



United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP Chemicals Branch Newsletter

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Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

Run up to INC 5

Governments established a busy work programme for the short period between the fourth and fifth sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee. The Chair was tasked by the Committee to prepare a revised text for the fifth session. The secretariat was requested to prepare documents on emissions and releases (with the co-chairs of the contact group), and on health issues (with the World Health Organization), as well as draft resolutions for consideration by governments for inclusion in the Final Act to be adopted at the Diplomatic Conference in October 2013.

Thanks to financial support from governments, the secretariat was able to organize four regional meetings to prepare for the fifth and final negotiating session. Meetings were held in Bangkok, Tunisia, in Colombia and in the Czech Republic. Minister Lugris, INC Chair, participated in all regional consultations, introducing his text and



Photo / Nicolás García Uriburu

Sculpture "Pez-Peste", by Nicolás García Uriburu

answering any questions which arose. Regional consultations have also facilitated formal and informal consultations between governments, and assisted them to prepare for the fifth session. We look forward to an even busier, and very exciting, INC 5!

From INC5 in Geneva to Minamata

As we meet at INC5, we reach the end of the negotiations, but not the end of the work. This is, in reality, the beginning of a new mercury chapter as we move towards the Diplomatic Conference, signature and entry into force of the Convention. For more than three years, focus has been on developing the text of the instrument on mercury. Now, as we move towards using the text which has been so carefully negotiated, the focus will shift towards implementation and putting into place the structures which will allow ratification of the new treaty, and a greater emphasis on practical actions.

Fortunately, we enter this interim period with a running start, because the UNEP Global Mercury Partnerships has worked extensively to prepare governments particularly in improving knowledge of their national mercury concerns. We have a solid basis of information produced both through the partnership areas, and through the assessment work requested by UNEP Governing Council,



Photo / Yann

Geneva Cantonal flag

and a close partnership with governments, civil society, industry and intergovernmental organizations which will assist us to support countries in a coordinated and effective way.



Photo / Andrew Bossi

Matterhorn, Switzerland

Friends and Colleagues,

Bonne année! We enter 2013 having ended yet another busy and exciting year in the field of chemicals! In addition to the normal workload, the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Mercury and the Third Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management under SAICM kept us hopping. Amongst others, we published the Global Chemicals Outlook - Synthesis for Decision Makers, receiving worldwide attention and sharing the important message on trends in chemicals manufacturing and use, the benefits of sound chemicals management, the costs of poor chemicals management and the overall contribution to national development. We sincerely look forward to INC5 and supporting the negotiators to complete their work on the mercury instrument. Thanks to all for your support in 2012 and we look forward to a productive and fruitful 2013!

*Tim Kasten, Head,
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Global Mercury Assessment



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Marine food-webs are an important route of human dietary exposure to mercury

UNEP has updated the 2008 report “Global Atmospheric Mercury Assessment: Source, Emissions and Transport” in close cooperation with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Secretariat. The updated report (entitled “Global Mercury Assessment 2013 - Sources, Emissions, Releases and Environmental Transport” (prepared for GC27, but will be available for INC5), provides the most recent information on atmospheric mercury emissions, releases to the aquatic environment, and the transport and fate of mercury in the global environment. The updated report is improved with better data from major source sectors, including artisanal and small-scale gold mining, as well as detailed information on mercury content in fuels and raw materials; on use of

pollution control technologies; and on location of major point sources. Information on several sectors is included for the first time. Although uncertainties remain, there has been considerable progress in improving the knowledge base for calculating emissions. The new estimates agree well with national estimates.

A wide network of experts has ensured that up-to-date national data are made available. International scientists from AMAP and the UNEP Global Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research partnership participated in developing the report.

The work is funded by the governments of Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Nordic Council of Ministers, Japan and the EU.

Mercury Storage and Disposal project in Argentina and Uruguay

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, supply of mercury may exceed demand as early as 2013. During 2012, UNEP supported the governments of Argentina and Uruguay to examine options for the environmentally sound solutions for the storage and disposal of excess mercury. Surveys were conducted to identify existing hazardous waste facilities that could serve as temporary storage facilities for mercury and to identify relevant regulatory frameworks. Argentina has at least

four security landfills and Uruguay has industrial waste landfills that are potential temporary storage sites; in addition, an existing chlor-alkali plant could serve for temporary storage. Initial National Action Plans for the environmentally sound management of mercury and mercury wastes were developed by both countries. Under the umbrella of the Global Mercury Partnership, this project constitutes an example of how UNEP supports governments in taking immediate action on mercury.

