coordination purposes. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, with SWITZERLAND, recommended greater use of the Basel Convention Regional Centers network. She questioned whether SAICM PrepCom1 has a legitimate mandate for addressing the issue of coordination among MEAs. The Chair said the SAICM could decide whether there is a need for such a mandate. BELARUS suggested the possibility of regional agreements coming under the umbrella of the SAICM, and stressed the need for coordinating financing mechanisms for global projects and to respond to events of global significance, highlighting the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

SENEGAL, supported by SWITZERLAND, stressed the need for concrete mechanisms to ensure coordination among the focal points of various MEAs at the national level. EGYPT explained how a committee on chemical-related activities can help to ensure synergies at the national level, and, consequently, at the international level. UGANDA requested identifying areas where cooperation is most needed, and proposed developing guidelines and checklists on existing development strategies and MEAs to coordinate implementation of the SAICM.

HAITI and TANZANIA recommended creating sub-regional and national coordination bodies to ensure cooperation among different ministries. NIGERIA emphasized that such bodies would need resources and capacities to be effective, and recommended that more governments participate in UNITAR workshops.

SWITZERLAND recommended integrating chemicals issues in national development and poverty eradication strategies, organizing more back-to-back meetings to maximize resources and enhance coherence, and exchanging scientific information at the international level. He stressed the importance of the IFCS and of a central financial mechanism, and suggested creating a chart to identify potential areas for enhancing coherence and cooperation among all institutions, including ILO and WHO.

IPEN said synergies can be improved through guidance on commonalities in implementation, institutional and legal requirements, capacity building and information exchange, noting that synergies in implementation could coordinate public participation. The CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC highlighted the problem of dispersion of expertise and called for raising awareness among indigenous peoples. ILO urged national-level coordination, and suggested that the SAICM request countries to establish national coordination and consultation mechanisms on strategic chemicals management. CANADA highlighted UNEP Governing Council guidelines on compliance and enforcement, supported coordination between trade and environment issues, and stressed the need for governments and international agencies to establish priorities and reduce competition for resources.

UNITAR briefed participants on two workshops that it had organized in 2002, which focused on national coordination and financial resource mobilization, and announced an upcoming workshop on synergies for capacity building under international agreements addressing chemicals and waste management, to be held in March 2004. AUSTRALIA recommended: requesting UNITAR and other organizations to report to PrepCom2 on work done on integration and cooperation; and considering the potential for international partnerships. The MONTREAL PROTOCOL described how experiences in implementing the Protocol can contribute to the SAICM.

#### **BREAK-OUT GROUP**

A break-out group facilitated by Nicholas Kiddle (New Zealand) met in the afternoon to begin deliberations on possible items to be considered in a global plan of action for the SAICM. Delegates generated a preliminary list of action items and, after protracted discussions, agreed that the Secretariat would extract relevant items from the recommendations of the: *Executive Summary of IFCS Forum IV* (/INF/10); *Report on SAICM-Related Work at IFCS Forum IV* (/INF/3); and *Proposed Structure of the SAICM Report for Consideration by the Preparatory Committee* (/6). A new document will be presented to Plenary on Wednesday, where it will be decided whether further work by the group is required, or if the document can be forwarded to PrepCom2.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

As PrepCom1 crossed its halfway mark, many delegates seemed disoriented as to which route to follow on the "SAICM roadmap." A number of proposals for a path forward have been tabled, but some confusion exists as to whether the Plenary is supposed to be considering the SAICM, the structure of its report, or the structure of the meeting's discussions. In any case, it would be easier to proceed if everyone was reading the same map.

Some delegates noted that the expressed desire for the IFCS and SAICM paths to converge is finally being realized through the break-out group, which had based the proposed global plan of action for the SAICM on IFCS outcomes. Some delegates have suggested that such working groups should have been established earlier to advance progress on discussions. However, the limitations posed by the lack of interpretation for parallel discussion sessions hindered this possibility.

Optimism regarding the outcome of Monday's contact group on rules of procedure has also been slightly eroded, as one delegate continued to put the brakes on matters of participation on Tuesday morning. As a result, some are concerned that the rules may not be adopted at this meeting.

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

**PLENARY:** Delegates will convene at 9:00 am in Plenary to decide on the way forward. The revised rules of procedure will be circulated, as will a conference room paper containing the possible set of subheadings for the continued work on coordination aspects, and the outcome document from the break-out group's discussions on the global plan of action.