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Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals Management

Guidance Document

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Prepared through collaboration of UNITAR with UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and OECD, and the Secretariats of the OPCW, Basel Convention and IFCS

OPCW

UNITAR

Secretariat of the Basel Convention
United Nations Environment Programme

IFCS

IOMC
INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS
A cooperative agreement among UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO, UNITAR and OECD

UNITAR/IOMC Programme Principles

- **a multistakeholder approach**, involving representatives from various government ministries as well as concerned parties outside of government, such as industry, research institutions, labour, and public interest groups;
- **a country-driven process** through which partner countries assess and identify their chemicals and waste management needs and link their related activities to national environmental and developmental objectives; and
- **an integrated approach** to chemicals management in order to strengthen coordination and therefore the effectiveness of efforts to address chemicals issues across all stages of the life cycle.

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Preface

The growing world-wide commitment to protect human health and the environment from dangerous chemicals and wastes has been a catalyst for action in many countries and sectors. Due to the cross-sectoral nature of chemicals and waste management and the interests of various government ministries and other stakeholders in this area, well co-ordinated and integrated management approaches at the national level may achieve maximum impact for the limited resources available. Co-ordinated and integrated approaches for the sound management of chemicals and wastes are also called for through Chapters 19 and 20 of Agenda 21, by the IFCS and more recently, the WSSD.

This document has been developed to assist countries in developing and implementing an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals Management. A companion document entitled *Searching for Synergies: Linking Waste Management to an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals Management* is available to countries which are interested in pursuing an integrated, life-cycle management of dangerous chemicals and wastes. Both documents were developed by UNITAR, in cooperation with its partner organizations in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), and the Secretariats of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Basel Convention (SBC) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS).

Part A of this document provides context and background on the importance of chemicals management and introduces the international policy framework for the sound management of chemicals. **Part B** outlines the national framework for an integrated national programme for chemicals management, including the importance of interministerial collaboration and developing a national policy on chemicals. **Part C** outlines a range of activities and provides practical suggestions for taking concrete action towards developing and sustaining an integrated national programme for the sound management of chemicals.

The approach and activities suggested in this document build upon the experience gained and lessons learned through earlier projects on integrated chemicals management which were successfully implemented in seven countries since 1996 with funding provided by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).[1] In particular, experiences gained with three country projects in Ecuador, Senegal and Sri Lanka in 2001-2003 will be shared.

UNITAR and its partners do not suggest that all activities outlined in this document need to be implemented in their entirety or at once to achieve co-ordinated and integrated chemicals management. Instead, this document is meant to provide flexible guidance to allow countries to address those areas considered of particular importance to their national situation. Thus it can serve as a general stand-alone reference tool for any country that wishes to make its programmes for chemicals management more integrated and sustainable. It may also serve, however, as a basis for collaborative programmes with an international organization and/or a particular bilateral donor.

[1] A final report of the pilot programmes is available from UNITAR.

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Part A: International Framework for Sound Chemicals Management

1. The Importance of Sound Chemicals Management

While chemicals have long been a part of human history, their production and use proliferated in the last half of the 20th century. Today, tens of thousands of chemicals can be found in the marketplace and hundreds of new chemicals are developed and produced annually. World production of all types of chemicals is well in excess of several hundred million tons each year and is a significant component of international trade and commerce.

Over the course of a generation, the world has grown dependent on the benefits that chemicals provide. Chemicals play a key role in many major sectors of the world economy including agriculture, industry, housing, transport, textiles, the health sector and in the home. Despite the benefits they can provide, chemicals can be corrosive, explosive, flammable, an irritant, oxidising, and dangerous to human health and the environment. Adequate toxicity data exists for only a very small portion (on the order of ten percent) of all chemicals in commercial use. Nevertheless exposure to chemicals, and/or their by-products, has been associated with a range of detrimental human health and environmental effects including: cancer, teratogenic and mutagenic effects, neurological damage, endocrine system disruption, cases of acute poisonings, and effects on ecosystems.

Thus the sound management of chemicals is a particular challenge for governments. Governments have responded with various tools such as laws, policies and practices at all levels - from the local to the national and international. These tools help to protect citizens and the environment from the detrimental effects of chemicals while maintaining access to their benefits. In many countries these tools have been designed to reflect the inherent hazards and risks chemicals can pose, attempting to limit the exposure of humans and the environment at or below levels that do not cause harm (or at "acceptable" levels of harm).

By referring to the term "national systems for environmentally sound management of chemicals", Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 indirectly implies that national initiatives and approaches to manage chemicals safely comprise different components. Such components should, ideally, be well co-ordinated and mutually supportive, and collectively make up the "system". Indeed, action to improve the national chemicals management system does not likely address the system as a whole, but rather focuses on strengthening particular aspects or components of it. These often include those areas which are considered to be of highest priority. The possibilities therefore are greater for mobilising the required funding, or for obtaining political support at the national and/or international level. Thus there are a range of entry points countries can consider as they develop their priorities.

2. International Policy Framework and Institutions

An examination of events, structures and policy decisions taken at the international or regional level can provide useful insights for the development of an integrated national programme.

Institutional and policy frameworks for chemicals management commenced soon after their widespread introduction in the middle of the last century, and accelerated accordingly as awareness of the harmful effects of certain chemicals became widespread.[2] In fact, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been addressing chemicals issues since the early 1920s - a Convention on lead was adopted in 1921. By the 1990s, a broad range of international agreements and bodies addressed chemicals issues. This has recently culminated (thus far) with the completion of negotiations for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and discussions initiated on a possible Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

2.1 Agenda 21, Chapter 19 - A Landmark for Co-ordinated Action on Chemicals

Many of the international efforts to address chemicals since 1992 have occurred as a result of the "Rio Conference" - more formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Heads of State or Governments from more than 150 member countries of the United Nations adopted *Agenda 21*, a comprehensive document outlining responsibilities of States towards the achievement of sustainable development, including a number of important principles (see box on next page). Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 is entitled "Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals, Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products", and provides an international strategy for achieving the sound management of chemicals through their life-cycle, a goal to which all countries present at the Rio Conference agreed. A review of that agreement held at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) produced a number of important new commitments (see section 2.5).

Chapter 19 addresses chemicals issues in six programme areas: international assessment of chemical risks; harmonisation of chemical classification and labelling; information exchange on chemicals and chemical risks; risk reduction; strengthening national capacities and capabilities for chemicals management; and prevention of illegal international trade in toxic and dangerous products. *Programme Area E on Strengthening of National Capabilities and Capacities for Management of Chemicals* is of particular relevance to countries that are in the process of establishing or improving their national systems for chemicals management (see Part B).

[2] For example, with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962.

Key Principles from Agenda 21

The Right-to-Know Principle

In order to provide communities and the public at large with chemicals-related information, a number of governments have in recent years promoted the principle of Right-to-Know, which has also been endorsed in Agenda 21. The Right-to-Know Principle establishes the right of citizens to certain chemicals information, in general in relation to releases of chemicals into the environment, which might pose a potential risk to human health. The promotion of the Right-to-Know Principle as part of a National Chemicals Policy can be an effective, cross-cutting tool for chemicals management within an integrated national programme.

The Importance of Stakeholder Involvement

"The need for new forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need of individuals, groups and organisations...to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work. Individuals, groups and organisations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and information on environmental protection measures".

The Importance of Science

Chapter 35 of Agenda 21 states that the role of the sciences should be to provide information to better enable formulation and selection of environment and development policies in the decision-making process. In order to fulfill this requirement, it will be essential to enhance scientific understanding, improve long-term scientific assessments, strengthen scientific capacities in all countries and ensure that the sciences are responsive to emerging needs. The Rio Declaration (Principle 9) proposes that: "States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies". A related development is UNEP's "Science Initiative", a consultative process to identify gaps and needs in the current environmental assessment structure, and means to address them. See: <http://science.unep.org/>

2.2 Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)

In 1994, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) was established as a means for countries to regularly discuss their activities and priorities for the sound management of chemicals, including progress made in implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21. It comprises representatives of countries around the world as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations who meet approximately every three years. Through these meetings and within its regional groupings, the participants in the Forum discuss important aspects of chemicals management and safety and develop recommendations which serve as a driving force for work at the international level and within countries. These recommendations provide important milestones for countries in their efforts to strengthen their national chemicals management programmes.