Thank you to Agneta Sunden Bylehn and Aase Tuxen

2012 saw the retirement of two of the longest serving staff members of Chemicals Branch. Agneta Sunden-Bylehn and Aase Tuxen worked with Chemicals Branch (and its predecessor, the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC)) for a combined total of 55 years! Throughout the years, both have made valuable contributions to the environment through their knowledge, experience and hard work on chemicals management. Agneta was responsible for many topics, including legal issues, pesticides and most recently endocrine disrupting chemicals. Aase was engaged in the voluntary Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure, then was part of the secretariat supporting the negotiations as it became the Rotterdam Convention. Most recently, she supported the mercury negotiations. Both Agneta and Aase will be greatly missed, not only for their excellent work, but also for their positive and charming personalities. We wish them well.

UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group Meeting



Photo / Nida Bestelli

Colosseum, Rome

The fourth meeting of the Advisory Group of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership was held in Rome, Italy on 27-28 September 2012, back-to-back with the 16th International Conference of Heavy Metals in the Environment. The leads of the eight partnership areas as well as observers from governments, academia and civil society participated in the meeting.

The progress and plans of each partnership area were presented. The Advisory Group then discussed the means to improve and enhance the work of the partnership through wider advocacy, improved communication,

revised business plans and project “wish-lists”. The Group also discussed resources that had been available over the past two years and how to mobilize further support.

The secretariat was encouraged to maintain and improve the Partnership website, to continue the “story of the month” and enhance outreach to partners, so as to leverage additional resources for the important work it undertakes.

Progress of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership will be presented to the 27th UNEP Governing Council.

SAICM ICCM3 outcomes

The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) is the governing body of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The third session of the ICCM met in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17-21 September 2012, building renewed momentum for future implementation efforts towards the realization of its 2020 goal towards sound management of chemicals.

ICCM3, amongst other things, adopted a strategy on strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of SAICM, an omnibus resolution supporting further collaborative actions on lead in paint, chemicals in products, hazardous substances within the lifecycle of electrical and electronic products, nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials. It was agreed that these last two

be included in the Global Plan of Action of SAICM. A resolution supporting further collaborative action on perfluorinated chemicals was agreed, as were cooperative actions on endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

On SAICM financing, ICCM3 agreed to the extension of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund until its fourth session in 2015 and requested that SAICM be included in any long term approach to financing of the chemicals and waste cluster to be proposed by UNEP Executive Director. Furthermore, ICCM3 agreed to a budget for the operation of SAICM secretariat.

Further information on ICCM3 is available at www.saicm.org.



UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi

Approaching the 2020 Goal of Sound Management of Chemicals

A high-level dialogue at the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3) provided an opportunity for different stakeholders to share their views on the current implementation of SAICM. The dialogue highlighted the successes, but also identified the challenges, thereby setting the direction for how SAICM should move forward to the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management. With only seven years remaining to reach the 2020 goal, there is an increased sense of urgency for concrete collaborative actions to turn aspirations

into practical delivery on the ground without delay. Based on the outcomes of the high-level dialogue, the SAICM secretariat was requested to develop overall orientation and guidance to meet the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management including some concrete elements. Such overall orientation and guidance needs to be both retrospective and prospective. The orientation and guidance will be developed under the guidance of the ICCM4 Bureau, to be further discussed at regional meetings and the Open-ended Working Group and for possible consideration at ICCM4.

Chemicals in Products (CiP) project

The UNEP-led CiP project received a new mandate from ICCM3: to develop an approach to cooperative actions – a Chemicals in Products programme – with the aim of facilitating and guiding the provision, availability and access to relevant information on chemicals in products throughout the product life cycle and among all stakeholder groups. The draft CiP programme is to be presented to ICCM4.

