

**SUMMARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON CHEMICALS
MANAGEMENT AND NINTH SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING
COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL
ENVIRONMENT FORUM:
4-9 FEBRUARY 2006**

The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) was held from 4-6 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It was followed by the ninth Special Session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-9/GMEF), which was held from 7-9 February 2006. Over 1700 participants, representing more than 170 governments, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies attended the meetings.

At the ICCM, delegates completed negotiations and adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, including a high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy and global plan of action. While some participants seemed satisfied with the outcome of the ICCM, others argued that it was not sufficiently "strong" to tackle the world's chemicals-related problems. However, most seemed relieved that the meeting achieved its objective of adopting SAICM, and stressed that it is a work in progress that can be built on in the future.

Following the ICCM, ministers and delegates attended the GCSS-9/GMEF to consider various matters, including: policy issues relating to energy and environment, chemicals management, and tourism and the environment; assessment, monitoring and early warning; follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and contribution of UNEP to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; international environmental governance; outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/GMEF; and implementation of UNEP's programme of work and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council. Various side events and the seventh Global Civil Society Forum were also held during the week.

The GCSS-9/GMEF session was largely viewed by participants as successful. It provided ministers with an opportunity to discuss, rather than negotiate, topical issues

of UNEP'S work programme and the status of international environmental governance, in particular the question of universal membership of the Governing Council and the proposal to transform UNEP into a UN Environmental Organization.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GOVERNING
COUNCIL/GMEF AND SAICM**

SAICM

The issue of chemicals management and the idea of a SAICM have been discussed by the GC and reflected in various forms since 1995, including in:

- UNEP GC decision 18/12 of May 1995, which invites UNEP's Executive Director to convene an expert group to consider and recommend further measures to reduce risks from a limited number of chemicals;
- an expert group meeting in April 1996, which made recommendations in four areas, namely: inadequate capacity of developing countries to handle hazardous chemicals and pesticides; disposal of unwanted stocks of pesticides and other chemicals; insufficient information for chemicals management decision making and action; and the possible need to ban and phase out certain chemicals; and
- UNEP GC decision 19/13 of February 1997, which seeks out options for enhanced coherence and efficiency among international activities related to chemicals.

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WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT (WSSD): The Summit was convened from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, where delegates adopted the Johannesburg Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The JPOI's chemicals-related targets include:

- the aim to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
- the development, by 2005, of a SAICM based on the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) Bahia Declaration, and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000; and
- the national implementation of the new Globally Harmonized System of classification and labeling of chemicals, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

SAICM INFORMATION MEETING: A stakeholder information and consultation meeting took place on 29 April 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates heard briefings on the background of the SAICM process, an outline of the preparatory process, and perspectives from organizations on the SAICM Steering Committee. Participants also heard an update by UNEP on SAICM PrepCom-1 documents, and a presentation on progress achieved in the compilation of possible draft elements for SAICM.

IFCS FORUM IV: The fourth session of the IFCS (Forum IV) took place from 1-7 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand, under the theme "Chemical Safety in a Vulnerable World." In response to GC decisions SS.VII/3 and 22/4, Forum IV discussed the further development of SAICM, and forwarded a non-negotiated compilation report on its work to SAICM PrepCom-1, addressing, among others:

- life-cycle management of chemicals since Agenda 21;
- new and ongoing challenges;
- gaps in life-cycle chemicals management; and
- resources for capacity building and implementation.

PREPCOM-1: SAICM PrepCom-1 took place from 9-13 November 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand. Participants provided initial comments on potential issues to be addressed during the development of SAICM, examined ways to structure discussions, and considered possible outcomes of the SAICM process. There was widespread agreement among participants that the overarching objective of SAICM should be to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, as agreed in the JPOI. There was also broad support for a three-tiered approach for SAICM, which would comprise: a global programme of action with targets and timetables; an overarching policy strategy; and a high-level or ministerial declaration.

PREPCOM-2: SAICM PrepCom-2 was held from 4-8 October 2004, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates discussed elements for an overarching policy strategy for international chemicals management, made progress in creating a matrix of possible concrete measures to include in the global plan of action, and provided comments on an initial list of elements for a high-level political declaration.

PREPCOM-3: SAICM Prep-Com 3 was held from 19-24 September 2005, in Vienna, Austria. Delegates discussed the SAICM high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy, and global plan of action, but did not reach agreement on several

elements in the three documents, including: principles and approaches; description of SAICM as "voluntary"; financial considerations; and the timing and frequency of future ICCM sessions.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Regarding chemicals management, delegates resolved to promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle, including hazardous wastes, with the aim that, by 2020, chemicals are "used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment." They resolved to implement a voluntary strategic approach to international management of chemicals, and to support developing countries in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes.

MEETING OF THE EXPANDED BUREAU: The SAICM expanded bureau met in Jongny, Switzerland, on 4 and 5 November 2005, to explore avenues for possible consensus on the outstanding issues. It was attended by, among others, the President, 16 governments from all regions, and a number of non-governmental organizations.

UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, officially established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC's responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve this, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) is constituted by the GC as envisaged in UN General Assembly resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

21ST SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The 21st session of the GC/GMEF took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted decision 21/7, which requests UNEP's Executive Director, in consultation with governments, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the IFCS and others, to examine the need for a SAICM. Delegates also established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthening international environmental governance (IEG).

SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The seventh Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-7/GMEF) was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. Delegates adopted decision SS.VII/3, stating that the further development of a SAICM was needed, and requesting UNEP's Executive Director to develop such an approach, based on the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, and the Priorities for Action Beyond 2000, both adopted by the

IFCS Forum at its third session. Delegates also adopted the IGM report on IEG, and decisions related to, among other things: a strategic approach to chemicals management at the global level.

WSSD: The WSSD was held from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Declaration outlines the path taken from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to the WSSD, and the JPOI sets out a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at Rio.

22ND SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The 22nd session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-22/GMEF) took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted decision 22/4 endorsing the concept of an international conference, with preparatory meetings, as the basis for developing SAICM. The GC also recognized the need for an open, transparent and inclusive process for developing the approach, and further requested UNEP to compile possible draft elements of SAICM. GC-22/GMEF also adopted decisions on issues relating to, among other things: IEG; a mercury programme; and support to Africa.

EIGHTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The eighth Special Session of the GC/GMEF took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: small island developing States; waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

23RD SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The 23rd session of the GC/GMEF took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya. Ministers considered the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and adopted decisions on, among other things, chemicals management, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, UNEP's water policy and strategy, IEG, gender equality and the environment, poverty and the environment, and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Delegates recognized the need for more efficient environmental activities in the United Nations system, through, among other things, enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, and strengthened scientific knowledge. They further agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and UN specialized agencies.

ICCM REPORT

The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) opened on Saturday morning, 4 February 2006. Hamad A. Al Midfaa, Minister of Health and Chair of the Federal Environmental Agency of the United Arab Emirates, welcomed participants to Dubai. He highlighted the positive role chemicals play, while stressing that their use can lead to hazardous and adverse effects and emphasizing the need for collective action.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer noted the progress made throughout the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals process and stressed the links between the chemicals and development agendas. He described SAICM as a global endeavor for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2020 target on chemicals management, as set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Robert Visser, Chair of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), described IOMC's work in the SAICM process and called for adequate resources for SAICM's implementation.

Suwit Wibulpolprasert, President of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), predicted that SAICM would be a "global failure" without significant financial support and increased multisectoral involvement.

Töpfer reported that discussions held the previous day on the rules of procedure had resulted in an agreement to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of the SAICM Preparatory Committee (SAICM/ICCM.1/6), based on an understanding that decisions at this meeting would be taken by consensus. He said rules for a second ICCM session could be developed by a working group.

Delegates then elected Mariano Arana, Uruguay's Minister of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment, as ICCM President. They also elected Sulfina Barbu (Romania), Aisha Omar Kigoda (Tanzania), Claudia McMurray (US), and Fatemeh Vaez Javadi (Iran) as Vice-Presidents. Aisha Kigodo agreed to serve as rapporteur.

Participants also agreed to establish a Credentials Committee that would include a representative of each country on the Bureau. The Credentials Committee was comprised of: David Brown (US), Fernando Lugris (Uruguay), Seyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi (Iran), Rodica-Ella Morohoi (Romania), and Abubakar Rajab (Tanzania). Fernando Lugris reported back on the Committee's work on the final day of the Conference, when delegates adopted the report of the Committee (SAICM/ICCM.1/L.1).