The IFCS encourages its participants to work closely in regional groupings, stressing the benefits of regional cooperation for implementing its recommendations, and as an important means of building capacities and the necessary infrastructure for chemicals management. A particular emphasis has been placed on regional and sub-regional groups to deal with issues of strategy development and improved coordination.

Forum III, held in Brazil in 2000, made a number of key recommendations (known as "Priorities for Action Beyond 2000"):

- by 2002, most countries, through a multi-stakeholder process, will have developed a National Profile on chemicals management [and] ensured national coordination for the sound management of chemicals.
- by 2005, at least five countries in each IFCS region will have full arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals.
- by 2005, most countries will have developed national policies with targets for improving the management of chemicals.

Forum IV, held 1-7 November 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand, reviewed progress made since Forum III and recommended a number of relevant actions:

- ensure than countries have core essential capabilities and capacities for the sound management of chemicals covering all stages of the life-cycle;
- promote a dialogue with international development assistance institutions with the goal of integrating chemical safety issues into poverty reduction strategies and national sustainable development strategies;
- take stock of all available capacities (e.g. as identified through National Profile Process) to help address the widening gap between countries in following chemical safety policies; and
- facilitate national-level dialogues to assist with integrating chemicals management activities.

2.3 The Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals

The Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) was established in 1995 by UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and OECD as Participating Organisations following recommendations made by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development to strengthen cooperation and increase coordination in the field of chemical safety. In January 1998, UNITAR formally joined the IOMC as a Participating Organisation (PO). The purpose of the IOMC is to promote coordination of the policies and activities pursued by the POs, jointly or separately, to achieve the sound management of chemicals in relation to human health and the environment.

To ensure good communication among the seven organisations and as a means for ensuring coordination on topics of common concern, the Inter-Organisation Coordinating Committee (IOCC) was established. The IOCC is comprised of the senior managers responsible for the chemicals-related programmes in the seven respective organisations. The IOCC meets twice per year to discuss relevant topics and to exchange information on ongoing activities. The responsibility of chairing the IOCC is shared among the participating organisations on a rotating basis, with each chairperson serving a 2-year term. Tools have also been developed to facilitate information flow among the members of the IOCC and their respective organisations, including a calendar of events and an inventory of activities featured on the IOMC website. In areas requiring technical coordination, specific groups have been established for: harmonisation of classification and labelling of chemicals; assessment of existing industrial chemicals and pollutants; chemical accident/emergency preparedness and response; and pollutant release and transfer registers.

2.4 Regional and Supranational Cooperation

Increasingly, countries are also joining together in regional groupings in order to facilitate trade and/or to address issues of common concern. Related to this, governments have long found it to be advantageous, especially those whose economies are closely integrated or strive to be closely integrated, to co-operate, and therefore share the often resource-intensive burden on a variety of chemicals issues, including, data collection and sharing; basic research; evaluation; and even approvals and other regulatory actions. Such groupings span a wide spectrum from organisations that are relatively well integrated, such as the European Union, to less closely integrated fora for cooperation, such as SADC (Southern Africa Development Community), CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), Mercosur (Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme), APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Community), SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) (and its associated body, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (NACEC)).

Key supranational integration activities of note include those within the European Union and its predecessors, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and, to a lesser degree, among the NAFTA countries and the African Union (AU).

2.5 The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held 26 August – 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, adopted a Plan of Implementation and political declaration (The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development) to build upon the accomplishments since UNCED and implement activities so as to achieve targets for sustainable development, as set out in Agenda 21. A number of important new commitments related to chemicals and waste management were also agreed, including to:

- renew commitment, as advanced in Agenda 21, to sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and of hazardous wastes for sustainable development as well as for the protection of human health and the environment, *inter alia*, aiming to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
- promote the ratification and implementation of relevant international instruments on chemicals and hazardous waste;
- further develop a strategic approach to international chemicals management based on the Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action beyond 2000 of the IFCS;
- encourage partnerships to promote activities aimed at enhancing environmentally sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes;
- and for Africa in particular: achieve sound management of chemicals, with particular focus on hazardous chemicals and wastes*, inter alia*, through initiatives to assist African countries in elaborating national chemical profiles, and regional and national frameworks and strategies for chemical management and establishing chemical focal points.

2.6 Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

A more recent initiative to address – at least in part – the issue of synergies among chemicals initiatives at the international level is the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). SAICM is to review current actions to advance the sound management of chemicals, identify gaps and propose concrete projects and priorities. The initiative was endorsed by the WSSD in Johannesburg, which called for the completion of the SAICM by 2005. The first Preparatory Committee meeting, in which over 120 governments, and numerous NGOs and IGOs particitipated, was held in November 2003. At the PrepCom, a wide scope for SAICM, in terms of which international agreements it might address, was proposed. Agreements such as the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), and formal conventions such as the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions, were proposed for inclusion in SAICM.

In the context of capacity building, a number of issues were raised for consideration.[3] First, in a discussion on developing coherent and integrated national programmes, it was suggested that experiences gained from pilot countries that have initiated such programmes might provide useful input to SAICM discussions. Second, it was proposed that synergies for capacity building under international chemicals management agreements also be examined,

[3] More detail can be found in the document *Contribution of UNITAR to SAICM PrepCom 1*.

as implementation of specific obligations often requires core skills and infrastructures to be in place at the national level. Lastly, the issue of ensuring that chemicals management issues are reflected in the priorities of countries requesting development assistance was raised by many participants. Similar recommendations were also made at a November 2002 UNITAR/IOMC/OPCW Thematic Workshop on Financial Resource Mobilisation (see section 14, below). While the final form and content of SAICM has not yet been determined, one key aspect of the strategic approach is to promote the incorporation of chemical safety issues into the development agenda.

3. International Agreements

In addition to the above policy frameworks and institutions, international agreements and conventions have affected and will continue to affect national legislation, regulations and policies for the sound management of chemicals. Different agreements have different objectives and can therefore be considered tools to help countries address specific challenges. However, many conventions are also dependent that a country has the basic elements for sound chemicals in place. Examples of key international agreements, many of which have only been recently negotiated, include: the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the PIC Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and ILO Convention 170 concerning safety in the use of chemicals at work.[4] These various instruments have been negotiated under the auspices of several international organisations, such as UNEP, FAO and ILO and, following the ratification at the national level, are often implemented through national counterpart ministries of the respective international organisations (for example, a national environment ministry takes the lead in implementing an agreement negotiated under the auspices of UNEP).

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The objective of the 2001 Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPS are chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms and are toxic to humans and wildlife. The Convention initially targets 12 POPs for reduction and eventual elimination, nine of which are pesticides: aldrin, dieldrin, chlordane, DDT, endrin, heptachlor, hexacholorobenzene, mirex, toxaphene; two are industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene (which is also used as a pesticide) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and two families of unintentionally produced chemicals: dioxins and furans. Continued use of DDT is allowed for vector control until safe, affordable and effective alternatives are in place. Parties must make determined efforts to identify, label and remove PCB containing equipment by 2025, and manage those wastes in an environmentally sound manner no later than 2028. In addition the Convention sets up a process for selecting additional chemicals which have POPs characteristics to be

[4] These agreements are presented in more detail below; see also the companion document *Searching for Synergies* on wastes-specific agreements.

included in Annex A (elimination), Annex B (restriction) and Annex C (release reduction from unintentional production). The Convention establishes arrangements for the purpose of providing technical assistance and promoting the transfer of technology to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It also establishes a financial mechanism for the provision of adequate and sustainable financial resources to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to assist in their implementation of the Convention. On an interim basis, the institutional structure of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has been designated the principal entity entrusted with the operations of the financial mechanism.

