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## Mercury and other metals activities

Partnerships are a key element of UNEP's programme to reducing risks to health and environment from mercury. UNEP has participated in and provided financial support to a number of events organized within the context of such partnerships:

- International Workshop on Mercury Control from Coal Combustion, Beijing, November 2005;
- South East Asia Conference on Alternatives to Mercury in Health Care, Manila, January 2006;
- Technical exchange visit for Russian specialists to chlor-alkali plants in Germany, Spain, Italy, February 2006;
- CEC-Americas workshop to promote reduced mercury use in products, Merida, Mexico, February 2006;

- Mercury Stewardship Workshop for chlor-alkali facilities, including 2 plant visits, Coatzacoalcos, Mexico, March 2006.

UNEP may also begin scientific reviews on lead and cadmium. A letter was sent in March 2006 to all Governments and stakeholders providing a schedule of work and inviting those who have not already done so to nominate a member of the Working Group that will finalize the reviews at a meeting scheduled for 18-22 September 2006. It is expected that a first draft will be circulated for comments to the working group by end May 2006.

For more information please see <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships> and [http://www.chem.unep.ch/Pb\\_and\\_Cd/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/Pb_and_Cd/)



Photo / Steve Newman Sr (c) www.vannattabros.com/helens  
Mt. Saint Helen eruption in 2004 - volcanoes release up to 1000 tons mercury per year

## Project on capacity to analyze POPs

A project managed by UNEP Chemicals and funded by the GEF is already producing results that will help fill gaps in regional ability to analyze POPs. The project supports key provisions of the Stockholm Convention, especially those related to Effectiveness Evaluation, unintentionally generated POPs and "low POP content in POPs waste". The outcomes to date includes:

1. Databank of laboratories worldwide categorized according to their capabilities to analyze all POPs in different matrices.

2. Recommended criteria for:
  - (a) Sampling, identifying, quantifying POPs;
  - (b) Operating POPs laboratories in a sustainable manner.

For more information, please see <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops/laboratory/default.htm>.



Photo / Juan Manuel Barbaldo, UNEP Chemicals Branch

### Status of NIPs

Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention requires Parties to develop and endeavour to implement a plan for the implementation of its obligations under the Convention and to transmit the plan to the Conference of the Parties with in two years of the date on which the Convention enters into force for it. As of 13 April 2006, the following Parties had transmitted their national implementation plans: Bolivia, Burundi, Egypt, Japan, Latvia, Niue, Republic of Moldova, Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

*The UNEP Chemicals Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.*

*UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.*

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# UNEP Chemicals Newsletter

### UNEP's new Executive Director

The General Assembly, acting upon the nomination of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, unanimously elected Achim Steiner of Germany as the new Executive Director of UNEP for a four-year term, effective 15 June 2006. Mr. Steiner, who is currently the Director-General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), will succeed Klaus Töpfer, who was UNEP's Executive Director for over eight years, and become UNEP's fifth Executive Director.

## It happened in Dubai

Monday 6 February 2006 will be remembered by all participants in the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) as the decisive day for the development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). SAICM is a policy framework to support achievement of the objective set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development 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.

After three years of meetings and consultation, three sessions of the Preparatory Committee and three days of final negotiations, SAICM was finally adopted in Dubai. Agreements were reached on the three main documents of SAICM, the Dubai Declaration, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action, and on four Conference resolutions. Consensus on outstanding issues was reached due to the skill-



Photo / Burj Al Arab, Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE

Dubai provided a dynamic and inspiring setting for ICCM

ful mediation of ICCM President Mr. Mariano Arana, Minister of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay. SAICM was then endorsed by UNEP Governing Council at its ninth Special Session and is expected to be considered by governing bodies of other organisations in due course.

### SAICM Secretariat

The ICCM has requested UNEP to establish and administer the SAICM Secretariat, and to co-locate it with the chemicals and wastes cluster of UNEP in Geneva. UNEP and WHO will take lead roles in the Secretariat. The Secretariat is currently establishing a global network of SAICM focal points, preparing to initiate the Quick Start Programme and setting up systems for its other functions. Further information on SAICM, the ICCM and the Quick Start Programme can be found on [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm).