Delegates adopted the agenda without amendment (SAICM/ICCM.1/1). Regarding the organization of the meeting, delegates agreed that a Committee of the Whole (COW) would be established to assist with the ICCM's work. Viveka Bohn (Sweden), who had chaired the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a SAICM, agreed to chair the COW. Bohn reported that 120 countries had worked in a cooperative spirit in the three PrepComs and in two Bureau meetings. She reported on consultations held during an expanded Bureau meeting in Switzerland in November 2005, and on her revised texts, noting that some matters still remained unresolved. President Arana said he would conduct consultations on a draft High-Level Declaration, assisted by Maged George Elias Ghattas, Egyptian Minister of State for Environmental Affairs.

GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

The draft Global Plan of Action (GPA) (SAICM/ICCM.1/4) was discussed on Sunday, 5 February, in the COW. The main issues that delegates discussed were the general nature of the GPA, the degree of emphasis on the voluntary nature of the GPA, and inclusion of its draft Table C, which sets out a list of activities where consensus was not reached at PrepCom 3 and where "further consideration" is required.

On the status of the GPA, the US said that as some activities had been freely added by participants without negotiation and discussion, the nature of the GPA should be further clarified. Tanzania, supported by the European Union (EU), said the draft GPA had been carefully discussed by all regions.

Regarding the nature of the activities, as described in the GPA executive summary, delegates discussed whether to include the term “voluntary” in relation to activities undertaken by stakeholders. The US supported the term, while the EU, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), Bahrain, Tanzania and Norway argued against its inclusion, noting it was redundant, since the GPA was clearly non-binding. IPEN added that the use of “voluntary” in the text could be misinterpreted to mean that activities would be voluntary for all stakeholders, regardless of their government policy. Delegates considered a US compromise that retained the word “voluntary” in reference to the plan itself, rather than activities carried out under the plan. Agreement was finally reached in the evening by a reference to “activities that may be undertaken voluntarily.”

Regarding Table C in the GPA, Canada, supported by Japan, Argentina and Ukraine, suggested its deletion because it contained activities that had not been discussed and agreed on. They urged adding text in the executive summary stating that a process be initiated for continuing discussion on activities listed in Table C. Tanzania, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and others opposed this suggestion. Chair Bohn established a drafting group to discuss this outstanding issue. Delegates agreed, after consultation, to delete Table C from the GPA. However, a paragraph is included in the executive summary stating that, as the GPA is an evolving tool, stakeholders may wish to discuss these items prior to the second session of the ICCM.

Final Text: The final text of the GPA (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2) consists of an Executive Summary, which summarizes the activities or “work areas” that could be taken up by stakeholders, and which are contained in the annexed tables, Table A and Table B. Table A provides a summary list of the work areas and the numbers of the possible activities associated with them. Table B lists work areas together with possible activities associated with them, suggested actors, targets and timeframes, indicators of progress and implementation aspects. The executive summary states that these were not fully discussed and sufficient time was not available to reach agreement. It also notes that stakeholders might find the tables useful in their implementation of the relevant activities.

OVERARCHING POLICY STRATEGY

The Overarching Policy Strategy (OPS) had been the focus of the preparatory process. The final text of the OPS (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.1, Annex II) consists of seven sections on: introduction; scope; statement of needs; objectives; financial considerations; principles and approaches; and implementation and taking stock of progress. The section on objectives includes sub-sections on risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity building and technical cooperation, and illegal international traffic. Most of these sections were finalized at PrepCom-3. However, PrepCom-3 had left several issues outstanding, including the issue of financing and that of principles and approaches, in particular regarding the application of the precautionary approach. These issues required

considerable discussion during the ICCM, but were finally resolved on Monday, 6 February. This section summarizes the final agreement and describes the negotiations on issues that remained outstanding after PrepCom-3: financial considerations; principles and approaches; and scope. Another outstanding issue, which was only briefly discussed, was that of the future dates of ICCM sessions.

INTRODUCTION: The introductory text, which was provisionally agreed at PrepCom-3, states that the involvement of all relevant sectors and stakeholders, including at the local, national, regional and global levels, is critical to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Approach. It states that a transparent and open implementation process and public participation in decision-making is important, particularly with regard to strengthening the role of women. It also lists the main stakeholders in SAICM, including governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals involved in the management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle from all relevant sectors.

SCOPE: The section on scope was discussed briefly on Saturday and Sunday by the COW, and in the closing plenary on Monday. On Saturday, the US, opposed by the EU, requested deleting a reference in the chapeau that referred to SAICM being “at least, but not limited to” agricultural and industrial chemicals in the draft OPS (SAICM/ICCM.1/3). The US also proposed amending the footnote in the scope section, which stated that governments “may decide that, within their jurisdiction,” SAICM does not cover products regulated by a domestic food or pharmaceutical authority or arrangement to state that such products would simply not be covered by SAICM. Switzerland and Egypt expressed their support for the current version of the footnote, and Argentina said it was not necessary to have a footnote, given the flexible and voluntary nature of SAICM. Canada said SAICM should not duplicate national legislation.

Final Text: The scope section of the OPS states that SAICM has a scope that “includes”: (1) environmental, economic, social, health and labor aspects of chemical safety; and (2) agricultural and industrial chemicals, with a view to promoting sustainable development and covering chemicals at all stages of their life-cycle, including in products. The OPS further states that SAICM should take “due account” of existing instruments and processes, and deal with new ones without duplicating efforts, in particular in relation to military uses of chemicals. The section also contains a footnote stressing that SAICM “does not cover products to the extent that the health and environmental aspects of the safety of the chemical and products are regulated by a domestic food or pharmaceutical authority or arrangement.”

OBJECTIVES: This section includes issues regarding risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and technical cooperation, and illegal international traffic. The outstanding issue discussed at the ICCM was how to define precaution as a risk reduction measure. This was discussed in the context of principles and approaches (see the section below).

The text establishes the overall objective of SAICM as being the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle so that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

On risk reduction, the objectives include minimizing risks to human health, particularly that of workers, and to the environment.

Regarding knowledge and information, objectives focus on ensuring the availability of science-based information, standards, methodologies and research.

With respect to governance, objectives include using appropriate national, regional and international mechanisms as needed, and taking a multisectoral, transparent and coherent approach. This subsection also focuses on stakeholder involvement, codes of conduct, corporate responsibility and the equal participation of women.

On capacity building and technical cooperation, aims include: narrowing the widening gap in capacities between industrialized countries on the one hand, and developing countries and countries with economies in transition on the other. Another key aim is to develop and implement sustainable capacity-building strategies in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to promote cooperation between all countries.

Regarding illegal international traffic, objectives include preventing illegal traffic in toxic, hazardous, banned and severely restricted chemicals, including products incorporating these chemicals, mixtures and compounds, as well as wastes. The subsection also sets out the aim of strengthening mechanisms and domestic and regional implementation to support relevant multilateral agreements.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: The financial aspects of SAICM were taken up by the COW on Saturday, 4 February. Most of the discussions took place in a contact group, co-chaired by Jean-Louis Wallace (Canada) and Seyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi (Iran), and focused on the mention of new and additional resources and the international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The contact group broke out into smaller clusters to try to resolve contentious issues. On the last day, President Arana invited a meeting of Bureau members and representatives from regional and other groups in a final attempt to resolve persisting differences. Delegates addressed paragraph 19 of the draft OPS (SAICM/ICCM.1/3), which was tabled as a compromise by former SAICM PrepCom President and COW Chair Viveka Bohn. Financial issues were also addressed in the context of the Quick Start Programme arrangements (SAICM/ICCM.1/CRP.8/Rev.1), an initiative of the European Community. The negotiations in the contact group carried over to the plenary, and continued from Saturday until late Monday. Financial issues were the last to be resolved at the Conference.

A number of delegates, including Norway, the EU, the Asia-Pacific Group, and members of the G-77/China accepted the COW Chair's compromise proposals. Developing countries continuously emphasized the critical nature of the section on financial resources for SAICM's implementation, and the inclusion of a clear reference to "new and additional" resources. A large number of delegations welcomed the Quick Start Programme, whose secretariat is to be provided by UNEP. The Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) called for the inclusion of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration) in the financial section of the OPS.

The US urged deletion of references to international financial institutions, including the World Bank, saying that the ICCM cannot preempt their positions. It also opposed references to the GEF, in particular, with EU support, to opening a new chemicals funding window, but using the existing six focal areas instead for specific chemicals-related projects. The Group of 77 and China (G-77/China) insisted on retaining the idea of a new GEF focal area, to help implement SAICM.