Under the Convention, Parties are required to develop and implement a plan for the implementation of their obligations. These national implementation plans (NIPs), should as appropriate, include action plans designed to characterize and address the release of unintentionally produced POPs, promoting *inter alia*, the use of best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) for existing and new sources. The development of National Implementation Plans for POPs by developing countries and countries with economies in transition who have signed the Convention or who are a Party to it, are eligible for funding by the GEF.[5]

The Use of Precaution in Environmental Agreements

The precautionary principle calls for preventive, anticipatory measures to be taken when an activity raises threats of harm to the environment, wildlife, or human health, even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

It has taken root in international statements of policy and legally binding agreements dealing with high-stakes environmental concerns of low scientific certainty. Key international agreements that refer to precaution include:

- the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (Principle 15);
- the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

While there is no universally agreed upon, specific definition that fits all situations, acceptance of precaution nonetheless reflects a significant paradigm shift in the environment-development realm of decision making. (*Adapted from WWF*)

[5] <www.pops.int>

Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

The 1998 Rotterdam Convention is an important instrument for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing countries as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of certain hazardous chemicals (including pesticides) and severely hazardous pesticide formulations, and for ensuring compliance to these decisions by exporting countries. Substances for export that come within the terms of Convention must be packaged and labeled in a manner that is adequately protective of human health and the environment. Thirty-one chemicals are subject to the Convention: 21 pesticides, five industrial chemicals and five severely hazardous pesticide formulations. Further chemical substances can be notified for action under the Convention.

Developing countries, usually as the importers of scheduled chemicals, directly participate in the decision-making process, as exports can only take place with their prior informed consent (PIC). For this procedure to work countries have to strengthen their national infrastructure and institutions to ensure that the importers within their jurisdiction possess the necessary scientific, technical and legal information to be able to manage these chemicals safely and in line with the Convention. As with other Conventions, the role of the Customs Departments in verifying the imported substance is an important provision. The technical assistance necessary for the strengthening of national institutions can be provided by countries with more advanced programmes for regulating chemicals.[6]

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (as either adjusted and/or amended)

The 1985 Vienna Convention, its 1987 Montreal Protocol and subsequent amendments are aimed at protecting the ozone layer from various human activities. The Convention encourages intergovernmental cooperation on research, systematic observations of the ozone layer, monitoring CFC production and the exchange of relevant information on human activities. The Convention is concerned with the indirect effect of chemical substances on the ozone layer. When CFCs breakdown they release chlorine atoms that gives rise to the ozone depletion. Similarly, bromine atoms are released by halon breakdowns that have a similar impact. The Vienna Convention is a framework Convention and does not contain legally binding controls or targets. The Montreal Protocol was designed to reduce the production and consumption of a number of CFCs and several halons following agreed phase-out schedules that are based on scientific and technical assessments. Amendments to the Protocol have adjusted the phase-out schedules, introduced new controlled substances to the list (currently at 96 substances) and introduced other types of control measures. A range of alternative chemical substances have been developed and commercialized allowing developed countries to end the use of CFCs faster than originally anticipated. The Montreal Amendment to the Protocol included provision to ban exports of used, recycled and reclaimed substances other than for destruction, to discourage illegal sales of these substances.

[6] <www.pic.int>

The Multilateral Fund has provided financial assistance to developing countries so they can comply with the provisions of the Protocol and its amendments, including the use of safe alternatives and related technologies. Developing countries have had a grace period before they had to start their phase-out schedules which recognizes the fact that developed countries while being responsible for the bulk of total emissions, have more financial and technological resources available for adopting alternative substances. Legislation to prevent illegal traffic in CFCs and the prevention of smuggling relies on action by national governments to both introduce statutory controls and more enforcement actions by customs departments especially through harmonized chemical classification and labeling systems.[7]

United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

The Convention was adopted in 1988 response to the growing trend in the illicit production of, demand for, and traffic in, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Illicit traffic has been seen as a serious threat to the health and welfare of people that adversely affects the economic, cultural and political functions of countries. The Convention centers on strengthening and enhancing legal measures for international cooperation aimed at suppressing international trafficking. The Convention reinforces the earlier Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Agreed measures to achieve the aims, include monitoring of international trade in the substances and proper labeling and documentation of legitimate trade. Prior to an export, the exporter is required to obtain details from the competent authority of the importer.

National activities include strengthening and enhancing of domestic legislative systems to establish illicit trafficking as a criminal offence. Developing countries can receive mutual legal assistance and support under the Convention, including specific training programmes for law enforcement and customs department officials. Strengthening of customs departments to prevent illegal traffic can also be considered in the light of a joint awareness programme to restrict illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and in banned or severely restricted pesticides. This would promote the ability of a country to more efficiently manage such substances.[8]

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemicals Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC)

The CWC, which came into effect on 29 April 1997, is aimed at eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective control that is largely outside the scope of this summary. However, it also covers chemicals and activities not prohibited under the Convention. These include the so-called dual-purpose chemicals and their precursors. Indeed the exchange of scientific and technical information, and the production, processing and use of such chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, are permitted. Imports and exports of scheduled chemicals are also

[7] <www.unep.org/ozone/>
[8] <www.incb.org/e/conv/1988/index.htm>

permitted subject to the conditions as laid down in the Convention and the relevant decisions that have been taken by the policy making organs of the organisation. Inspections of scheduled chemical production facilities as well as other chemical production facilities producing by synthesis discrete organic chemicals, including chemicals containing phosphorus, sulfur and fluorine, are included as part of the verification regime.

National implementation of the Convention involves adoption of measures by each State Party to fulfill its obligations under the Convention. In particular, it includes the enactment of necessary legislation to prohibit activities which are not permitted under the Convention, setting up National Authorities which are to serve as national focal points for implementation of the Convention, and bringing national regulations concerning trade in chemicals into line with the provisions of the Convention. In order to facilitate national implementation, technical assistance, training of personnel, and legal assistance aimed at capacity building are provided by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. As with other Conventions, activities are undertaken through the National Authorities which assist in briefing national scientific and technological communities and the public at large on the requirements of the Convention. Synergies between the CWC and other relevant treaties could strengthen national chemicals management.[9]

International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (Revised version)

The 2002 version of the FAO International Code is a revised version of the 1985 Code of the same name. Provisions for PIC originally drafted in the earlier Code were removed from the revised version, as the Rotterdam Convention specifically addressed this important issue. The Code was developed in response to a growing concern regarding the appropriateness of supplying pesticides to countries that lack the infrastructure to register pesticides and thereby ensure their safe use. The objectives of the Code are to establish voluntary standards of conduct for all public and private entities engaged in, or associated with the trade, distribution and use of pesticides, particularly where there is inadequate or no national legislation to regulate pesticides. The standards set forth in the Code focus on risk reduction, protection of human health and the environment, and support for sustainable agriculture developed by adopting various procedures. The Code details responsibilities of governments to legislate, regulate and enforce such actions as well as establish information exchange networks between regulatory authorities on actions for banned or severely restricted pesticides. Establishment of appropriate educational, advisory, extension and health care services are also included. Under the Code industry is responsible for adhering to standards of manufacture, distribution and advertising of pesticides especially in countries that lack appropriate legislation or means of implementing regulations. They also have to ensure that pesticides are adequately tested in terms of risk and that pesticides are adequately labelled and packaged.

[9] <www.opcw.org>

At the national level, cooperation between all organizations and institutions involved or associated with the trade and application of pesticides is required under the Code. The Code applies to governments, industry and has implications for workers in terms of protection of their health and environment as a consequence of actions. Clearly, all national organizations involved in pesticides should examine how best to co-operate to implement legislation and exchange information on related activities under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and the Code.[10]

ILO Chemicals Convention 1990, No. 170

The Convention represents one of the most far-reaching international agreements in the area of chemicals management and specifically addresses the protection of workers from harmful effects of chemicals at the workplace. It applies to all branches of economic activity in which chemicals are used and covers all chemicals and provides specific measures in respect of hazardous chemicals. The Convention requires that classification systems be established and that all chemicals should be marked to indicate their identity. Hazardous chemicals should be labelled to provide essential information on their classification, their hazards and safety precautions to be observed. Because of the tri-partite composition of the ILO under whose jurisdiction the Convention was negotiated, governments, suppliers, employers and workers all have responsibilities for the safe management and handling of chemicals. Governments are required to develop national policies on safety in the use of chemicals at work and that may include measures to prohibit and/or restrict the use of certain chemicals.[11] Suppliers that may include manufactures, importers and distributors are required to ensure that chemicals are properly classified and labelled and that safety data sheets are provided to employers. Employers have an obligation to ensure that workers are not exposed to chemicals exceeding national or international limits, they are provided with safety data sheets and to train workers on all aspects of safety in the use of chemicals in the workplace. Employers are also required to assess the risks associated with use the use of chemicals and identify options to protect workers throughout all stages of the life-cycle of the chemical. Workers have an obligation to co-operate with their employers and to take all reasonable steps to minimize or avoid risk.

