



## SAICM PREPCOM1 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2003

Delegates heard a brief report from the contact group on concrete measures and action items, and met in Plenary and contact groups throughout the day to discuss the elements of the President's revised proposal for the possible organization of issues to be addressed during the development of a SAICM.

### PLENARY

President Halldor Thorgeirsson (Iceland) introduced his proposal on *Possible Organization of Issues to be addressed during the Development of a SAICM* (SAICM/PREPCOM.1/CRP.7), which contains the following headings: statement of political strategic vision; statement of needs; goals and objectives; principles and approaches; scope; scientific activities in support of decision making; concrete measures; coordination; capacity, resources and development; and implementation and taking stock of progress.

Reporting on the progress of discussions on concrete measures, Contact Group Chair Nicholas Kiddle (New Zealand) highlighted a new document on concrete measures and possible elements. He explained that the group had developed a list of action items based on IFCS outcomes and other relevant documents, noting that the items have not yet been prioritized. President Thorgeirsson suggested that the contact group consider how its work would be forwarded to PrepCom2. The Plenary then discussed various sections of the President's proposal (/CRP.7).

### CAPACITY, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT:

Several participants stressed that the SAICM should build on IFCS outcomes, with the US highlighting Forum IV's work on the widening gap. CANADA suggested considering cross-cutting issues identified by the Commission on Sustainable Development and an upcoming GEF meeting on strategic capacity development. The ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FUND, supported by SWITZERLAND, underscored the need for coordination and prioritization of chemical safety by relevant ministries. SWITZERLAND and others called for the prioritization of chemical safety by recipients and donors, and its integration into national sustainable development and poverty eradication strategies. He also supported the active involvement of the private sector. The WORLD BANK outlined its report on the *Global Pursuit of the Sound Management of Chemicals*. EGYPT said capacity building is a pivotal issue for developing countries.

KENYA, supported by SWITZERLAND, underlined the importance of addressing concrete measures for technology transfer. He further noted the need for regionally-specific technologies. EGYPT called for the transfer of clean technologies and best practices. BRAZIL stressed the importance of transfer, development and adaptation of technology.

ZIMBABWE proposed referencing the New Partnership for Africa's Development. SOUTH AFRICA recommended mobilizing funds for institutional and legislative development, emphasizing the need for poison centers. With ARGENTINA, she called for greater use of the Basel Convention's capacity-building resources. AUSTRALIA, SENEGAL and ARGENTINA recommended utilizing existing resources, noting UNITAR's work on institutional development. The EU recommended creating a database of ongoing and planned activities, and utilizing INFOCAP.

Several countries stressed the need for coordination among financial mechanisms, and some called for a financial mechanism for the SAICM. JORDAN, AUSTRALIA and others emphasized the need to address the migration of polluting technologies to developing countries. UNIDO explained how public-private partnerships could help address this problem, and IRAN recommended a mechanism to address this issue, possibly based on the prior informed consent of host countries. ICCA stressed the need for governments to support voluntary industry initiatives.

Highlighting linkages between pesticides, development and health crises, UZBEKISTAN called for addressing highly toxic pesticides. IPEN emphasized that the cost of sound chemicals management should be borne by the producers, and not by consumers in developing countries. ARGENTINA stressed the need for synergies in capacity building among MEAs, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, and opposed excluding consideration of pharmaceutical and radioactive chemicals. INDONESIA and PERU stressed building capacity to address chemicals stockpiles. PERU also highlighted the growing demand for food free from agro-chemicals. The PHILIPPINES called for community empowerment and awareness raising among marginalized groups. Summarizing the discussion, President Thorgeirsson identified technology, poverty, resources, and development as the key themes addressed, and proposed establishing a contact group to further consider this heading.

**SCOPE:** Stressing the need for a manageable process, the US called for the exclusion of pharmaceuticals from the SAICM's scope, and EGYPT for the exclusion of military uses. UGANDA stressed that the key issue should not be deciding which sectors to exclude, but identifying which chemicals are dangerous to human health and the environment. The EU recommended that the scope cover the full life-cycle of chemicals.

**SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES:** President Thorgeirsson proposed that the PrepCom consider the: assessment and monitoring of exposure and impacts, and of levels of contaminants in the environment; study of chemicals' characteristics; development of transparent science-based risk assessment and management procedures; and addressing data gaps.

Stating that industries often choose risk assessment procedures that serve their interests, IPEN called for transparent, participatory, and precautionary risk assessments. ICMM suggested



including life-cycle assessment as a tool for decision making. EGYPT proposed differentiating between risk assessment to human health, and to the environment.

ZIMBABWE and others stressed the importance of available and accessible hazard data. THAILAND highlighted the need to improve developing countries' understanding of risk assessment and management. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed developing a list of affordable and practical methods for analyzing chemical properties. BRAZIL flagged the need to develop methods to improve data analysis in tropical countries. CHILE, with TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO and SURINAME, urged reliable and efficient laboratory support to developing countries. ISRAEL outlined its proposal for using indicators for quantitative evaluations of exposure and monitoring of progress, contained in *Health Indicators of Adverse Effects from Toxic Chemicals* (/CRP.12).