While discussing the Quick Start Programme, several delegates focused on its suggested strategic priorities, which, in their view, tilted towards analysis at the expense of concrete action, such as training, capacity building, and enhancing enforcement. An opinion was expressed that these priorities meant intervening in domestic policy making. Several developing countries proposed to emphasize the role of national priorities. The terms of reference of the Programme, including the modalities of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee and the Executive Board, were debated at length.

Final Text: The text clarifies that SAICM should reflect national, regional and global efforts to advance sound chemicals management, recognizing Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration on common but differentiated responsibilities. The final compromise text involved not only the addition of references to Principle 7, but also to least developed countries and small island developing States in the context of progress towards the WSSD 2020 chemicals goal. Language on multilateral development bank representatives was deleted.

The text also addresses:

- actions at the national and subnational levels to help finance SAICM;
- enhancing industry partnerships and financial and technical participation by industry;
- integration of SAICM aims into multilateral and bilateral assistance cooperation;
- supporting initial capacity building by establishing a Quick Start Programme;
- inviting governments and other stakeholders to provide resources to enable the Secretariat to carry out its work; and
- making more effective use of, and building on, existing sources of relevant global funding, including by inviting GEF and the Montreal Protocol and its Multilateral Fund to consider whether and how they might support SAICM implementation, within their mandates.

It was agreed that a paragraph would be included in the Report of the Conference referring to the fact that some countries desired to discuss the GEF option at a future ICCM, but no agreement was reached on this question.

PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES: Participants first considered this issue in the COW on Saturday 4 February, when Canada introduced a proposal on principles and approaches, submitted with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and the US (SAICM/ICCM.1/CRP.9). A contact group, chaired by Donald Hannah (New Zealand), convened on Saturday and Sunday to consider the matter, which was then taken up in the evening plenary on Monday.

The initial discussion in the COW focused on whether the OPS should follow the draft OPS forwarded from the PrepCom, which articulated various principles and approaches for SAICM (SAICM/ICCM.1/3, paragraph 20), including substitution,

precaution and prevention. The other option suggested by some was to use the proposal by Canada and others, which listed a number of voluntary and legally-binding instruments containing principles and approaches that would guide SAICM's implementation. Participants also considered a paragraph on precaution in the objectives section of the OPS. Disputes over how to interpret precaution quickly arose. While the Canadian proposal set as a risk reduction objective the application of the precautionary approach as set forth in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration (which relates to precaution in the environmental context), the draft OPS referred to the application of the approach "taking into account" Principle 15, while also referencing threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health and/or the environment. A number of participants, including Peru, Greenpeace and IPEN, expressed reservations about the Canadian proposal, and highlighted the importance of articulating specific principles. The EU, Switzerland and some environmental NGOs emphasized that the precautionary principle is essential to international chemicals management, and its connection to human health. Australia and India argued that internationally agreed principles should not be reformulated. Nigeria said Canada's submission would be acceptable to him if Rio Principles 9 (capacity building) and 13 (liability and compensation) were added to the list of instruments containing principles and approaches.

In the contact group, participants were divided on the issue of precaution. One group, led by the US, supported a reference to precaution based on Principle 15, on the grounds that SAICM should not redefine widely-agreed instruments such as the Rio Declaration. The other group, led by the EU, said the precautionary approach had evolved since 1992 in other international instruments, and so its wording should be flexible enough to reflect that evolution in thinking. In particular, this second group wanted to emphasize a clear connection between precaution and health, not explicitly reflected in Rio Principle 15. The group agreed on Sunday to base discussions on the Canadian proposal, and to divide the chapeau into two sections so as to distinguish principles and approaches contained in voluntary instruments from legally-binding agreements, to which not all States were parties.

Final Text: The section on principles and approaches of the OPS states that, in implementing SAICM, governments and other stakeholders should be guided by: principles and approaches in the Stockholm and Rio Declarations, Agenda 21, the UN Millennium Declaration, the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and the following agreements "where applicable to them": the Montreal Protocol, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and ILO Convention No. 170 (safety in the use of chemicals at work).

The reference to precaution in the objectives section of the OPS states that one of the objectives of SAICM in relation to risk reduction is to "appropriately apply" the precautionary approach, "as set out" in Principle 15 of Rio Declaration, "while aiming to achieve that chemicals are used or produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment."

IMPLEMENTATION AND TAKING STOCK OF PROGRESS: This section of the OPS deals with institutional arrangements to support implementation and taking stock of

progress. The key outstanding issue in this section was that of the future dates of ICCM sessions. The final text sets out ICCM's functions, and suggests that its future meetings should be held in 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2020. It further proposes commencing with an enabling phase to build capacity, stakeholder participation, and national implementation plans. It then addresses subsequent phases for implementing SAICM and contains guidance on regional meetings, an ICCM bureau, and the functions of a SAICM secretariat, which will be established by the Executive Director of UNEP. It also states that UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) will take lead roles in the secretariat in their respective areas of expertise.

HIGH-LEVEL DECLARATION

During the ICCM, President Arana conducted consultations on a draft High-level Declaration (SAICM/ICCM.1/2), assisted by Maged George Elias Ghattas, Egypt's Minister of State for Environmental Affairs.

Consultations resulted in a number of changes to the text, including the addition of a reference to the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals in a list of relevant agreements. In addition, multilateral development banks were included alongside UN organizations, agencies, funds and programmes as part of efforts to integrate SAICM into their work.

Delegates retained language stating that SAICM is a new voluntary instrument that is not legally binding, but removed text stating that it "therefore does not change rights and obligations under legally-binding international agreements." The text was adopted as part of the SAICM package late on Monday night, 6 February. Following its adoption, the US made a clarification of its understanding of SAICM in the context of food and pharmaceutical products.

Final Text: The Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2, Annex I), agreed by "ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of civil society and the private sector, assembly" present at the ICCM, affirms that the sound management of chemicals is essential for the achievement of sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty and disease and the improvement of human health and the environment. The text notes that significant but insufficient progress has been achieved in international chemicals management through various treaties and agreements, and the efforts of the private sector and civil society. It also stresses that the global production, trade and use of chemicals continues to rise, and as a result, fundamental changes are needed in the way societies manage chemicals.

In the Declaration, ICCM participants affirm their commitment to achieving chemical safety and assisting in combating poverty, protecting vulnerable groups, and advancing public health and human security. They also reaffirm the goal to minimize the significant adverse effects on human health and the environment by 2020. In the Declaration, participants commit to strengthen the capacities of all concerned in order to achieve the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes at all levels, and to continue mobilizing national and international financing from public and private sources.

In addition, the Declaration addresses the need to close the gaps in the capacity to manage chemicals safely between developed countries and developing countries and countries

with economies in transition. ICCM participants further agree to work towards effective governance and support partnerships and transparency, as well as recognize the need to protect highly-vulnerable groups, children and “the unborn child.”

The agreed text also adopts the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy and recommends the use and further development of the Global Plan of Action.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS

In addition to the High-Level Declaration, OPS and GPA that constitute SAICM, delegates also adopted several resolutions. These dealt with arrangements for implementing SAICM once it is adopted and with the Quick Start Programme intended to support initial capacity-building activities. There were also resolutions thanking the United Arab Emirates and Dubai for hosting the meeting, and addressing the relationship between SAICM and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS). The resolutions were adopted on Monday night, 6 February.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS: The resolution on arrangements for implementing SAICM was the subject of some initial disagreements. For instance, a proposal by IPEN to include paragraphs on establishing SAICM civil society focal points and terms of reference for a subsidiary body to continue intersessional work through to ICCM 2 (SAICM/ICCM.1/CRP.15) was not universally supported, with India and others expressing doubt about the language. Delegates ultimately approved a suggestion by Chair Bohn for text supporting the election of regional focal points instead. The US also reiterated calls to remove references to international financial institutions.

Final Resolution: This resolution (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2, Annex III, Resolution 1) calls on all stakeholders to take appropriate action to achieve the aims of SAICM. It encourages governments to focus their initial implementation work on activities to achieve the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation’s 2020 chemicals goal, and other SAICM objectives. The resolution invites UNEP’s Executive Director to convene further sessions of the ICCM, and calls on governments and non-governmental participants to designate SAICM focal points. It also recommends intersessional work such as regional meetings and regional focal points, and encouraging relevant international financial institutions to support SAICM implementation in their work programmes.