At the national level countries are required to develop coherent policies on safety in the use of chemicals at work in order to reduce the incidence of chemically induced illnesses. The establishment of information exchange mechanisms to obtain information from suppliers of chemicals, and to provide such information to workers is an essential national activity. So too is the provision of appropriate preventive measures and facilities to workers to protect them from chemical hazards.[12] There is much scope for synergistic activities especially concerned with information exchange between the Stockholm, Rotterdam, and ILO Chemicals Conventions and the International Code of Conduct, especially with regard to issues of hazard, risk, labeling and packaging and chemicals management generally. In this respect, particular attention should also be paid to the more recently established GHS.

[10] <www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Code/PM_Code.htm>
[11] The related *ILO Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Agriculture (184)* also requires that countries have appropriate national systems establishing specific criteria for the importation, classification, packaging and labelling of chemicals used in agriculture, and for their banning or restriction.
[12] <www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/standard.htm>

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)

The 2002 UN Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is an important new tool that countries can draw upon to develop national chemical hazard communication systems by providing a basis for the establishment of comprehensive chemical safety programs. It represents an important step in harmonizing national chemical hazard communication systems worldwide and has a great potential to improve chemical safety across all relevant sectors. The GHS is a consistent and coherent approach to identifying the hazards of chemicals, and providing information on these hazards and associated protective measures to users or those who may be exposed. The system is structured so that appropriate elements for classification and communication, which consider the target population, can be selected. Those who then use chemicals can take the proper steps to protect themselves and the environment.

The non-binding GHS covers all hazardous chemical substances, dilute solutions and mixtures and addresses how labels and safety data sheets should be used to convey information about their hazards, and how to protect people from these effects. Food additives, pesticide residues, pharmaceuticals and cosmetic products intended for consumer use are not covered under the GHS in terms of labelling for intentional intake. However, these types of chemicals *are* covered where workers may be exposed, and in transport if potential exposure warrants. The GHS also provides a basis for safety training and health promotion. Target populations include employers, workers, including those involved in transport, consumers, and emergency responders. Others who provide services to these people will also find the information useful (e.g., doctors, nurses, safety engineers and occupational hygienists). The GHS includes harmonized criteria for the definition of physical hazards (such as flammability), health hazards (such as carcinogenicity) and environmental hazards. These internationally-developed criteria are used to evaluate the hazards of both substances and mixtures.[13] Governments have been invited to take the necessary steps, through appropriate national procedures and/or legislation, to implement the GHS as soon as possible and no later than 2008 (a target also agreed at WSSD and IFCS Forum IV). It is expected that other international agreements, such as those listed above, will be amended in their various aspects in order to be conformity with the classification criteria and hazard communication elements (e.g. labels and safety data sheets) of the GHS.

UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)

The 1979 CLRTAP was the first international legally binding instrument to tackle problems of air pollution on a broad regional basis. Besides laying down general principles of international cooperation for air pollution abatement, the Convention sets up an institutional framework bringing together research and policy. It has been extended by eight specific protocols, including one each on heavy metals, POPs, as well as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds and ammonia for the abatement of acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone. The Convention primarily targets air pollution in Europe, but Canada and the United States are also parties. As the focus of the convention is a

[13] <www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs.html>

regional improvement in air quality, the accession of some central and eastern European countries to the EU will mean a significant improvement for Europe, particularly as some of the acceding nations are significant emitters.[14]

Through the protocols, parties set national emission ceilings based on the concepts of critical loads and cost effectiveness. The latest protocol on acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone sets emission reduction targets of up to 90% for some European countries by 2010. In addition, the Protocol requires that countries set limits on the amount of specific pollutants that may be emitted from certain stationary and mobile sources. As with all protocols, parties must report on their implementation and review regional progress toward meeting the objectives.

UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

The Aarhus Convention was adopted in 1998 at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process and establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement and active participation of all stakeholders, and links government accountability to environmental protection.[15] The Convention elaborates on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which establishes the public's right to access to information, to participation in decision making and to justice in environmental matters. The Convention grants the public rights and imposes obligations on Parties and public authorities based on these three "pillars." Although the Convention remains regional in scope, the ethos of the Convention seems to be gaining broader support and forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. The WSSD Declaration and Plan of Implementation reiterated the importance of transparency, accountability and civil society involvement in many different decision-making contexts.

National implementation of the Convention involves taking the necessary legislative, regulatory and other measures to establish and maintain the Convention's provisions. For instance, information on the environment, or affecting the environment (such as development plans), held by public authorities must be accessible to any party without a need for the party to state a particular interest, unless the information is especially exempted. Governments must also develop national information systems and procedures that ensure systematic and periodic dissemination of environmental information, such as national pollutant inventories or registers (PRTRs).[16] These systems must also provide sufficient product information to enable consumers to make informed environmental choices. Public participation requirements apply to specific activities (such as those usually requiring an EIA), plans, programmes and policies, as well as executive regulation and legally binding normative instruments. Public participation processes must include public notice and detailed information of the proposed activity, transparent opportunities for comment and involvement, reasonable timeframes and

[14] <www.unece.org/env/lrtap>
[15] <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>
[16] An extra-ordinary meeting of the Parties held on 21 May 2003 in Kiev, Ukraine in the framework of the fifth 'Environment for Europe' Ministerial Conference adopted a Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs).

full disclosure on the process. The access-to-justice provisions of the Convention are closely linked to its first two pillars; that is, the public has access to a judicial or non-judicial review procedure if its rights to information or participation have not been dealt with in accordance to the Convention. The public may also challenge acts and omissions by private persons or the government that contravene national law relating to the environment.

4. Opportunities for Integrated Capacity Development under International Agreements

The growing number of international agreements dealing with chemicals suggests development of integrated and co-ordinated approaches for national level implementation. At the international level, there is also increasing attention focused on how to improve "synergies" between related agreements, their required actions and institutional functioning.[17] Countries should therefore consider developing platforms for exploring opportunities for developing such linkages between the instruments created under various international agreements. Integrated and co-ordinated implementation of such instruments at the national level could potentially minimise costs for government as well as for the regulated community. A committee made up of ministries/agencies and all stakeholders who are affected or interested in a particular international agreement could be set up to deal with implementation issues in a co-ordinated manner.

Countries should also consider efforts and mechanisms that may be ongoing in the context of other national level activities, such as developing a national implementation plan (NIP) for the Stockholm Convention. For example, in developing a NIP, countries are encouraged to establish a multi-stakeholder coordinating committee, assess national infrastructure and capacity, set priorities, and develop a national strategy for information exchange, communication and awareness raising. International convention secretariats could foster such efforts by assisting countries in thinking through how implementation of all related conventions at the country level could be achieved in a more integrated way.[18]

While each international agreement has its precise objectives and purpose, some of the broad capacities required to implement the obligations under various agreements at the national level (and their required regulatory and policy instruments) are often similar, if not the same. Six such areas are briefly mentioned below.

Development of an Information Base

A key component of sound chemicals management, and one required in many international agreements, is the capacity to gather information. This may take the form of chemical inventories or lists, supplemented by a means for disseminating the gathered information

[17] "Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management" is the topic of a Thematic Workshop being organized by UNITAR and other international partners in March 2004.

[18] By ratifying relevant international chemicals and wastes agreements, countries (if not already a Party) may also facilitate access to technical support from relevant Secretariats.

(information exchange). For example, countries may need to establish some kind of inventory of chemicals in use at the national level or international conventions may require emissions reporting to air, water or land for chemicals. In this context countries may want to consider if they develop separate inventories of chemicals or emissions, or consolidate their efforts within more integrated approaches such as development of PRTRs.