**STATEMENT OF NEEDS:** MAURITIUS drew attention to the vulnerability of small island States, and SLOVENIA to pregnant women. AUSTRALIA recommended identifying gaps in the existing framework for chemical safety. CANADA identified the need to address newly developed chemicals. ICMM identified as a primary need a global mechanism for the sound management of chemicals. KENYA recommended considering current gaps and the added value of the SAICM. The US recommended taking stock of progress and identifying causes for concern. ICCA noted tension between society's demand for chemicals and the need to meet consequent environmental and health challenges. SWITZERLAND proposed focusing on the need for: a framework for a comprehensive international regime; a programme of action with concrete actions, targets and timetables; and adequate capacity and commitment to implement them.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL highlighted support among delegates on the need for: phasing out hazardous chemicals; data on the environmental and health effects of new chemicals as a precondition for their production and use; and liability and accountability mechanisms. NORWAY, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed elimination by 2020 of releases of the most hazardous substances, particularly PBTs, CMRs, endocrine disruptors, and certain heavy metals. ICCA recommended considering the WSSD 2020 target in the context of other elements contained in paragraph 23 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI).

AUSTRALIA, the US and SWITZERLAND expressed concerns about listing concrete actions in the same section as "goals and objectives." EGYPT called for defining hazardous chemicals, and addressing their full life cycle. AUSTRALIA noted that the Stockholm Convention and the Montreal Protocol phase out particular chemicals on the basis of specific criteria. CHINA underscored the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FUND and others proposed objectives that can be easily understood by those not involved in chemicals management. The EU, SWITZERLAND, EGYPT and others said the goal should be to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of chemicals, and proposed that the SAICM provide a framework for global action and coordination.

President Thorgeirsson noted general support for the need to state specific strategic objectives to achieve the WSSD 2020 target. Stressing the need for both an action plan and a policy strategy, SWITZERLAND requested attaching its conference room paper (/CPR.1) to the PrepCom1 report.

**PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES:** Addressing the list of principles contained in the President's proposal, ISRAEL suggested adding public education and risk communication. The EU suggested adding producer responsibility, and PAPUA NEW GUINEA, the principle of "duty of care." The President suggested forwarding the original list to PrepCom2, with a note stating that the Committee did not consider it and that delegates indicated their interest in adding to the list.

## CONTACT GROUPS

**CONCRETE MEASURES:** This contact group met in the morning to focus on a newly circulated proposal on *Concrete Measures: Possible Elements* (/CRP.8), a matrix aimed at structuring action items proposed by UNIDO (/CRP.10), and on how to forward the group's work to PrepCom2.

While expressing satisfaction with the document, delegates called for: an introductory paragraph; delineation of action items under illegal traffic; clear mention of the IFCS *Priorities for Action Beyond 2000* and a preamble for each programme area; and reference to gaps in life-cycle chemicals management, as contained in the *Report on SAICM-related work at IFCS Forum IV* (/INF.3).

Many delegates supported the proposed matrix as a tool for organizing discussions on the action items, but said its creation should not be the end goal. They emphasized the need to define the specifics of how, when and by whom the action items would be implemented. Participants also urged consideration of: different classes of chemicals; very persistent and very bioaccumulative substances; elimination and criteria for elimination; capacity building; and the IFCS and women as stakeholders.

On the way forward, several delegates supported annexing the list of elements to the PrepCom1 report, with a request to keep the list open. Delegates also discussed options for advancing the work during the intersessional period, and called for the opportunity to provide input prior to PrepCom2. Chair Kiddle proposed requesting the Secretariat to revise the list of elements, and develop and circulate a pilot matrix, allowing opportunity for feedback before PrepCom2.

**CAPACITY, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT:** This contact group met in the afternoon to further consider capacity, resources and development, with many stressing the relevance of IFCS Forum IV outcomes. Delegates agreed to include a reference to the WSSD JPOI, and recommended that the Secretariat prepare a summary of the issues raised in Plenary and add a reference to the *Preliminary Text of the Executive Summary of the IFCS-Forum IV* (/INF.10).

**SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES:** This contact group met in the afternoon to discuss the list of activities raised in the President's proposal and in Plenary and added, *inter alia*: references to the precautionary principle/approach, and to the IFCS Forum IV outcomes on hazard data generation and availability; provisions on using comparative assessments to find safer alternatives; the role of science in all areas, including education and training; and the need for cost effective and available analytical techniques.

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Among the other metaphors that were thrown around at PrepCom1, delegates have compared the development of the SAICM to the shaping of a lump of African clay that can be molded into anything. Following two days of stakeholder statements and a third day lost in the mud without a map to provide direction, delegates seemed relieved when the clay finally began to take form on day four of PrepCom1. Several participants expressed satisfaction that the clay to be molded is now being unearthed from IFCS outcomes. However, a few delegates are concerned about the shape that the SAICM is presently assuming, and would prefer to see two distinct outcomes – an overarching political strategy and a programme of action with targets and timetables. With one more day on the potter's wheel, delegates have a final chance to impress their positions, before handing it over to the intersessional kiln in hopes that it will craft a SAICM that they can refine at PrepCom2.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**PLENARY:** Delegates will meet at 9:00 am in Plenary to consider the draft rules of procedure (/CRP.4), the report of the meeting, and preparations for PrepCom2.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of SAICM PrepCom1 will be available on Sunday, 16 November 2003 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/saicm/>