The resolution also invites UNEP’s Executive Director and the Director General of the WHO to provide appropriate staff and other resources in accordance with indicative budget and staffing provisions set out in two tables contained in the resolution. It welcomes UNEP’s offer to provide a P-5 level UN post and WHO’s “potential offer” for a P-4 post, subject to approval by the World Health Assembly. The resolution also invites UNEP’s Executive Director to work with other relevant organizations in facilitating the development of the Quick Start Programme. Finally, it urges governments and other stakeholders to contribute to the voluntary trust fund established by UNEP to support the Programme.

QUICK START PROGRAMME: This item was discussed in the context of the financial issues taken up in the COW and in the contact group on financial considerations.

Final Resolution: This resolution (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2, Annex III, Resolution 4) establishes a Quick Start Programme for implementing SAICM objectives, building on ICCM outcomes and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The resolution states that the Programme should aim to support “initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition.” It invited UNEP’s Executive Director to establish a “voluntary, time-limited Quick Start Programme trust fund, and governments and others to make contributions.” The resolution also establishes an Executive Board consisting of two government representatives of each UN region and all bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the Programme.

The resolution contains two annexes. The first sets out the priorities and institutional arrangements for the Quick Start Programme; the second establishes terms of reference for the Trust Fund.

TRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Delegates took up this topic on Monday, 6 February, stressing their appreciation to the host country.

Final Resolution: This resolution (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2, Annex III, Resolution 2) expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates, the Zayed International Prize for the Environment and the authorities of the Emirate and city of Dubai for the cordial welcome and their contribution to the success of the Conference.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY: Delegates discussed this topic on Monday and quickly approved the text.

Final Resolution: This resolution (UNEP/GCSS.IX/6/Add.2, Annex III, Resolution 3) recognizes the unique and multifaceted role played by IFCS in the area of sound chemicals management, and invites IFCS to continue its role and to contribute to the implementation of SAICM and the work of other chemicals-related international organizations and institutions.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The ICCM high-level segment took place on Monday, 6 February. Delegates heard opening remarks followed by statements from more than 60 ministers and other senior representatives of governments, civil society and intergovernmental organizations.

OPENING STATEMENTS: In his opening remarks, UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer emphasized the role of sound chemicals management in achieving the MDGs and eradicating poverty. He highlighted the need for additional financing, improved capacity building, increased technological support, an effective and quick start to SAICM implementation, and use of the precautionary approach.

Hamad A. Al Midfaa, United Arab Emirates Minister of Health and Chair of the Federal Environment Agency, said the use of chemicals has become all pervasive globally and must be carefully addressed. He said SAICM is voluntary but is still a firm and solid basis for countries to act and avoid potential disasters resulting from mismanagement.

HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENTS: Following the opening remarks, ministers and other senior representatives of governments, civil society and intergovernmental organizations

spoke on a range of issues, including the state of the negotiations, developing country needs, linkages to poverty and development, financial matters, capacity building, cooperation, information, the Quick Start Programme, and the impact of pesticides on the environment and human health.

Many speakers praised SAICM as a timely initiative that would help countries reach the target set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of minimizing the significant adverse effects of chemicals on human health and the environment by 2020. Speakers also noted the social and economic benefits of chemicals, along with their attendant risks. Several speakers urged adoption of SAICM in Dubai, and a number of speakers said it should be a strong negotiated outcome. Financial matters and the need for capacity building and technology support for developing countries and countries with economies in transition also featured prominently in the discussions. Several European countries pledged funding to the Quick Start Programme, while collaboration and partnerships were also encouraged. Health and safety issues were also explored. A comprehensive account of the high-level statements can be found online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1651e.html>.

AWARDING OF THE ZAYED INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In a ceremony on 6 February, the Zayed Prize for Global Leadership was awarded to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The prize for Scientific and Technological Achievement was awarded to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and the prize for Environmental Action with Positive Impact on Society was awarded to Angela Cropper and Emil Salim.

CLOSING PLENARY

Participants adopted the draft report of the session (SAICM/ICCM.1/L.1 and Add.1), as well as SAICM, as amended during the closing plenary, late on Monday evening. The completed SAICM was then set out in a document forwarded to the UNEP Governing Council (UNEP/CGSS.IX/6/Add.1 and Add.2). President Arana thanked delegates for their cooperation and commitment during a “long and difficult road.” He gavelled the meeting to a close at 12:01 am.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE ICCM

The great hope for SAICM was that it would represent a major step forward in international cooperation on the sound management of chemicals on a global scale. By the end of PrepCom-3, however, these hopes had been replaced by fears, and the ICCM began in the shadow of issues that had not been resolved by the PrepCom, in particular principles and approaches, and financial considerations. While it was no surprise that these two issues would prove equally contentious at the ICCM, many participants expressed dismay at what they viewed as a lack of flexibility by a few delegations in addressing them, and the deadlock in the financial considerations group led some to believe that there would be no SAICM at all.

Against all odds, SAICM was finally adopted at midnight on ICCM's last day. Many felt this in itself was a success, but others pointed out that significant adjustments will need to be made if SAICM is to be of any consequence for chemical safety. This brief analysis will consider the key outcomes of the ICCM,

focusing on the two areas that were most controversial, taking into account the evolution of the process since PrepCom-1 and the larger context of international chemicals management.

KEY OUTCOMES: FROM BANGKOK TO DUBAI

While many attending PrepCom-1 in Bangkok were unclear about the shape and substance of a future SAICM, the general sentiment was that it had to be a comprehensive strategy that would give coherence to, and fill existing gaps in, international chemicals policy. Delegates strongly emphasized the need for participation and involvement by all stakeholders and sectors, as well as the need to build the capacity of all countries to safely manage chemicals. Thanks to the intersessional work of regional groups, PrepCom-2 started giving form to those ideas, including a broad scope that would cover all chemicals of concern and a number of forward-looking principles to promote chemical safety through, for instance, substitution of safer chemical and non-chemical alternatives for toxic chemicals. By PrepCom-3, some felt that the original idea had been lost, and a deadlock arose over fundamental issues, including which principles and approaches should inform the application of SAICM, and the financial resources necessary to support the approach.

In the end, and with much effort, participants achieved a final compromise, making trade-offs in different sections of SAICM, which consists of three component parts: an overarching policy strategy (OPS), a global plan of action (GPA) with activities or “work areas” for chemical safety and a high-level declaration to give political weight to both instruments. While many said the outcome was too weak, in part because the scope was limited to industrial and agricultural chemicals and the principles guiding the approach broke no new ground, they argued that it could also be strengthened in the future, as it is a “work in progress.”

THE PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH AND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

Delegates at the ICCM focused on the issues that could not be resolved at PrepCom-3, including scope, future dates of ICCM sessions, financial considerations and principles and approaches. The latter two were the most contentious. The core disagreement in relation to principles and approaches was over the application of the precautionary approach to chemicals management. One group, led by the US, supported the formulation of Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration, while another group, led by the EU, insisted that the precautionary approach had evolved in other contexts, such as in biosafety and persistent organic pollutants, and that this should be reflected in SAICM. In particular, this group saw precaution as applying to health and not just environment, a connection it saw as essential to achieving the World Summit on Sustainable Development's 2020 goal.

Those who insisted on defining precaution in the terms of Principle 15 argued that the Rio Declaration was universally accepted, and ICCM was not the forum to renegotiate it. They also suggested that behind their position was a concern that a departure from the Principle 15 wording would allow the precautionary approach to be used as an unjustified barrier to international trade, something they were not prepared to accept. Thus, the US urged including a provision that SAICM would not change rights and obligations under existing international agreements, although this was not ultimately reflected in the final text.

The compromise text on this issue applies the precautionary approach “as set out” in Principle 15, but linked it to the aim of minimizing the significant adverse effects of chemicals on both health and the environment. While the EU-led group and many NGOs were happy to see precaution and health mentioned in the same provision, they were generally disappointed with the final wording. These delegates wanted a more flexible definition of precaution so that other interpretations of precaution beyond Principle 15 would be taken into account. This, they argued, would have created a stronger link between precaution and health. Some were also dissatisfied that the final text provides only that those implementing SAICM should be guided by principles and approaches in widely-agreed instruments, rather than enunciating specific principles and approaches. They argued that this represented a “missed opportunity” to explicitly articulate and promote new approaches (or new interpretations of existing approaches) needed to address chemicals-related problems, such as the substitution principle to promote safer chemical and non-chemical alternatives.