Control Measures for Risk Reduction

A number of international agreements include chemical use restrictions/bans, including import/export controls, or the ability to classify chemicals or to apply existing classification schemes and ensure appropriate labelling. In some cases the same chemicals are included in distinct international agreement. Those close coordination, or even integration of activities may be warranted. For example in the area of classification and labeling, implementing the GHS would ensure coordinated chemical classification and hazard communication at the national level.

Development of an Enabling Infrastructure and Related Capacities

Several international agreements contain provisions that require core elements of national chemicals management such as legal/regulatory capacity or an infrastructure for risk assessment and risk management decision-making, either for specific chemicals or for identifying risks under conditions of use in a particular country. A country may consider, for example, how to develop an integrated strategy for building capacity to undertake risk management decision-making (e.g. building up a core team of experts, undertaking step-by-step risk-benefit analysis, involving relevant stakeholders) rather than having a decentralized approach.

Policy Issues

International agreements include a range of policy issues that could be considered from an "integrated" perspective. These could include, for example, life-cycle management approaches, developing a national approach of a precautionary policy/approaches or putting coherent definitions of confidentiality in place.

Institutional and Coordinating Issues

Lastly, international agreements often require institutional and coordinating capacities at the national level regarding chemicals management. Topics may include resource mobilisation, public awareness and technical assistance. Of particular concern to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, for example, are the numerous chemicals management issues requiring technical assistance (either on a voluntary on mandatory basis). An integrated approach might attempt to harmonize national needs and requests across multiple conventions and integrate management of technical assistance that is received.

Emergency Management and Response

Chemical accidents and incidents can take place throughout the chemical life-cycle phases governed by different international conventions (e.g. during production, transport, use and disposal). Responding to such emergencies, however, requires an integrated and coordinated approach not limited to one single convention but requiring capacities at the national (and regional) level to manage emergencies appropriately by having appropriate legislation, enforcement and emergency response provisions in place. There are some related international conventions and activities that may assist in this task.[19] A related concern may be the use of chemicals or toxic wastes in terrorism.

[19] These could include, for example, ILO Convention 174 on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents, the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, UNEP's APELL (Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at a Local Level) Programme, the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (the United Nations mergency response mechanism to activate and provide international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies), and the UNECE Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters.

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Part B: National Framework for an Integrated Programme for Sound Chemicals Management

Programme Area E of Agenda 21 is of particular relevance to countries that are in the process of establishing or improving their national systems for chemicals management. Along with the national-level capacities implied by various international agreements (see section 3 above), it provides a list of basic elements of national chemicals management:

(a) adequate legislation;
(b) information gathering and dissemination;
(c) capacity for risk assessment and interpretation;
(d) establishment of risk management policy;
(e) capacity for implementation and enforcement;
(f) capacity for rehabilitation of contaminated sites and poisoned persons;
(g) effective education programmes; and
(h) capacity to respond to emergencies.

This part of the Guidance Document provides a framework for an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals Management by elaborating the concept of integrated capacity development, highlighting the differences between projects and programmes, and emphasizing the importance of inter-ministerial coordination, stakeholder involvement and the commitment of decision-makers.

5. Opportunities for Integrated Capacity Development at the National Level

Given the framework of basic elements for sounds chemicals management provided by Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, combined with existing national-level needs and priorities and the large number of international agreements and initiatives either requiring or calling for common country-level actions, what are the elements of an *integrated* approach to capacity development?

5.1 What is Capacity Development?

It is helpful to first examine what is meant by the term "capacity development" or "capacity building". While used in many contexts and having differing meanings for different people and organizations, members of the international community[20] involved in capacity building for sustainable development have been recently moving toward a common definition of the term:

[20] Sources: Capacity Development Initiative, October 2000, *Country Capacity Development Needs and Priorities: A Synthesis*; and Report of the UN Inter-Agency Workshop on Capacity Development, Geneva, 20-22 November 2002.

> "*Capacity* refers to the ability of individuals, communities, institutions, organizations, social and political systems to use the natural, financial, political, social and human resources that are available to them for the definition and pursuit of sustainable development goals. *Capacity building* or *capacity development* is the process by which individuals, institutions and countries strengthen these abilities".

Individuals, institutions and systems are understood to already have capacity. To enhance, build upon or develop that capacity the process should be endogenously driven. If participants drive the process, they will have a sense of ownership of the capacity-development initiative and are more likely to incorporate the added capacity in the long term. As such, capacity-building initiatives should be based on the stated needs of those developing their capacity to meet specific targets. There is now general agreement that capacity building does not only refer to enhancing individual skills but to addressing institutional, organizational and societal dimensions of a country's performance. Capacity development may also involve participants' integration into knowledge networks that help sustain their capacities, as well as the material and financial support to apply capacities. A strategy to develop capacity may involve at least these three components:

(1) At the *individual* level, capacity development refers to the process of changing attitudes and behaviours, most frequently through imparting knowledge and developing skills through training. However it also involves learning by doing, participation, ownership, and processes associated with increasing performance through changes in management, motivation, morale, and levels of accountability and responsibility.

(2) Capacity development at the *institutional* level focuses on overall organisational performance and functioning capabilities, as well as the ability of an organisation to adapt to change. It aims to develop the institution as a total system, including its constituent individuals and groups, as well as its relationship to the outside. In addition to improvements in physical assets, such as infrastructure, institutional capacity building involves clarification of missions, structures, responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting lines, changes in procedures and communications, and changes in the deployment of human resources.

(3) At the *systemic* level capacity development is concerned with the creation of "enabling environments", that is, the overall policy, economic, regulatory, and accountability frameworks within which institutions and individuals operate. Relationships and processes between institutions, both formal and informal, as well as their mandates, are important.

Capacity building can occur at local, national, or global levels and amongst any individual or group of stakeholders— individuals, entities or institutions—as well as at an overall systems level. Interactions between the different levels are also important to overall capacity. Capacity is also relevant in both the short term (for example, the ability to address an immediate problem) and the long term (the ability to create an environment in which particular changes will take place).[21]

[21] See box on page 59 about Internal and External Financial Resource Mobilisation in Ecuador for an example of capacity development at the institutional and systemic levels.

5.2 Possible Objectives of Integrated Capacity Development

"Integrated" Means "Co-ordinated"

Developing integrated capacity means, first and foremost, seeking to strengthen coordination and ensure that efforts are complementary in nature across government among the various activities and tools that are relevant to chemicals management. The goal of such strengthening is to increase the effectiveness of existing capacities and programmes. For example, under an integrated scheme, ministries of agriculture, environment, health, labour and others would continue to work on the aspects of chemicals management for which they have the relevant mandates and substantive expertise, but their efforts would be co-ordinated to avoid conflicting policies, gaps and unnecessary overlaps with a view to contributing towards common goals. Where initiatives by various actors require common tools or comprise common activities, such as the development of an information system, the establishment of an emissions register, or the organisation of public awareness raising campaigns, such efforts would not be organised separately and on a sectoral basis, but in a way that would minimise duplication and maximise institutional efficiencies. From the perspective of the regulated community and others outside the government, such co-ordination of activities would also appear as a more streamlined and rationalised system.

"Integrated" Also Encompasses a "Life Cycle Approach"

A second aspect of an integrated national programme, which is closely related to the first, is the idea of approaching chemicals management topics from a holistic, life-cycle perspective. Such an approach helps to ensure that potential risks to health and environment at the various stages of the life cycle (e.g. extraction of primary materials, production, storage, transport, use, import/export and disposal – the "cradle to grave" approach) are taken into account and that appropriate measures are put in place to manage and reduce those risks. Consideration should also be given to concepts of extended producer responsibility and product design in order to minimise the use of hazardous materials from the outset, and attention paid to how to manage chemical emergencies (such as a chemical spill during transport or an accidental emission from a factory).[22]

The process of developing an integrated national programme, which entails looking at all ongoing activities as well as problems/needs in a holistic way, will help to uncover stages of the life cycle, or elements within particular stages which may have "fallen through the cracks" under the existing schemes within individual ministries and/or agencies.