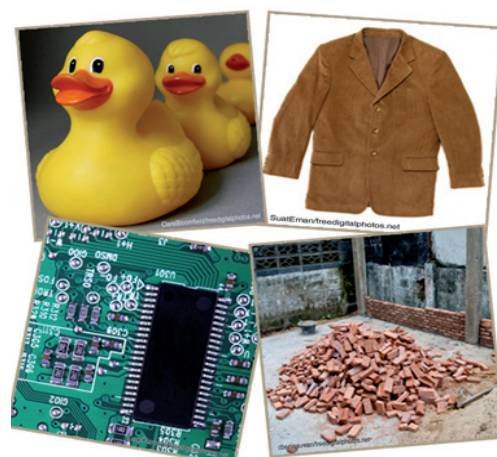
Key tasks to be accomplished in developing the CiP programme include:

- Identifying roles and suggest responsibilities for the major stakeholder groups in the life cycle of products.
- Developing guidance on what chemicals information could be transferred and how

information access and exchange could take place.

- Implementing of one or more pilot projects to demonstrate the applicability of the guidance developed under the proposed CiP programme.
- Raising awareness and gaining support of this issue for stakeholders throughout the product life cycle.

UNEP continues to engage with numerous product sector stakeholders with the aim of building broad participation and establishing ambitious, achievable goals in this priority chemicals-policy issue. Information and participation inquiries are welcome at chemicals@unep.org.



Chemicals can be found in everyday products

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UNEP Chemicals is a Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE).

The UNEP Chemicals Branch 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.

Inquiries and editorial correspondence should be sent to: chemicals@unep.org.

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A list of publications is available from UNEP Chemicals Branch and on the Web (www.chem.unep.ch). Publications are free of charge.

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LIRA – a guidance for the sound management of chemicals

SAICM recognized that, in particular, developing countries and countries with economies in transition lacked the national capacities and finances to develop, implement and enforce national legal and administrative structures for sound management of chemicals.

UNEP has, with support from the Government of Sweden, developed a guidance on the development of legal and institutional infrastructures for sound management of chemicals and measures for recovering costs of national administrations (LIRA). The LIRA guidance will be used in an

in a regional activity in Africa aiming at raising the priority and profile given to national implementation of sound management of chemicals and assisting countries to develop enabling legislation, institutional and administrative structures, as well as sustainable funding for the sound management of chemicals. The regional activity will initially consist of a few countries testing the guidance in the spring of 2013 and be followed by an African regional meeting to review the findings of the case studies with the objective of capacity building of all African countries to improve the sound management of chemicals.

Boosting implementation of chemicals and waste MEAs – DDT and PCBs

Cooperation between the Chemicals Branch and the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions Secretariat has been enhanced by the transfer of two important networks established to boost implementation of these treaties. The DDT Global Alliance (DDTGA) and the PCB Elimination Network (PEN) were established to provide direction and support to Parties seeking to meet their Convention obligations with regards to these chemicals – bringing together the wide range of expert stakeholders needed to make cost-effective progress in phasing out and destroying these important POPs.

During 2012, Chemicals Branch supported, for the first time, the meeting of the DDTGA Advisory Group, in Nairobi, and the PEN Steering Group, held in Beijing. At both meetings, work plans and budgets for these global networks were agreed and requests for funding have been sent. The networks are now preparing their contributions to the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention.

Chemicals Branch support for these networks is a further example of the services we provide to the implementation of the chemicals

and waste MEAs and is complementary to the portfolio of projects addressing not only DDT and PCB but a wide range of chemicals management issues identified in the conventions. Much of this portfolio is co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a principal entity of the financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention.

During 2012, UNEP concluded several regional projects contributing to the Global Monitoring Plan of the Stockholm Convention. Reports generated by these projects, financed by the GEF and by the SAICM Quick Start Programme are available at www.chem.unep.ch/Pops/GMP/default.htm. An instructive movie on the analysis of perfluorinated compounds, some now listed in the Stockholm Convention, was launched at the International Dioxin Symposium in Cairns, Australia, as will soon be available from www.pops.int. Work on the second phase of the Global Monitoring Plan is now starting and at its most recent meeting, the GEF Council approved proposals submitted by UNEP for work in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa. The projects will support up to a total of 26 countries in these regions to implement monitoring activities including human milk assessment and air monitoring.