FINANCE: THE ETERNAL ISSUE

Financial issues were expected to be difficult, and many said they would be impossible to resolve, given the “inflexible” position that they accused the US of taking. Critics said the very existence of SAICM was at stake, since “with no money, there is no SAICM.” While developing countries insisted on new and additional resources for SAICM, which they said were required to implement the approach, developed countries generally appeared reluctant to adopt the sort of language developing countries were seeking. Among industrialized countries, however, positions varied. For instance, many participants felt the US was virtually alone in its opposition to making any references to international financial institutions in SAICM, or to committing any funds for its implementation.

Some suspected that this opposition flowed from what they saw as a preference on the part of the US to take unilateral, rather than multilateral, approaches. For its part, the US said it was simply an understandable desire to ensure donor control over the money spent, and that it reflected a genuine and legitimate concern for financial accountability. In the end, delegates agreed to call for “new sources” of financial support to provide “additional resources,” and while all specific references to international financial institutions and the GEF were taken out, a reference to “international financial resources” somewhat eased the discontent among developing countries. Delegates also agreed to set up a Quick Start Programme to put SAICM’s implementation on track, and many were pleased to hear pledges to contribute to the fund. The question remains, however, whether enough funding will be provided to make SAICM sustainable in the medium and long-term, since the Quick Start Programme only relates to capacity building and implementation in the initial phase, and the trust fund to finance it will be voluntary and time-limited.

CONCLUSION: LOST OPPORTUNITY OR A GOOD START?

Some participants seemed satisfied with the outcome of the ICCM, calling it a “balanced compromise,” which would help countries in their efforts to protect the environment and human health from the harmful effects of chemicals. Many were disappointed, however, arguing that it was a “lost opportunity”

to seriously tackle the world’s chemicals-related problems. They noted that while the High-Level Declaration expresses an “unwavering commitment” to promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle, the OPS does not sufficiently reflect this commitment. Most seemed relieved, however, that SAICM was finally adopted since, after three years of negotiations, the worst possible outcome would have been no SAICM at all. Even those who would have liked a stronger SAICM said the real test would lie in the implementation of the GPA, which includes vital activities that, if widely applied (in particular through regional efforts), could make a significant contribution to achieving the 2020 goal.

GCSS-9/GMEF REPORT

The ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-9/GMEF) began with a ceremonial opening on Monday evening, 6 February 2006, when the third Zayed International Prize for the Environment was awarded to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The following morning, Tuesday, 7 February, Rachmat Witoelar, Indonesia’s State Minister for the Environment and President of the GCSS/GMEF, opened the session and said the 2005 World Summit had reaffirmed that sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework of UN activities and recognized that key environmental issues such as chemicals management and energy are international priority issues. He said States must work together to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets, and emphasized the importance of implementing the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and promoting South-South cooperation in this area.

Hamad A. Al Midfaa, United Arab Emirates Minister of Health and Chair of the Federal Environment Agency, noted the importance of the energy and tourism policy issues to be discussed in the ministerial consultations, and highlighted his country’s achievements.

Anna K. Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, stressed the links between environmental degradation and urban poverty and highlighted cooperative efforts between UN-HABITAT and UNEP.

Stressing the need for international support for capacity building and technology transfer, Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, President of the Gambia, highlighted the importance of implementing the Bali Strategic Plan and called for a “Dubai Global Compact on the Bali Strategic Plan” and the creation of a special trust fund for this purpose in selected pilot countries.

Moritz Leuenberger, President of Switzerland, stressed the need for countries to follow the polluter pays principle, strengthen international environmental governance institutions, and set clear environmental goals.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer described the GMEF’s work, including the Malmö Declaration and the Bali Strategic Plan. He expressed his appreciation to all those who have supported UNEP.

The plenary then adopted the draft agenda without amendment (UNEP/GCSS.IX/1) and agreed on its organization of work. Governing Council President Witoelar noted that there was one vacant space on the Bureau after Beat Nobs (Switzerland)

vacated the position of Vice-President on 1 January 2006. Lena Sommestad, Sweden's Minister for Environment, was elected for the post. However, delegates agreed to invite Beat Nobs to continue at this meeting in his role as Chair of the Committee of the Whole (COW), on the understanding that the election of a representative of a country that is not a member of the Governing Council would not constitute a precedent. The other Bureau members were: Rachmat Witoelar (Indonesia), Sulfina Barbu (Romania), Sedogo Laurent (Burkina Faso), and Donald Cooper (Bahamas).

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

A major part of GCSS-9/GMEF was the ministerial consultations, which took place throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, 7-8 February, and concluded on Thursday morning, 9 February. These consultations addressed a variety of issues, including energy, tourism, and recommendations for UNEP and the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), which will take place in May 2006. This section outlines each of these discussions.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT: Consultations on energy and environment (UNEP/GCSS.IX/9, UNEP/GCSS.IX/9/Add.1) were chaired by President Witoelar. On Tuesday afternoon, they were moderated by Christine Churcher, Ghana's Minister of Environment and Science, and Cristina Narbona Ruiz, Spanish Minister of Environment. On Wednesday morning, the consultations were moderated by Sigridur Anna Thordardottir, Iceland's Minister of Environment, and Khalid Al-Irani, Jordan's Minister of Environment.

Klaus Töpfer reminded delegates that energy was high on the agenda of the next session of the CSD, and that the results of the GMEF would be submitted to it.

On Tuesday, the consultations began with two keynote speeches. Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan stressed the need to focus on energy security, climate change, and access to energy by developing countries. Margaret Beckett, UK Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, stressed the need to address the issue of sustainable energy production and consumption. Moderator Narbona highlighted the unsustainability of the current world energy model.

Several ministers emphasized the connection between energy and climate change. The European Commission (EC) called for a new global sustainable energy policy that addresses climate change and provides access to energy. The UK, the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria emphasized the value of using the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism for capacity building and technology transfer.

Many ministers and delegations emphasized the importance of sustainable and clean energy. Saudi Arabia proposed sending a message to the CSD about the need for technologies to make fuel cleaner. China described its efforts to improve energy efficiency, renewables and clean coal technology. Iran said her region would take a leading role in providing clean energy to the world, including nuclear energy.

Many countries, including Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Korea, the US, Israel, Kenya, Malawi and Hungary, emphasized the need for the development and use of renewable energy.

The need for capacity building and financial resources was highlighted by many speakers, including Argentina and Bahrain, for the Arab Group. Indonesia called on international

financial institutions to help improve energy affordability. The International Chamber for Commerce and the US supported good governance to attract investment.

On technology transfer, Japan said governments should encourage business-to-business energy technology transfer. Colombia shared its experience with the use of tax schemes to promote technological improvements for small-scale projects. Tuvalu stressed the need for greater access to clean energy technology by SIDS.

Many speakers, including Malaysia, Portugal, Swaziland, Thailand and Kuwait, highlighted the importance of research and innovation, and some outlined their experiences in this area. Pakistan highlighted market mechanisms in sustainable energy development. Austria suggested the CSD focus on review and monitoring arrangements, regional and local energy initiatives, and the integration of all relevant stakeholders. Iraq and Sudan called for special support to countries affected by war. A comprehensive account of these consultations can be found online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1652e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1653e.html>.

TOURISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Ministerial consultations on tourism and the environment were held on Wednesday, 8 February. The consultations were chaired by President Witoelar and moderated by Claudia McMurray, Assistant Secretary, US State Department, and Atilio Savino, Argentina's Secretary of the Environment (UNEP/GCSS.IX/9, UNEP/GCSS.IX/9/Add.3).

In a keynote speech, Deirdre Shurland, Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, stressed that sustainable tourism requires diversified products, effective planning and control, and the dissemination of best practices.

Many ministers underlined the benefits of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Brazil emphasized the need for comprehensive strategies to minimize the negative impacts of tourism. Brazil also highlighted tourism's role in poverty alleviation, but stressed the need to protect the environment, traditional knowledge, and local communities. The EU said most of the negative impacts of tourism were related to transportation.

Some ministers reported on economic and regulatory instruments developed and efforts made in achieving sustainable tourism, including taxes and awards, mandatory certification programmes, environmental impact assessments, and codes of conduct for tourists. The US said it did not support mandatory certification programmes.

