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**Implementation towards the achievement of the 2020 goal
of sound chemicals management: emerging policy issues
and other issues of concern: existing emerging policy issues:
chemicals in products**

Emerging policy issue update on chemicals in products

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, for the information of participants, a report on chemicals in products prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (see annex). The report summarizes the work carried out in this area since the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, identifies gaps remaining to be filled in order to achieve the 2020 goal and proposes a workplan for the period 2016–2020. The report is presented as received by the secretariat, without formal editing.

* SAICM/ICCM.4/1.

Annex

Progress report on chemicals in products

I. Background

Most chemicals used to fabricate products are relatively safe when handled correctly. Some products, however, contain chemicals that can present significant risks to human health or the environment at various points in the products' life cycles. Governments, product manufacturers, transporters, retailers, consumers and users, recyclers and waste managers clearly require adequate information on hazardous chemicals in products to make informed choices, control exposures where necessary, and protect humans and the environment.

In recent years it has become increasingly evident that information on the chemicals in products is too often absent or insufficient to allow proper management. Because systems for the production, distribution, use and treatment of discarded products are increasingly cross-border in extent, it is important that an effective means of providing, retrieving and exchanging chemical constituent information is available and, to the extent possible, internationally consistent.

Governments, businesses and the general public are increasingly aware that proper diligence is needed in respect of chemicals in products and, in addition, that the capacity to manage chemicals in products safely, and to use chemical information effectively, is evolving. In some economies and product sectors significant progress has been made; outstanding needs exist in many countries, however, in particular developing countries, where significant stakeholder awareness and capacity largely still remain to be realized.

II. Introduction

During the period between the second and third sessions of the Conference (2009–2012), an analysis was undertaken of the chemicals in products information issue as a global emerging policy issue, and this led to the call at the third session for development of a chemicals in products programme

During the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, convened in September 2012, and in particular by that session's resolution III/2, UNEP was requested to develop a chemicals in products programme proposal and to present it to the Conference at its fourth session in 2015. At its third session, the Conference further identified as the aim of the chemicals in products programme "facilitating and guiding the provision and availability of, and access to, relevant information on the chemicals in products among all stakeholder groups...".

III. Project activities and outcomes

Brief summary of activities and outcomes linked to requests (shown in bold) made at the third session of the Conference through its resolution III/2 (reproduced in the appendix).

- **Development of a CiP programme proposal**
The outcome linked to this request is found in meeting document SAICM/ICCM.4/10. Activities contributing to the development of the CiP programme proposal included:
 - i) extensive feedback via written comments and teleconferences from a wide range of stakeholders to drafts of the proposal;
 - ii) Two dedicated meetings: an International Consultation Meeting in Boston, USA in 2013 and an International Workshop in Beijing in 2015;
 - iii) Discussion during the second session of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group; and
 - iv) Through sessions held in connection with the SAICM regional meetings between the third and fourth sessions of the Conference.
- **Development of guidance on what information could be transferred and how**
The outcome linked to this request is found in meeting document SAICM/ICCM.4/11. The Guidance document was developed in tandem with the CiP programme proposal and the activities which contributed to its development are identical to those cited above.

- **Pilot projects to demonstrate the applicability of the guidance**
A project entitled “Defining and demonstrating best practices for exchange of information on chemicals in textile products” has been developed and approved in 2014 by the Global Environment Facility. It aims at piloting a chemicals in products information exchange in China. The project is scheduled for completion in early 2017. The inception meeting was held in July 2015 in Beijing. Project proposals for pilot activities in other sectors are under development.
- **Implementation of activities to raise consumer awareness and gain broader support from business, industry and other stakeholders.**
The outcomes linked to this request include numerous, approximately 20, presentations at related industry or other stakeholder events, dedicated webinars, interviews, press releases and articles. Furthermore an information document was developed for the second session of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group “Making the business case for knowing chemicals in products and supply chains”¹. Activities beyond those related to the above outcomes include continued and expanded engagement with product sectors to underline the advantages of the multi-stakeholder approach to the issue.
- **Inclusion of chemicals management experts representing final product manufacturers on the CiP project Steering Group**
Three experts in chemicals in products information from final product manufacturers have been added to the Steering Group in the period between the third and fourth sessions of the Conference. The new members are from the textiles, electronics and automotive product sectors.

IV. Gaps remaining and implications for the 2020 goal

Activities carried out under the chemicals in products project since the third session of the Conference illustrate that considerable progress has been made in some product sectors towards exchanging chemicals in products information within supply chains and, to a lesser extent, also to stakeholders outside of supply chains.

The significant and laudable efforts which have led to these advances in some product sectors may be characterized as the start of substantive progress. Major gaps still remain in both exchanging chemicals in products information in supply chains and - with a view to the 2020 goal - in using this information for chemicals management actions. The situation is generally also quite heterogeneous, with different stakeholders in the same product sector, stakeholder group or geographic area engaged and progressing on these issues at quite different levels. There are also considerable differences of awareness, engagement and progress between products sectors.

Implications for the 2020 goal: a sustained effort in product sectors and by stakeholder groups which have recognized the importance of the chemicals in products issue will be required to achieve a level of performance consistent with the 2020 goal (i.e., within that sector or group). Awareness raising, capacity building and assistance in pilot and scale-up activities will be needed for those product sectors and stakeholders groups which have yet to significantly progress on the issue. Notable as well is the need for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to be brought into activities.