## UNEP and initial SAICM implementation

The ICCM established the Quick Start Programme with the objective of supporting initial SAICM enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition. UNEP was invited to set up and administer a voluntary, time-limited Quick Start Programme Trust Fund. The Trust Fund will provide seed money to support the objective and strategic priorities of the Programme. The fund will be open to applications from Governments and, in exceptional circumstances, non-governmental organizations, from all sectors involved in chemicals management.

UNEP is, in parallel, also planning for its own initial and long term SAICM implementation activities. It is developing a limited series of initial activities to be conducted during 2006-2007 and preparing a comprehensive plan for the implementation of activities in



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2008-2020, in accordance with the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action. Depending on the availability of additional resources, initial implementation activities would include capacity building on information access, a symposium on illegal trafficking and a publication cost recovery to finance chemicals regulatory systems.

## From the Director



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The adoption of SAICM is a major achievement in the history of global chemicals management for many reasons. In addition to its multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholders nature, one particular aspect attracts special attention: the potential for integration of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda.

Chemicals have become a part of our daily life, sustaining many of our activities, preventing and controlling diseases, and increasing agricultural productivity. They are therefore indispensable for development. However, for development to be sustainable, policies and

responsible approaches to chemicals management need to be in place, aiming at ensuring the highest possible level of safety and protection of humans and the environment.

In the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000, world leaders committed their nations to a global partnership to reduce poverty, improve health, and promote environmental sustainability. In 2002, world leaders established in Monterrey a framework for global development partnership. Elements of the Monterrey Consensus, particularly the commitment to advance a fully inclusive and equitable economic system, and to address the need for a new partnership of rich and poor countries, are inherently addressed by SAICM. The challenge before us is to demonstrate that investing in sound management of chemical is, indeed, a major element of investing in development.

*Maged Younes, Head, UNEP Chemicals Branch, DTIE*

## Maged Younes - Biographical note

Maged Younes was appointed as Head of UNEP Chemicals Branch as of 1 February 2006. He holds an MSc and a PhD degree in Biochemistry/Physiological Chemistry, and a DSc (Dr. habil.) degree in Toxicology and Biochemical Pharmacology.

Maged started his career as a researcher and Professor of Toxicology and Biochemical Pharmacology in Germany, before joining the German Federal Health Office and WHO. In his career with WHO, both at Regional and global level, Maged dealt with various aspects of environmental health policy and management, and led various multidisciplinary teams on several environmental health issues. He managed groups dealing with risk assessment (including burden of disease and cost-effectiveness of interventions assessment), chemical safety (including food chemicals), cross-cutting environmental health

issues, and occupational health. He performed work on establishing linkages between science and environmental health policies, on ensuring coordination with other international bodies and NGOs, and on providing policy advice to counterparts in Member States. His latest assignment with WHO was as Director, Office of the Assistant Director-General, Sustainable Development and Healthy Environments.

### CIEN - Connecting for the Sound Management of Chemicals

CIEN project was launched in 2000 to provide capacity to developing countries to access chemical information via the Internet. From 2005, the project combined the assets of the CIEN organizational framework and the technical facilities of the ESTIS to build national websites and foster networking. To date, 8 Central American countries and 42 African countries have participated in CIEN. 9 African countries have their national CIEN website and 87 webmasters have undergone training in the use of ESTIS. <http://jp1.estis.net/communities/cien>

## Joint projects with DTIE and SBC



Photo / Frank Moser, UNEP Chemicals Branch

Two projects that are about to commence highlight the inter-relationship of chemicals and wastes management, and the close cooperation between the UNEP Chemicals Branch, DTIE and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention. Both projects are supported by the Canada POPs Fund. The first project will assist countries in

achieving environmentally sound management (ESM) of wastes through the joint application of Stockholm and Basel Convention guidance publications on Best Available

Technologies and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) and on the ESM of POPs as wastes, including intentionally as well as unintentionally produced POPs.