Several speakers also made proposals for international, regional cooperation and emphasized partnerships. France, supported by Finland and India, stated that it would launch a working group on sustainable tourism in cooperation with UNEP. Pakistan said the recent earthquake has seriously affected tourism, and welcomed cooperation in developing eco-tourism. Iran said a comprehensive international instrument was required to address the challenges facing sustainable tourism, and introduced the draft covenant "Nature Based Tourism," in which her country had participated. The UK stressed the need for a forward-looking document to be submitted to the CSD, and a focus on sustainable tourism rather than on eco-tourism alone. In addition, some ministers emphasized the need for technical and financial assistance in sustainable tourism development.

A comprehensive account of these consultations can be found online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1653e.html>.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT ON THE MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS: Ministerial consultations, chaired by President Witoelar and moderated by Malik Amin Aslam, Pakistan's Minister of State for the Environment, were held on Thursday to discuss the draft summary report of the President of the discussions by ministers and heads of delegations (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.3).

Australia, supported by Kuwait and a few other delegations, said that since it is not a negotiated text, terminology such as "ministers agreed," or "ministers concurred," should not be used, and that "many ministers" could be inserted instead.

Participants made some other comments, edits and additions to the draft report. Denmark asked to include the issue of globalization and environment in the context of energy. Finland proposed adding a reference to a UNEP task force on sustainable building and construction. The UK requested to adequately reflect sustainable tourism. Töpfer, supported by the US, proposed to add an annex on best practices to the document. Palestine requested to add preservation of vegetation cover, and to mention that absence of security and peace is the major hindrance to sustainable tourism. Kenya asked to add in the report of the President the need to attract private sector investment in the energy supply sector in developing countries.

Töpfer said that the report will be revised based on the discussions, and ministers adopted the report as amended (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.3/Rev.1).

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, OUTCOME OF THE 2005 WORLD SUMMIT, AND UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP

On Wednesday evening, 7 February, in a special plenary session held prior to the ministerial dinner, Adnan Z. Amin, Executive Director of the Secretary-General's Panel on UN System Wide Coherence, reviewed ongoing reform initiatives for the follow-up to the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit regarding improvement of UN system-wide coherence. He described the mandate of the Secretary-General's Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence and the UN General's Assembly President's informal consultations on system-wide coherence related to environmental activities.

In a keynote address, France argued for transforming UNEP into a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO). The call was supported by the EU, Ireland, Greece and Germany. The EU also said there was a need for universal membership of the GC. Brazil voiced opposition to both universal membership and a UNEO, and the US also raised objections to a UNEO.

Discussions continued on Thursday afternoon. Italy, Hungary, Spain, Norway and Moldova supported the creation of a UNEO. India and Israel questioned the value of universal membership. The Netherlands said the "Cartagena package," agreed in 2002 at GCSS-7/GMEF, must be the basis for discussions on international environmental governance. Non-governmental organizations said IEG discussions must address such issues as coherence, harmonization, compliance, capacity building and transparency. Noting the need to strengthen international environmental governance based on existing institutions, Australia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Palestine and the Russian Federation expressed concern about the UNEO proposal. Indonesia, Nigeria and Norway stressed the need for strengthening UNEP's financing. The G-77/China and India

said discussions here must not pre-empt those of the Panel on System-Wide Coherence in New York. Israel urged the integration of environmental considerations in all UN activities. Argentina requested that the issue of comparing the costs of GC regular and special sessions should be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

The discussion did not produce an agreed outcome and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergence of views expressed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW, which was established in plenary by the Governing Council on Tuesday, 7 February, met throughout GCSS-9/GMEF. The COW, which was chaired by Beat Nobs (Switzerland), took up several issues, including: assessment, monitoring and early warning; follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and UNEP's contribution to the upcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; outcomes of relevant intergovernmental meetings; international environmental governance; and implementation of UNEP's programme of work and relevant Governing Council decisions.

ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND EARLY

WARNING: STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT: On Wednesday, 8 February, UNEP reported to the COW on its work in addressing environmental challenges (UNEP/GCSS.IX/10) and outlined findings from recent assessments, including the annual Global Environmental Outlook (GEO), *One Planet, Many People: Atlas of Our Changing Environment*, and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Many speakers praised these reports, and the US urged further work to identify not only problems but also solutions. The discussions were subsequently noted in the report of the Committee, which was adopted on 9 February (UNEP/GCSS.IX/CW/L.1).

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WSSD: CONTRIBUTION OF UNEP TO CSD-14 AND OUTCOMES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS OF RELEVANCE TO THE GC/GMEF: Discussion of the agenda items on WSSD follow-up and outcomes of intergovernmental meetings were held together. Delegates spoke on a range of issues, including universal membership of the Governing Council, the replenishment of the GEF, and the proposal to create a UNEO focusing on the environment and sustainable consumption and production issues.

Switzerland expressed regret that the 2005 World Summit had taken "a step backwards" by subordinating environment and sustainable development to the goal of development, and recommended that one person head the secretariats of the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions. The Republic of Korea outlined the "Seoul Initiative," which he said seeks to maintain a balance between environment and economic growth. Japan said discussions on UN system coherence relating to environmental activities should take place in the context of management reform of the entire UN system. The Philippines said UNEP inputs to the CSD should focus more on developing countries' concerns, and that UNEP should play a role in climate change adaptation. Norway highlighted work on carbon capture and storage. Nigeria drew attention to the 2006 Year of Deserts and Desertification. The Russian Federation called for greater cost-savings in the UN system by reducing fragmentation. The Barcelona Convention secretariat drew attention to the recently

agreed Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. A full account of these discussions can be found online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1653e.html>.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: On Tuesday, 7 February, delegates discussed international environmental governance issues (UNEP/GCSS.IX/3) relating to Environment Watch, the Environmental Management Group (EMG), the Bali Strategic Plan, and issues relating to universal membership for UNEP's Governing Council. On Wednesday morning, delegates continued discussions on the Bali Strategic Plan and considered the UNEP-UNDP Poverty-Environment Initiative.

Environment Watch: On the updated proposal for a UNEP Environment Watch system (UNEP/GCSS.IX/3/Add.2), many speakers highlighted the importance of strengthening the scientific base of environmental work. Several participants, including the EU, encouraged coordination between Environment Watch and other initiatives/mechanisms, such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. A number of speakers also agreed that further elaboration and clarification on the Environment Watch proposal was needed, although most felt that the latest report represented a distinct improvement compared with earlier versions. The need to avoid duplication, use existing networks wherever possible, and benefit from synergies of Earth observation systems was also highlighted.

The G-77/China noted the need to nominate national and regional focal points and to make reporting procedures more user-friendly and less complicated. Norway suggested that a decision on Environment Watch could be taken at the next Governing Council session in 2007. The Philippines said that much work remained to be done. The US, supported by Australia, said Environment Watch was "very complicated" and required further consultations.

Japan was encouraged by the fact that no additional financial implications in terms of institution building were indicated. Colombia urged that work focus on reducing the impacts of natural disasters. Switzerland suggested that UNEP compile a list of recent multilateral environmental goals to help focus discussions and catalyze further action. The US opposed this idea.

Environmental Management Group: Halifa Drammeh, EMG Director, introduced this item, outlining recent developments in system-wide coherence and cooperation. On behalf of EMG members, Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director General of UNESCO, reported on the High-Level Forum of the EMG, held in Geneva on 24 January 2006. Many delegates expressed support for the EMG's work and recommended increased collaboration within the UN system.

The EU stressed that the EMG must be a results-oriented mechanism, enjoying "buy-in" from all parts of the UN system. The G-77/China welcomed EMG activities, and expressed hope for increased collaboration within the UN system. She stressed that sustainable procurement is not an immediate priority for the EMG and that the EMG should be instrumental in promoting collaboration on implementing the Bali Strategic Plan. The US defended sustainable procurement as a valuable theme. Switzerland said the EMG had not lived up to expectations, and supported its revitalization. Egypt welcomed the EMG's idea to hold a broad-based partnership forum.

Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building: This item was discussed on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. Many developing countries stressed the need for increased funding for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the need for greater South-South cooperation. Several developed countries urged more efficient utilization of existing resources in implementing the Strategic Plan. The Secretariat reported on the Plan's implementation to date and set out plans for further work for 2006-2007 (UNEP/GCSS.IX/3/Add.1). The Gambia reported on the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in six African countries.

On Wednesday, Indonesia presented the report of the high-level consultation on South-South cooperation in environmental matters in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan (UNEP/GCSS.IX/INF/14) held in Jakarta in November 2005. The G-77/China urged the EMG to address implementation of the Plan. She suggested replicating UNEP-UNDP poverty projects, called on UNEP to develop a strategy for resource mobilization, and noted the absence of a dedicated financial mechanism for the Plan.