V. Proposed Work Plans

Meeting document SAICM/ICCM.4/10 proposes a draft resolution on the chemicals in products programme and describes general activities which the Conference may wish to consider. This section builds on the general activities noted in that draft resolution and describes more specific activities, which the Conference may also wish to consider. Proposed actions would be contingent on availability of resources.

¹ See document SAICM/ICCM.4/INF/17

PROPOSED ACTIVITY AREAS	PROPOSED ACTIONS 2016-2020
Awareness raising	<p>Carry out country case studies in at least one country in each SAICM region, highlighting the use of existing chemicals in products information systems in product sectors and the potential for application of such systems where they are not in use.</p> <p>Hold a multi-stakeholder workshop in each SAICM region on implementation of chemicals in products information systems and use of chemicals in products information. The workshops should be held back-to-back with related events if possible (e.g., SAICM regional meetings or major product-sector conferences).</p> <p>Engage product sectors to bring visibility to the chemicals in products programme and promote participation of product manufacturers and related stakeholders in the programme.</p> <p>Engage stakeholders involved in broader sustainability discussions through other fora (e.g., on climate change, life-cycle impact, water use and pollution, the investment community) with the goal of integrating chemicals in products information and supply-chain chemicals control measures into their sustainability initiatives.</p> <p>Use of online platforms such as websites, webinars and online meetings to broadcast activities, efforts and promote networking.</p>
Capacity building	<p>Facilitate the development of national expertise and establishment of coordinated regional networks (i.e., communities of practice) for implementation of the CiP programme. These networks would include the stakeholder groups of governments, private sector (on a product sector basis), recyclers and waste handlers and civil society.</p>
Implementation of the CiP programme	<p>As resources allow, facilitate pilot and large scale implementation of the CiP programme by product sector manufacturers and related stakeholders, including the waste management sector.</p>
Information sharing	<p>Establish a global network of government-to-government notifications and information exchange centred on chemical content in products.</p> <p>Facilitate a global network among civil society organizations and academia, with information accessible to the public, and centred on chemicals in products information.</p> <p>The CiP programme secretariat publishes annual progress reports, coordinates periodic updating of the Guidance, establishes and maintains a web site for the chemicals in products programme and publishes a comprehensive report on status of implementation of the CiP programme for the fifth session of the Conference.</p>

Appendix

International Conference on Chemicals Management resolution III/2, section C

Chemicals in products

Recalling its resolution II/4 C, in which it decided to implement a project with the overall objective of promoting the implementation of paragraph 15 (b) of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach that would, among other things, include the development of specific recommendations for further international cooperative action for consideration by the Conference at its third session,

Acknowledging with appreciation the progress made in implementing the specific tasks set out in resolution II/4 C, including the survey on priority product sectors and types of information needed, the study on existing information systems and stakeholder needs, the sector case studies, the synthesis report and the results and conclusions of the meetings held since the second session of the Conference,

Acknowledging the existing information system initiatives and standards with a view to learning from them and sharing best practices,

Having considered the results of the project activities, and especially the suggested elements for further international cooperative action as identified by the international workshop on the chemicals in products project held in March 2011,

1. *Agrees* to continue the multi-stakeholder project established under resolution II/4 C (hereinafter “CiP”) to undertake cooperative actions to address the need to improve the availability of and access to relevant information on chemicals in products in the supply chain and throughout their life cycles to facilitate the efforts of all stakeholders to contribute to the overall objective of the Strategic Approach that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, taking into account in particular paragraphs 15 (a)–(c) of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach;

2. *Decides* that under the CiP a proposal will be developed for a voluntary international programme for information on chemicals in products along the supply chain and throughout their life cycles (hereinafter the “CiP programme”) with the aim of facilitating and guiding the provision and availability of, and access to, relevant information on chemicals in products among all stakeholder groups by building on CiP activities, results and recommendations to date, taking into account the elements identified during the March 2011 workshop on the CiP;

3. *Agrees* that in the development of the proposal for an international CiP programme the following tasks shall be undertaken:

(a) Identification of the roles and suggestions for responsibilities of the major stakeholder groups while providing for flexible and differentiated approaches to meeting the needs of individual sectors and individual stakeholder groups throughout product life cycles, with special attention paid to the needs of vulnerable populations, developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(b) Development of guidance on what information could be transferred and how information access and exchange could take place to meet the needs of various stakeholder groups throughout product life cycles; considering best practices and successful experiences and taking into account paragraph 15 (c) of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach;

(c) Implementation of pilot projects to demonstrate the applicability of the guidance developed under the proposed CiP programme in one or more priority sectors,² subject to stakeholder participation and available resources;

(d) Implementation of activities aimed at raising consumer awareness and gaining broader support from business, industry and other stakeholders;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of the involvement of chemicals management experts from various sectors, including sectors relating to the various phases of the life cycles of products, in the development the CiP programme, and in particular recommends the inclusion of chemicals management experts representing final product manufacturers and the waste sector in the current steering group established under resolution II/4 C;

² Building materials, electronics, textiles and toys.

5. *Requests* that the CiP programme take into account the Globally Harmonized System of the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and avoid duplication of efforts with that system;
 6. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme to prepare relevant documents and to facilitate a multi-stakeholder workshop to consider the outcomes of paragraph 3;
 7. *Encourages* the private sector, governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the development of the proposal for the CiP programme, including associated pilot demonstration projects, and urges all stakeholders to provide adequate human, financial and in-kind resources on a voluntary basis;
 8. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue to lead the CiP in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, and to submit the proposal for a voluntary international programme for information on chemicals in products to the International Conference on Chemicals Management for consideration at its fourth session;
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