The second project builds on the Chemicals Information Exchange Network (CIEN) project, supported by the Canada POPs Fund, the USEPA and the Swiss Government and implemented by UNEP's Chemicals Branch and establishes a regional integrated information network on chemicals and wastes in Africa. The project exploits synergies between the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Environment Secretariat and relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) on chemicals and wastes, such as the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions. It will be implemented in cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) in Cairo.

## Stockholm Convention – COP.2

The second meeting of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (COP.2) will take place from 1-5 May 2006 in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting is expected to conduct the first review of the Convention's financial mechanism and set in motion processes for evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention and for the continued need for DDT use in disease vector control. The meeting will consider among other things ways of enhancing synergies among the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and how to establish regional centres for capacity building and transfer of technology. It will also consider the work of three subsidiary groups: the first meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review

Committee (POPRC.1), November 2005; the first meeting of the Expert Group on Best Available Techniques and Best Environmental Practices (EGBATBEP.1), late November 2005; and the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Non-Compliance which will meet just prior COP.2.

POPRC.2 is scheduled from 6-10 November 2006 in Geneva. EGBATBEP.2 is scheduled from 4-9 December 2006 in Beijing.



Photo / Juan Manuel Barbeito, UNEP Chemicals Branch

## Preparation for Basel Convention COP.8

The 5th session of the OEWG considered a new programmatic approach focusing on key activities. In this context, the meeting considered the development of the Basel Convention public-private partnership programme, synergies between the chemicals and waste conventions, and resource mobilization. In terms of technical assistance and capacity-building, the meeting acknowledged that the strengthening of regional cooperation and support to the Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs) would be required in

the biennium 2007-2008, to promote the life-cycle approach to the management of chemicals.

Progress was made on the issue of obsolete ships. Taking into account the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on a new legal instrument to regulate ship scrapping, the meeting considered interim environmental measures needed until an eventual IMO instrument enters into effect.

The meeting adopted a new training manual on the illegal traffic of hazardous and other wastes for customs and other enforcement agencies. The meeting also finalized three new sets of guidelines on the environmentally sound management of DDT, obsolete pesticides, and dioxins and furans.

### Status of the Rotterdam Convention Ratifications

As of 1 April 2006, 105 countries and the European Community had deposited instruments of ratification for the Rotterdam Convention. There are currently 39 chemicals subject to the Rotterdam Convention, including 24 pesticides, 4 severely hazardous pesticide formulations and 11 industrial chemicals.

### Status of the Stockholm Convention Ratifications

As of 13 April 2006, there were 121 Parties. New Parties since the last issue: Bahamas, Bahrain, Burundi, Cape Verde, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niue, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Vanuatu and Venezuela.

## Rotterdam Convention CRC.2 and COP.3

The second meeting the CRC was held in Geneva 13 to 17 February 2006. The meeting agreed to forward the draft decision guidance document (DGD) on chrysotile asbestos to COP.3 for a decision on inclusion in Annex III of the Convention. The experts also to agree prepare DGDs for endosulfan and tributyl tin compounds. The draft DGDs for these two chemicals will be finalized at the third meeting of the CRC, to be held in Rome in March 2007, and then forwarded for possible inclusion at COP.4 (2008). In addition, the CRC also discussed papers on risk evaluations and trade restrictions under other multilateral environment agreements, which they forwarded to COP.3 for consideration. COP.3 will be held in Geneva 9 to 13 October

2006. In addition to deciding on the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos, and discussing the papers forwarded from the CRC, the meeting will also continue discussions on non-compliance and on a possible financial mechanism. The issue of synergies between the 'chemicals Conventions' will also be discussed, as will the program of work (including technical assistance) for 2007 and 2008. The meeting will include a high-level segment.



Photo / Sheila Logan, UNEP Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention