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Abstract:

The ICCA Global Product Strategy (GPS)

In early 2006 at the ICCM-1, ICCA introduced the Responsible Care® Global Charter (RCGC) and an innovative Global Product Strategy (GPS) to enhance stewardship best practices within the industry and throughout the product chain as its global contribution to SAICM. Together, the GPS and the Responsible Care® Global Charter are cornerstones of ICCA's contribution to the United Nations' (UN) Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). SAICM is the framework for meeting the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development goal that by 2020 all chemicals will be produced and used in ways that minimize risk

Through GPS, ICCA intends to improve global product safety standards by establishing a balance between regulatory systems and voluntary industry initiatives (e.g. HPV, LRI). Thus, through GPS, ICCA intends to provide communication to key audiences as well as proactively advocate on evolving regulatory initiatives, in support of government implementation. Through GPS, ICCA member associations and companies will be more transparent about their product safety assessment processes and provide access to information in a suitable format to co-producers and customers to increase public confidence that governments are filling their role and industry is meeting its voluntary commitments and regulatory requirements. From the chemical industry point of view GPS clearly helps to reduce the existing differences in the safety of chemicals between developing, emerging and industrialized countries and to achieve a common global standard in product safety assessment.

Key Strategic Elements

The strategic elements of ICCA's new Global Product Strategy include:

- Guidelines for product stewardship, including ways to make relevant product stewardship information more transparent.
- A tiered approach for completing risk characterizations and recommending risk management actions for chemicals in commerce.
- Improved product stewardship cooperation with industry groups and companies that are customers and suppliers to the chemical industry.

- Tracking industry performance and reporting to the public.
- Exploration of potential partnerships with intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders to enhance global product stewardship.
- Outreach and dialogue with customers, the public and stakeholders.
- Participation in scientific inquiry to address health, environmental and risk concerns.
- Constructive industry engagement in the public policy process.

The centerpiece of GPS is the enhancement and expansion of product stewardship best practices within the industry and throughout the value chain. Product stewardship – an important pillar of Responsible Care® – is the industry’s management of the health, safety and environmental aspects of a chemical product throughout its total life cycle. This is a shared responsibility requiring cooperation with suppliers and downstream users. GPS is aligned with the industry’s other important voluntary initiatives, including implementation of the ICCA Global Chemicals Management Policy, the Long-range Research Initiative and the High Production Volume Chemicals testing program.

Further Implementation of GPS

Since completion of the Product Stewardship (PS) Guidelines (published on the ICCA website www.iccachem.org in December 2007), ICCA has focused on the implementation of GPS. ICCA has defined a “base-set” of information for chemicals in commerce, developed guidance for member companies to use to help them define safe use conditions for chemicals and provided recommendations on best practices to enable safe conditions of use. We are also developing a mechanism to make relevant information available from co-producers to the public in an understandable, targeted form. As information becomes available, we will share it with downstream customers, which will enable them to improve their environmental, health and safety performance as well. We will of course also share this information with governments to meet regulatory requirements and improve industry performance in countries where such regulations are not yet in place. Along the way we will provide capacity building for SMEs in our industry, and as well to downstream customers and governments in developing countries.

More information available: <http://www.icca-chem.org/section02d.html>