

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management: preparations for the first meeting of the Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group¹ and the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management²

Questionnaire for Governments and organizations on emerging policy issues

One of the functions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), set out in paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), is “to focus attention and call for appropriate action on emerging policy issues as they arise and to forge consensus on priorities for cooperative action.” Paragraphs 14 (g) and 15 (g) of the Overarching Policy Strategy call, respectively, for new and emerging issues of global concern to be sufficiently addressed by means of appropriate mechanisms, and for an acceleration of the pace of scientific research on identifying and assessing the effects of chemicals on human beings and the environment, including emerging issues. ICCM has not yet defined the term “emerging issue”, but it may be understood to be an issue involving the production and use of chemicals, which has not yet been generally recognized or sufficiently addressed, but which may have significant adverse effects on human beings and/or the environment.

Following consultation with the informal planning group, “friends of the secretariat”, the secretariat has prepared the present questionnaire as a means for SAICM stakeholders to propose “emerging issues” for consideration by ICCM at its second session. Consideration of the advice received through the submission of completed questionnaires will enable the Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group to make the necessary preparations for discussion of the issues by ICCM.

Stakeholders wishing to raise what they consider to be emerging issues warranting cooperative action are invited to complete the questionnaire and return it to the SAICM secretariat (by fax to: +41 22 797 3460, or by e-mail to saicm@chemicals.unep.ch) **by 31 August 2008**.

In due course, stakeholders may wish to discuss criteria to be used in determining more rigorously what constitutes an emerging issue and whether such an issue is a priority for cooperative action. In the absence of such criteria, the intention of the present questionnaire is simply to gather advance information as to the range of issues that stakeholders may wish to raise.

¹ The first meeting of the Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group will be held in Rome, Italy, from 21 to 24 October 2008.

² The second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 11 to 15 May 2009.

Questionnaire for Governments and organizations on emerging chemicals management issues for possible consideration by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session

Please return **by 31 August 2008** to:

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Issue

(Brief title)

- Safety assessment of existing chemicals
- Sharing of chemical safety data
- Chemicals in products
- Sound management of specific substances ; nano-materials, mercury

Submitter

(Government or organization, address, contact name)

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State the problem

(Briefly describe the emerging issue and why it is a priority for cooperative action. Cite any key studies or authorities that are relevant in this regard. Attach a supplementary document with further details if needed.)

- The great majority of existing chemicals have yet to undergo safety assessment. Task sharing among public and private sectors should be considered.
- To secure sound management of chemicals, information on safety data of chemicals should be shared by relative stakeholders e.g. sharing of information of model MSDSs with GHS classification results
- Sound management of chemicals in products is necessary e.g. recovery of chemicals from products in the waste recycling system.
- Nano materials have become widely used in these days, while their hazard to health and environment and sound management methodology have not been fully assessed.
- Mercury would be needed under global management.
- Duplication in chemical management among international institutions.

Action so far

(Summarize any action taken so far, including, for example, guidance issued, preventive actions undertaken, bans or restrictions at the national level, or current consideration at the international level by bodies such as the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee or the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee, and other intergovernmental working groups. Attach a supplementary document with further details if needed.)

- In order to promote safety assessment of existing chemicals, expert committees of three ministries are discussing necessary review of related regulatory framework.
- an expert committee of the Central Environmental Council concluded to add necessary regulation on chemicals in products for the recovery of chemicals from products in the waste recycling system.
- Expert committees on consumer products and labour environment are discussing necessary management guidance on nano materials.
- Further elaboration of synergy for the efficient use of resources in international institutions.

Proposed cooperative action

(Describe the proposed cooperative actions, or options for such actions, which ICCM is recommended to consider. Attach a supplementary document with further details if needed.)

- Information exchange on safety assessment on existing chemicals, especially results and data resources of the assessments.
- Information exchange and discussion on further steps toward sound management of chemicals in products .
- Information exchange related to nano materials e.g. testing method, evaluation, and management methodologies.
- Global discussion and concrete actions toward sound management of mercury
- Encouragement of increased information sharing and cooperative actions for synergy.