For example, in national and international processes and discussions, the link between chemicals production and use, and the resultant generation of chemical wastes (with all its accompanying challenges) has been increasingly focused upon. For example, Senegal, in

[22] The OECD refers to extended producer responsibility (EPR) as a policy approach under which producers accept significant responsibility - financial and/or physical - for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. Assigning such responsibility could provide incentives to prevent wastes at the source, promote product design for the environment and support the achievement of public recycling and materials management goals. See <www.oecd.org>.

their country project on Integrated Chemicals management, made a formal request to UNITAR to develop a wastes-related Action Plan. At the international level, at SAICM PrepCom I, many governments and stakeholders outside of government supported including chemical wastes, in general and the Basel Convention in particular, within the scope of the initiative. The UNITAR/IOMC programme has, in response to such initiatives, been expanded to include wastes-related issues.

"Integrated" Should Include "Stakeholders"

Thirdly, the term "integrated" can also be interpreted as a reference to the involvement of various stakeholders - parties who have an interest in and/or are affected by chemicals issues. There are likely to be many untapped opportunities to form partnerships and foster collaboration among non-governmental as well as governmental stakeholders. Pursuit and development of such opportunities is another important facet of an integrated national programme.

"Integrated" takes advantages of "Synergies"

Lastly, an integrated approach identifies and takes advantages of synergies. This may mean, for example, undertaking joint projects to implement common provisions of several international agreements in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. If several international agreements require establishing an inventory of regulated chemicals, then an integrated approach might suggest developing a single, comprehensive inventory of chemicals in a country, rather than multiple inventories for each of the various agreements (which often will regulate at least some of the same chemicals).

Benefits of an Integrated Approach

Despite the existence of chemicals-related laws, policies and practices, the challenge of establishing a coherent, *integrated* national chemicals management framework that coexists with broader national development policies and effectively addresses local needs has yet to be tackled by most countries. Indeed, some developing countries and countries with economies in transition have initiated programmes to address specific aspects of chemicals management and safety. However, the production in recent years of National Profiles (to assess the national infrastructure for management of chemicals) and related discussions in international fora such as the IFCS have documented that the great majority of these countries do not have fully functional and comprehensive national chemicals management systems in place. Moreover, despite a trend toward increasing chemical production in developing countries, there is a widening gap between countries with sound management systems in place and those without as regards the capacity to manage such chemicals safely.

An integrated approach to chemicals management capacity development provides a great variety of benefits from streamlining administrative procedures to contributing towards a healthier society. Some of the potential benefits of an integrated approach to national chemicals management include:

- administrative benefits such as minimising overlaps and inconsistencies in policies and programmes;
- communications-related benefits, including improved information exchange within and among relevant parties, and raised awareness for the general public; and
- ensuring that chemicals management occurs at all stages of the life cycle - so that chemicals-related problems are not merely shifted from one medium to another, thereby increasing protection of human health and the environment.

5.3 Possible Substantive Areas for Integrated Capacity Development

For a number of chemicals management areas, integrated rather than separate capacity development efforts may be warranted. For example:

- the development of a multi-media Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) might be a viable alternative to maintaining separate emission inventories for air, water, and land;

- implementation of the Globally Hamonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) would benefit from close collaboration of government sectors responsible for classification and labeling of industrial chemicals, pesticides, consumer product chemicals and chemicals in transport respectively;

- border control – regulated chemicals may be facilitated by coordinated approaches in areas such as import and export control regulation and capacity building for customs officials to perform their monitoring duties;

- a national strategy for chemicals emergency response may benefit from a coordinated approach rather than developing separate emergency response procedures for different sectors and/or international agreements;

- pooling of resources for strengthening capacities for chemicals analysis and monitoring may result in an effective network of functioning laboratories with the capacities to serve various purposes; and

- development of a core network of experts able to conduct risk assessments may serve the needs of various ministries relying upon technical support to undertake risk assessment or to validate risk assessment conducted in other countries.

These are only a few examples where integrated approaches for chemicals management may result in more effectives control while saving resources at the same time. As countries develop integrated national programmes, many other opportunities for joint approaches may arise.

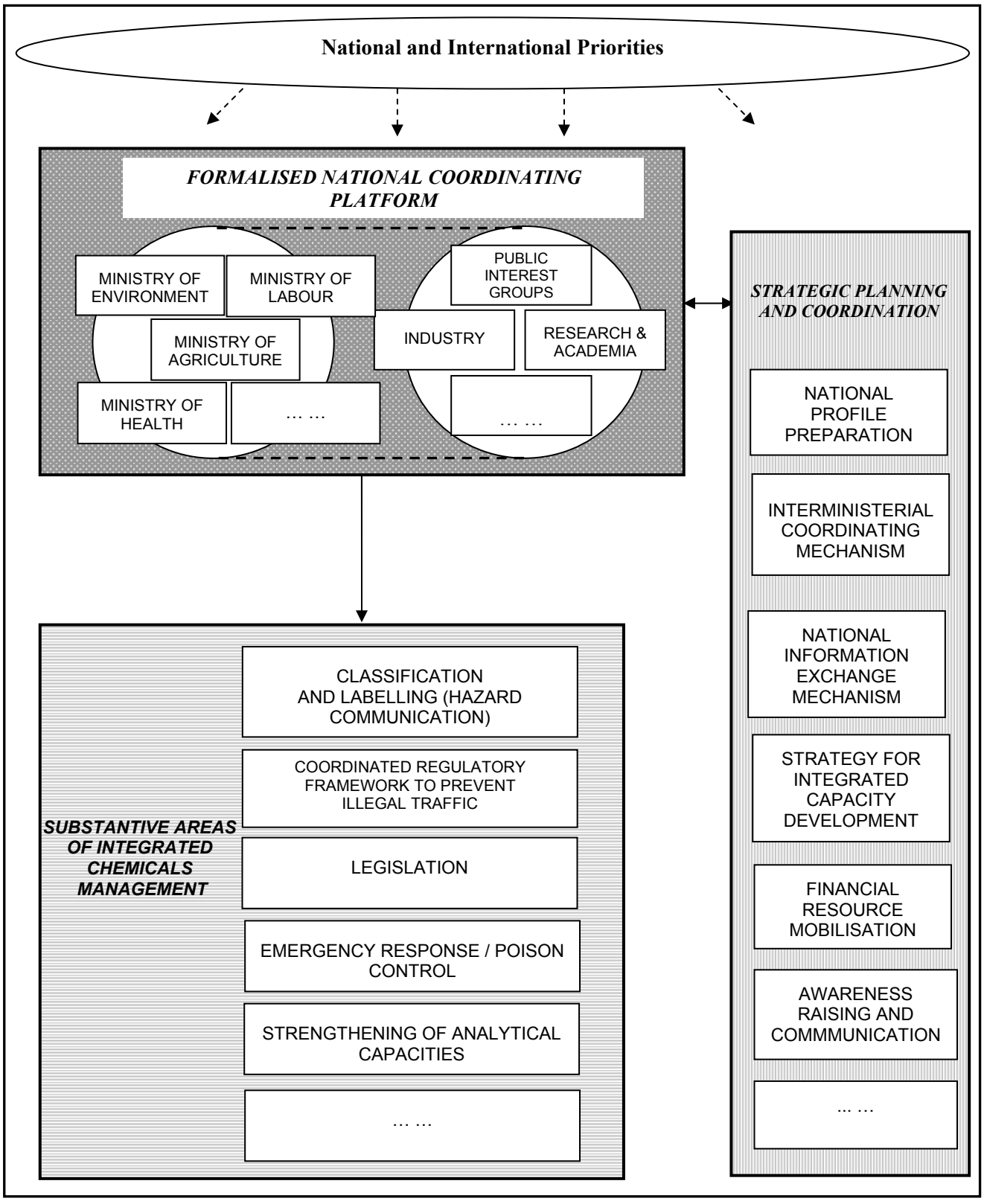
International Recommendations on Strengthening National Capacities for Chemical Analysis and Monitoring

A thematic workshop on *Strengthening National Capacities for Chemical Analysis and Monitoring* held in November 2001 recommended that:

- countries ensure that a legal framework (including infrastructure for enforcement) is in place at the national level for chemicals analysis and monitoring; activities under this framework should meaningfully involve interested and affected parties (stakeholders), build upon existing international experiences and take place in an integrated and coordinated fashion;
- donors be encouraged to ensure that equipment donations are suited to the needs of the recipient country and that appropriate training, service and maintenance are ensured; and
- countries should have a national plan for emergency response which should be regularly updated in an integrated way (this should take into account international information, as well as the control of cross-border transport of dangerous goods which makes analytical facilities and procedures for emergency situations necessary);

∗ A full report of this workshop is available from UNITAR.