The European Community proposed that UNEP immediately implement the Plan through its offices and in cooperation with other agencies. Norway asked UNEP to develop a strategy for cooperation with UNDP to present to the next session of the GC/GMEF.

UNEP-UNDP Poverty-Environment Initiative: On Wednesday, 8 February, Rwanda described work being done on the UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative, which has integrated the relevant programmes run by the two bodies, and made suggestions on improving project performance. Belgium commended progress achieved by the Initiative, and called for better interagency coordination. UNDP reported on its cooperative efforts with UNEP, the need to integrate environmental considerations into poverty reduction strategies, and the importance of working closely with countries based on national priorities. A full account of these discussions can be found online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1652e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1653e.html>.

Other Issues: On Tuesday afternoon, Pakistan expressed concern at plans to forward to the UN Secretary-General recommendations emerging from a ministerial dinner on universal membership of the Governing Council. Many speakers agreed, including India, the Russian Federation, Brazil, the Philippines, the US and Egypt. Chair Nobs said he would inform the Governing Council President of these comments. The question was taken up the Bureau and as a result the discussion on universal membership took place in a formal plenary session prior to the dinner on Wednesday evening and then continued on Thursday afternoon.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF UNEP AND THE RELEVANT DECISIONS OF THE GC: The Committee of the Whole took up this item on Wednesday, 8 February, discussing in particular the water strategy, environmental emergencies and the youth strategy. These discussions and the relevant reports were noted in the report of the Committee, which was adopted on 9 February (UNEP/GCSS.IX/CW/L.1).

Water strategy: UNEP introduced its revised draft water strategy (UNEP/GCSS.IX/4), noting that it provides an overview and guidance for future work programmes. Turkey raised an objection to language on transboundary and shared waters, and

Brazil objected to terms such as “transboundary,” which he said could raise sovereignty issues. Chair Nobs clarified that this draft would be reviewed further and adopted at the next session.

The EU highlighted the importance of integrated water resources management, capacity building, and coordination. Pakistan said that, “for too long big dams have been an environmental taboo subject, but it is time for this to change.”

Norway said UNEP should take the lead on sanitation issues. The US called for a focus on areas where UNEP has comparative advantages, including capacity building and South-South cooperation. Venezuela expressed concerns regarding text on water privatization. The Ramsar Convention secretariat highlighted the role of wetland ecosystems in relation to natural disasters and combating poverty.

Environmental emergencies: Delegates then considered and commended UNEP’s work on environmental emergencies (UNEP/GCSS.IX/5). They were briefed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on joint UNEP-OCHA activities. Japan drew attention to the Hyogo Framework for Action. Switzerland stressed the need to avoid duplication of work, and the US applauded UNEP’s work on waste management following the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Youth strategy: UNEP briefed participants on its “Tunza” youth programme (UNEP/GCSS.IX/7). The EU encouraged close links with the UN Decade for Sustainable Development. Argentina underlined the value of the Tunza strategy, stressing the need to reach the largest possible audience and for transparent and broad access for youth.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: This issue was addressed in the COW on Wednesday, 8 February, when Chair Nobs introduced a draft decision on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) (UNEP/GCSS.IX/CRP.1). Following editorial comments by a number of participants, and a comment by Switzerland that text on financial issues did not correspond to the SAICM agreement, a drafting group was formed to finalize the text. The group finished its discussions in the afternoon, when it reported back to the COW that it had added one preambular paragraph and three additional operative paragraphs dealing with voluntary extrabudgetary resources, contributions to the Quick Start Programme (QSP) voluntary trust fund, and resources for relevant UNEP activities and the QSP. The COW agreed to the draft decision, which was adopted on Friday’s plenary without amendment.

Final Decision: In its preamble, the decision on SAICM (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.2) recalls numerous chemicals-related UNEP GC decisions and the endorsement of the approach by various ministerial forums and international meetings, and welcomes the spirit of coordination and cooperation between UNEP and other Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals organizations. Through the decision, the UNEP GC endorses SAICM and requests UNEP’s Executive Director to assume overall administrative responsibility for SAICM and to convene future sessions of the ICCM. It also:

- invites all governments, other intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, including industry, to provide voluntary funds for SAICM;
- authorizes the UNEP Executive Director to establish and manage a QSP Trust Fund to support initial implementation of SAICM;

- urges governments and others to make contributions to the fund;
- invites governments and others to contribute resources for SAICM’s implementation; and
- requests UNEP’s Executive Director to report to the UNEP GC at its 24th session on initial activities and planning in support of SAICM-related activities by UNEP, taking into account the Bali Strategic Plan.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COW: The fourth and final meeting of the Committee of the Whole took place on Thursday morning, 9 February. Delegates considered the report of the meeting (UNEP/GCSS.IX/CW/L.1), which describes the issues taken up by the Committee.

Delegates adopted the report with a number of oral amendments. These included changes to a paragraph on discussions about the establishment of a United Nations Environment Organization, adding a suggestion from the Russian Federation noting that the proposal on a UNEO and GC universal membership was counter-productive. Text describing the Environment Watch system as a “promising” tool was also removed by the US, who also added a sentence clarifying that capacity building and technology support in this area should not be held up by continuing improvement of the proposal for the Environment Watch system. Turkey added language on transboundary water issues noting that “UNEP’s right of intervention” was among the issues that remained unresolved. Mexico added “other natural disasters” to a reference to hurricanes, and the US supplied a sentence noting that the Committee had discussed the SAICM decision. The Committee also approved a draft decision on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.2).

With the adoption of the report, Chair Nobs thanked delegates for their diligence and ability to focus on the tasks at hand. He also thanked the Secretariat, before gaveling the COW to close at 12:42 pm.

CLOSING PLENARY

ADOPTION OF REPORTS: The GCSS-9/GMEF closing plenary took place on Thursday afternoon, 9 February. COW Chair Beat Nobs presented his report of the meeting (UNEP/GCSS.IX/CW/L.1) and the decision on SAICM (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.2), which the Council adopted. He thanked delegates, the Secretariat and others involved for their “genuine willingness to find the optimal compromise.”

Delegates then considered the report of GCSS-9/GMEF (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.1, Corr.1 and Add.1). Several changes were made to the text, with Australia replacing a reference to the MDGs with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in reference to the 2020 goal on chemicals management. Text on the roles of UNEP and WHO were also clarified to make it clear that WHO work had to be mandated by its own governing body.

Several speakers, including Japan, Australia and the US, expressed concern at a paragraph noting the “intensive debate” on international environmental governance, explaining that these discussions are annexed to the report of the meeting. The reference to “intensive” was deleted along with a reference to “ministers’ conclusions” on the issue. The final text notes that there was discussion on the issue by ministers and that this is set

out in an annex to the report. It also states that the summary of these discussions reflects a variety of views expressed and does not represent consensus.

The Governing Council approved the report of the Bureau on its examination of credentials for the meeting, which noted that 57 of the 58 Council members had submitted their credentials, which were found to be in order.

The Council then adopted the report of the meeting, as orally amended. It also adopted a decision on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.2).

CLOSING REMARKS: In their closing remarks, many speakers thanked the United Arab Emirates and Dubai, UNEP staff and participants, as well as outgoing UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer. COW Chair Beat Nobs extended his “heartfelt gratitude” to Töpfer for his untiring efforts and leadership in UNEP. He praised him for his performance during his time in office, and wished him well for the future.

The G-77/China joined in expressing appreciation to Töpfer for raising UNEP’s profile, and reflected on the meeting, noting the successful adoption of SAICM and stressing the need to focus on implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. Kenya reiterated the need for transparent and improved environmental governance and multi-stakeholder participation, and reaffirmed its commitment to continue hosting UNEP. Colombia drew attention to Töpfer’s work for Latin America and the Caribbean, and his leadership in the Biosafety Protocol process. Germany commented that, in spite of some differences, the spirit of environmental cooperation is “strong and growing.”

Klaus Töpfer highlighted the high-level participation at this meeting. Reflecting on the way forward for environmental policy, he said a lot has been done, but that the growing ecological footprint is significant, with consumption patterns unchanged in industrialized countries, and developing countries facing major challenges to implement the MDGs. He repeated the Secretary-General’s words that prosperity built on environmental destruction is not real prosperity. He also reflected on the huge challenges in energy policy and the need for significant investment in technology development and transfer. On the future of UNEP, he felt that it was “a good time to hand over” to a new leader. He noted that new answers are also emerging to environmental questions. At the conclusion of his speech, Klaus Töpfer was given a standing ovation.