Framework for an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals Management



6. Developing a National Policy and Programme on Chemicals Management

Based on identified needs and substantive areas of importance related to integrated capacity development, countries may then choose to proceed to developing a national policy or programme for sound chemicals management.

6.1 From a Project to a Programmatic Approach

A traditional approach to chemicals management capacity building has been to undertake specific projects to assist countries to achieve national or internationally-mandated objectives. While the project-based approach is useful for addressing some aspects of capacity development and chemicals management issues, there is increasing awareness that a more "holistic" and longer-term vision – through development of a programme – is likely to prove both more effective and efficient. While a "project" has a specific starting and end dates and a very specific goal, a "programme" is a catalytic and long-term initiative which provides an overall framework for co-ordinated action and implementation of specific activities. A programme is also usually larger in scope and may comprise multiple projects, as well as an overall vision, policy milestones and long-term plans. This document therefore seeks to provide a framework for such a programmatic or integrated approach to capacity development for the sound management of chemicals.

6.2 Developing a National Policy

Some countries have found it useful to develop a national policy on chemicals management - a set of principles and procedures which address a broad range of chemicals issues that all ministries are required to follow. Such a policy can be an effective, overarching tool for an integrated and sustainable national programme. At a minimum, the process of attempting to find common ground or even consensus among government and stakeholders participating in the development of such a policy is an exercise that, of itself, can provide many benefits for integrated national management.

The development process of a national policy will inevitably differ from country to country. It can occur as a culmination of the National Profile process, as was done in Hungary (see box below and also section 10). A National Profile may also contain specific priorities for action which could form the basis for a policy. In other cases, it may make sense to define some priorities for action through a decision-making process and to make use of the momentum generated through those activities to focus the attention of policy-makers on the need for an overall national policy. Alternatively, the identification of priorities may be linked to an existing national policy, with a focus on actions needed to further the objectives and principles contained therein. With either model, priority setting can provide the framework for the national policy.

The National Profile as a Catalyst for a National Policy Development – the Case of Hungary

The preparation of a National Profile in Hungary acted as a catalyst for a national policy and other, related chemical safety issues. A series of recommendations and principles were developed as a result of analysis of Hungary's chemical safety system. Key strategic recommendations included:

- Chemical safety should be treated as a strategic element of sustainable development;
- A policy on chemical safety should be developed;
- Development of a Chemical Safety Act is essential;
- The national co-ordination of chemical safety should be ensured by the establishment of an Inter-ministerial Commission;
- An information system for chemical safety must be developed;
- The creation of integrated, comprehensive chemical safety based on the principle of graduality (priorities) is not a one-time, finished process; authorities should be strengthened, and a Chemical Safety Inspectorate should be established;
- Development of chemical safety is a task for the whole society, including with the cooperation of governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- The right to chemical safety should be a basic civil right;
- It should be ensured that Hungary plays an active role in the development of regional (Central and Eastern European) chemical safety.

Some countries may find it useful to set up an advisory body or independent committee to draft the national policy. A national platform for chemicals management, or a similar mechanism could host the development of a national policy. The multi-sectoral nature of that body will help to facilitate coordination of ongoing activities and help to ensure that existing priorities will be taken into account, as diverse interests will be represented. Depending upon its status, those who participate in the national platform may also play a key role in promoting the policy and fostering action on the identified priorities, including obtaining the necessary political and financial support.

The contents of a national policy will vary from one country to the next: what is important is that it provides a general picture of where the country would like to be in five, ten and twenty years with respect to its chemicals management programme. It is also an opportunity to lay out the key principles to be promoted through chemicals management policies and activities . As a means to operationalise the overall aims stated in the national policy and to put them into concrete and measurable terms, it may be useful to include specific "milestones" in the policy statement. Milestones are simple statements on what is to be achieved and by when.

While milestones should be realistic and feasible, it is indeed possible that not all will be fulfilled by the specified dates. Nevertheless, such targets and deadlines are useful, in that they provide clear endpoints towards which efforts can then be directed and criteria for judging success, progress or failure.

The executive summary of Hungary's National Profile has taken the form of a policy statement in which overall chemicals management goals and milestones are outlined. In the case of Indonesia, the development of a national report following two years of targeted action on certain priority topics provided the basis for a national resolution on key principles and further actions needed.

6.3 Incorporating Chemicals Management with Strategic Environment and Development Objectives

While chemicals management cover a wide variety of issues at a number of different levels, they nevertheless do not exist in isolation from other important national and international objectives related to sustainable development. Such objectives include, for example, the protection of marginalized groups, protection of water supplies and drinking water, and poverty eradication.[23] It is important to recognise how chemicals management is linked to these broader development goals. For example, reducing chemical emissions to waterways can promote the broader objective of protecting water supplies and reducing exposure to vulnerable populations such as women and children (who may use the water for washing or swimming). Implementing a harmonized system of chemical labelling can increase worker protection, as well as facilitate trade in chemical products between countries. Decisions and activities taken regarding sound chemicals management should be viewed within the context of these broader issues.

It is important that these linkages be made in order to both realise benefits for effective chemicals management (through, for example, raising its stature as a priority issue within government), and to strengthen how policies are related and integrated government-wide. A coherent national chemicals policy also facilitates the allocation and mobilisation of financial resources. Countries developing a national chemical safety policy, for example, should highlight the relevant linkages when submitting capacity assistance requests to donors.

Relevant environment- and health-related national policies and programmes include, *inter alia*:

- pollution prevention and control programmes;
- education;
- biodiversity conservation;
- sustainable development initiatives;

[23] See, for example, the World Bank report *Toxics and Poverty: The Impact of Toxic Substances on the Poor in Developing Countries* (August 2002).

- clean water initiatives, agricultural extension services, occupational health and safety programmes; and
- sustainable tourism.

Strategic economic and social development policies can include, *inter alia*:

- communications;
- finance;
- foreign affairs (see below);
- international trade;
- justice;
- development/poverty reduction;
- science/technology and research programmes; and
- transport.

A small sample of the types of questions which can be raised in order to highlight potential linkages include: How can chemicals management programmes contribute to national efforts to promote pollution prevention and cleaner production, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises? What potential impacts might decisions made in the context of chemicals management have on regional and international trade? How might stronger management of chemicals positively affect the country's international image, corporate competitiveness and the market for its products? How can improvements in chemical safety enhance the health and quality of life of its citizens?

6.4 Linking Chemicals Management with Foreign Affairs Policy

Chemicals management issues are increasingly being addressed internationally through treaty negotiations, regional agreements and other instruments. International trends towards increased economic integration are being realised through regional and international agreements, many of which have a direct relationship to environmental (including chemicals-related) matters. Countries are often represented at these negotiations by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or a combination of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries, from whom Foreign Affairs officials take advice and direction. It is advisable to have effective, two-way communication among key ministries in order that consistent and clear national positions on chemicals issues are expressed in such international fora. Committing to objectives for chemicals management set internationally should be preceded by careful planning and agreement that the resources and commitment to implement such agreements at the national level will be obtained. Development of a National Policy can be such a tool to ensure consistency. Commitments made by countries at the international level without parallel commitments domestically may weaken, undermine or even render ineffective international instruments.

7. Interministerial Coordination and Cooperation

Governments, through the IFCS, have strongly recommended that collaboration to enhance interministerial dialogue and coordination occur within countries.[24] An analysis of existing structures, challenges and opportunities for enhanced coordination and cooperation, and examples of responses by a number of key countries can be of assistance to those who wish to address this important issue.

7.1 Ministries Concerned With the Sound Management of Chemicals

Chemicals management is a diverse field, spanning issues of public health, environmental protection, economics, industry, agriculture, worker protection, international relations and trade. As a result, a wide range of governmental ministries and agencies have responsibilities which, taken as a whole, comprise the overall integrated national programme.