President Witoelar ended the meeting by noting that “we have achieved our goals” by making progress on a number of issues, including water and the Bali Strategic Plan. He also noted that an energy paper will be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development, and said governments should continue to support UNEP and increase its financial basis. He declared the meeting closed at 6:11 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GCSS-9/GMEF

UNEP took a risk by holding back-to-back sessions of the ICCM and the GCSS-9/GMEF, in the expectation that the latter would approve the results of the former. In the end, the risk was rewarded by the successful completion of SAICM. The outcome of the ICCM was quickly given its formal blessing by the UNEP Governing Council, and many breathed a deep sigh of relief. SAICM alone meant that for some the GCSS-9/GMEF could already be considered a success.

The GCSS-9/GMEF had more political undertones, dominated by the issue of UNEP’s future. The transition of the Executive Director, Klaus Töpfer, instilled a feeling among delegates that an important phase in UNEP’s history is ending, and a new one is about to begin.

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

GCSS-9/GMEF confirmed the effectiveness of the prevailing trend in recent Special Sessions of the Council, which have evolved towards a non-negotiating format, leaving ministers unencumbered by drafting texts where compromise language substitutes for a focus on substance. In this aspect, the GCSS-9/GMEF was singularly successful. Apart from approving SAICM, no formal decisions were adopted, and the ministers concentrated on a narrow set of issues, which, in their view, were both topical and practical, although not necessarily immediately deliverable. Ministers also advised the Secretariat on how they gauge the progress of UNEP’s work programme, and commended it for work done in emergency response, water policy, sustainable tourism and other areas.

The implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building is clearly a goal lying at the heart of UNEP’s activities, and this was convincingly articulated by the President of the Gambia. While the session did not mobilize additional resources for the Plan, it sent a political signal that its implementation is the touchstone of the international community’s determination to address an acute problem of the developing world.

Energy was an agenda item well chosen, and, in fact, dominated the ministerial consultations. They confirmed that energy is a primary challenge, if one seriously wishes to achieve the MDGs. The GCSS-9/GMEF has made a contribution to an international debate where the more visible issues of security of supplies and oil prices overshadow the “forgotten” aspects of the energy agenda, such as its environmental and climate aspects, and the overriding need to secure access to affordable energy for the poor. UNEP’s perspective will provide a much needed element of the various contributions to be made to CSD-14 this coming May.

The GCSS-9/GMEF discussion of UNEP’s scientific base and its role in assessment was, as ever, incisive. The session gave a guarded go-ahead to further exploratory work on Environment Watch, a UNEP initiative that has devolved over the years from the creation of a super scientific assessment panel to a less ambitious but more practical format focused on networking and more attuned to increasing capacities at national and regional levels. The need to synergize assessment work with the Bali Strategic Plan was emphasized time and again. However, there was residual skepticism on the part of some delegations, especially the US, who is wary of creating new bodies and of UNEP taking on duplicative burdens in an area where much is being done elsewhere.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Although the UNEP agenda item on “international environmental governance” covers a broad range of issues, GCSS-9/GMEF devoted much of its political thrust to an aspect that was initially earmarked only for an informal discussion at a ministerial dinner. This subject instead dominated the last day of the session.

The proposal to introduce universal membership of the Governing Council is a perennial issue debated at every recent Governing Council session and spilling into the General Assembly in New York. The discussion in Dubai, however, took a new turn. France again launched a frontal EU assault in favor of establishing a UN Environment Organization, honing its arguments in an even more persuasive fashion. It was noted that the proponents managed to bring some new countries aboard, by confirming the future organization's location in Nairobi. Some observers even felt that the usual skepticism of countries like China and Japan was in the process of erosion. However, the no less persuasive objections from the US, Russia, Brazil, Nigeria and other G-77 countries have shown that feelings on the initiative still run strong. This was illustrated by the esoteric debate on whether a discussion of the proposal at the informal ministerial dinner could be forwarded as UNEP's input to the UN Secretary-General's report. In any event, there was no discussion at dinner at all, and it was held instead in the formal setting of a plenary, with simultaneous translation. The results of the latter will be forwarded to New York, where the General Assembly will tackle the issue in late 2006.

QUO VADIS UNEP?

The GCSS-9/GMEF made some headway on issues related to the Environmental Management Group, an interagency body chaired by the Executive Director. As explained by the new EMG Secretariat, the Group will undergo "revitalization," strengthening its base and adding value to cooperation among actors in the UN system. This, and the expected sharper focus on delivery, has raised delegates' hopes, although some developing countries were quick to caution against the EMG acquiring policy-making functions. Hopefully, these changes will promote order to the convoluted process of interagency cooperation and coordination in the field of environment. This is not an easy task, since the overall UN scene is becoming even more complex, with several reform processes launched simultaneously since the 2005 World Summit, and compounded by the debate over transforming UNEP into a UNEO.

As Klaus Töpfer was stepping down from the podium, resoundingly applauded for his unswerving drive and acumen, delegates were wondering about UNEP's future directions and status. In recent years, UNEP has launched a multitude of initiatives, but, without the financial capacity to fully deliver, some think it may have spread itself too thin. Many were heard commenting that above all, efficient implementation should be the organization's priority, as UNEP enters a brave world of organizational uncertainties, including the impending appointment of a new Executive Director.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SECOND MEETING OF THE CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION:

The second meeting of the CRC is scheduled to take place from 13-17 February 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Rotterdam Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8296; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: pic@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.pic.int>

UNFF-6: The sixth session of the UN Forum on Forests will be held from 13-24 February 2006, at UN headquarters in New York. This meeting will seek to reach conclusion on issues that were not resolved at UNFF-5. For more information, contact: UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3160; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: unff@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LIABILITY AND REDRESS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL: The second meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Liability and Redress in the context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will meet from 20-24 February 2006, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=BSWGLR-02>

BIOSAFETY COP/MOP-3: The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will take place from 13-17 March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=MOP-03>

CBD COP-8: The eighth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties will take place from 20-31 March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=COP-08>

FIFTH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP OF THE BASEL CONVENTION: The fifth session of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG-5) will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3-7 April 2006. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Basel Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: sbc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int/meetings/meetings.html>

IPCC-25: The 25th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will take place from 26-28 April 2006, in Port Louis, Mauritius. For more information, contact: IPCC Secretariat; +41-22-730-8208; fax: +41-22-730-8025; e-mail: IPCC-Sec@wmo.int; internet: <http://www.ipcc.ch/meet/session25.htm>

OPEN-ENDED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: This working group will take place from 28-29 April 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/>

SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION (POPS COP-2): POPs COP-2 is scheduled for 1-5 May 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/>

FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-14 will begin the second cycle of the Commission's new work programme. The meeting will be held at the UN headquarters in New York, from 1-12 May 2006, to review progress in the areas of energy, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: The two Subsidiary Bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet in parallel for their twenty-fourth session in Bonn, Germany, from 15-26 May 2006. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: CRIC-5 is scheduled to convene in September 2006 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to review the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its institutional arrangements. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

IFCS FORUM V: The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety is scheduled to take place from 24-29 September 2006, in Budapest, Hungary. For more information, contact: IFCS Secretariat; tel: +41-22-791-3873; fax: +41-22-791-4875; e-mail: ifcs@who.ch; internet: <http://www.who.int/ifcs/en/>

SECOND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES: This meeting will take place from 16-20 October 2006, in Beijing, China. For more information, contact: UNEP GPA Coordination Office; tel: +31-70-311-4460; fax: +31-70-345-6648; e-mail: gpa@unep.nl or igr2@unep.nl; internet: <http://www.gpa.unep.org>

THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION: PIC COP-3 will be held from 7-13 October 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Rotterdam Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8296; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: pic@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.pic.int>

TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: UNFCCC COP-12 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP-2 will take place from 6-17 November 2006. Kenya has offered to host these meetings, although the location is still to be confirmed. These meetings will also coincide with the 25th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP-8) TO THE BASEL CONVENTION: Basel COP-8 is scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 November to 1 December 2006. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Basel Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: sbc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int>

24TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: GC-24/GMEF will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in early 2007 (the exact date is still to be determined). For more information, contact: Secretary for UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-2-623431/623411; fax: +254-2-7622937/7623748; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; internet: <http://www.unep.org>

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