Ministries concerned with, or who have a role in, the management of chemicals can include Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, Customs, Economics, Environment, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Industry, Justice, Labour, Public Works, Telecommunications or Transportation. Other governmental entities (such as central agencies or councils) could also have an interest, including those responsible for the development and implementation of laws, regulations, policies and activities related to chemicals management throughout their life cycle, and/or aspects of pollution prevention and control.

An integrated national programme is complicated by the fact that usually different ministries participate in the control of chemicals in different phases of the chemical life-cycle. Other elements, such as emergency response, are dispersed across different ministries and agencies. The allocation of responsibilities can vary between countries. Countries may use different titles for their ministries/agencies. In most cases:

- Ministries of *Agriculture* are generally concerned with the use of agricultural chemicals for the benefit of securing food supplies;

- *Customs Authorities* are generally responsible for ensuring that chemicals do not enter or leave the country contrary to government regulations, and tariffs and duties;

- Ministries of *Environment* are generally concerned with the direct and indirect effects of releasing chemicals into the environment as emissions and wastes to air, water and land;

- Ministries of *Finance* have a central role in financial resource allocations for chemicals-related activities;

[24] See section 2.2.

- Ministries of *Foreign Affairs* usually co-ordinate all international aspects of chemicals management, such as participation in relevant international agreements and conventions;

- *Government printing/publications offices* are generally concerned with the publication and distribution of laws, regulations and other government documents, and can play a role in raising public awareness;

- Ministries of *Health* are mainly concerned with the short- and long-term health impacts of chemicals (including emergencies and poisonings) on the general public or specific population groups;

- Ministries of *Industry* are often concerned with the production of chemicals and chemical products and the introduction of cleaner production technologies;

- Ministries of *Justice* or *Legal Affairs* are generally concerned with the development and enforcement of laws and regulations, and often deal with issues concerning public access to information, the protection of confidential business information, criminal and forensic issues and accidents/incidents/terrorism;

- Ministries of *Labour* are generally concerned with occupational health and safety issues related to the use and handling of chemicals at the workplace;

- Ministries of *Planning* primarily deal with economic planning (and land use/regional development). This ministry can also often deal with the donation or receipt of development assistance, which could include chemicals for agricultural use, technical or financial assistance for the development of chemical industries, or technical assistance for the management of chemicals;

- Ministries of *Science and Technology* play an important role in deciding the future direction and resource allocations for research and, at least indirectly, action on chemicals;

- Ministries of *Trade* are generally responsible for regulating the import and export of chemical substances and often have the authority to issue relevant trade permits; and

- Ministries of *Transport* are generally concerned with the safe transportation and storage of chemicals during the distribution phase.

7.2 Opportunities of Coordination and Cooperation

Governmental actors involved in chemicals management often operate on a sectoral basis (e.g. under their own, separate legislation) and thus may not be accustomed to working and sharing information. Other government bodies less directly involved in chemicals activities may not see a clear link between their activities and sound chemicals management, an area which may be considered to be largely the domain of environmental and health authorities. In

addition, several orders of government, e.g. federal, provincial and local governments, also typically share responsibilities (though often without recognising collaboration) for the implementation of chemicals management programmes, laws and policies. In fact, in some countries much of the actual implementation of relevant programmes and enforcement of chemicals-related laws is carried out at the local level.

Effective coordination among the whole range of those who have responsibility for or a stake in chemicals issues means that all those involved are familiar with each others' chemicals-related activities, priorities and positions, and the underlying reasons for each. Moreover, it suggests that all stakeholders use that information to make better quality and more strategic decisions on chemicals issues.

Possible Benefits and Challenges of Inter-ministerial Cooperation

Country experiences and international discussions have identified a range of benefits related to interministerial coordination. These include:

- common positions on issues are identified and reinforced;
- synergies are created – work can take place in collaboration instead of in isolation, resulting in additional benefits to both (or several) parties;
- duplication of efforts is avoided where possible, freeing up scarce resources for other priority issues;
- gaps in chemicals management are identified; and
- understanding of divergent issues is increased, and thus the potential for misunderstanding is decreased.

Challenges to sound inter- and intra-ministerial coordination and cooperation may include:

- conflicting or competing mandates;
- poor inter- and intra-ministerial communication;
- gaps in expertise;
- a lack of resources; and
- low priority given to chemicals issues within (a) particular ministry(ies).

Suggestions for Formalising Interministerial Coordination

Most, if not all countries that have attempted to address these issues have recognised the benefits of a multi-stakeholder "platform" for addressing national chemicals management issues in an integrated and co-ordinated way. Such a platform often has a defined relationship with, for example, existing committees, such as a pesticides registration committee, a policy formulation committee or a PIC decision-making task force. For most issues (except, for example, where policies are being developed government-wide through an agreed process), each individual committee usually maintains its own mandate and decision-making power - contributing to the integrity of the whole "network" and adding value to its own work.

International Recommendations on Strengthening Interministerial Coordination

A thematic workshop on *Strengthening Interministerial Coordination for the Sound Management of Chemicals* held in August 2002 recommended that:

- all countries should consider establishing an overall coordination mechanism for implementing the sound management of chemicals, taking into account already available mechanisms so as to avoid duplication;
- careful consideration should be given to the process for establishing the mechanism, including the development of Terms of Reference;
- stakeholder participation from outside of ministries should be facilitated, either directly through participation in the mechanism or in a consultative manner; and criteria should be used to set priorities for establishing a mechanism(s) that reflect the requirements and circumstances of individual countries.

∗ A full report of this workshop is available from UNITAR.

One can visualise varying degrees of formality for such a "network", depending upon countries' needs and preferences. Formalising national efforts in this regard, e.g. through a decree or law, may enhance its effectiveness (see Senegal example below). A decree or law can help to ensure that the efforts will have a real impact and that it will continue to function over the long term, notwithstanding changes in personnel or political leadership. Conversely, a less formalised collaboration - where existing committees and ministries merely share information informally - may prove to be a more dynamic forum where participants can share experiences, best practices and lessons learned with full confidence that their respective mandates may not change as a result of decisions made.

Countries may take the following questions into consideration when evaluating how to enhance dialogue and coordination, and in the design of their own process:

- Which ministries are regularly involved in chemicals management activities? Do they have a clear mandate regarding these activities?
- Do the activities of one ministry have an impact on the activities of another ministry?
- Would a ministry benefit from learning about the activities of other ministries or sharing information about its own activities?
- Do possibilities exist for the coordination of activities among ministries? Are there overlapping mandates?
- Would increased knowledge about chemical activities outside of government, eg. related to the NGO community or industry, benefit ministerial activities?
- What processes or mechanisms could be used to facilitate the sharing of information concerning chemicals management activities?
- What would an ideal membership be for a body that can act as a platform for such activities?

- Would it be useful to have more than one body, depending on the nature of the activities or issues being discussed?

8. Involving Stakeholders and Civil Society

Chemicals play a part in nearly all aspects of modern life. As a result, many individuals and groups in society have an interest in, and are potentially affected by, the way in which chemicals are managed and used. Those who produce, sell and use chemical products - from industrial managers to shopkeepers to homemakers - have responsibilities related to their judicious and correct use and sound management. A successful integrated national programme therefore requires involvement of those outside of government. If public and private interests are not supportive and/or engaged, the best-planned government programme could result in nothing more than a paper exercise.

Anyone who is concerned with the sound management of chemicals - be they producers, end users, workers or others - are potential stakeholders. While the role stakeholders play in any participatory process may differ for any number of reasons, all may bring legitimate perspectives to the table.

Most stakeholders (fortunately, for process management purposes) have self-organised into various identifiable categories. Such categories include:

- industry associations and industrial enterprises;
- the agricultural sector (e.g. farmers, agricultural associations, co-operatives);
- retailers and distributors;
- public health professionals;
- workers and workers' unions;
- public interest groups (e.g. environmental groups, consumer protection groups);
- research institutes and academia;
- women's organisations;
- communities; and
- individual citizens.

The support and engagement of such groups is often critical for the successful implementation of chemicals management strategies and initiatives. For example, public interest groups often have high credibility with the public - thus making their support of great added value to any process. The public can also play a role in monitoring commitments to standards of practice and can participate in enforcement of chemicals laws. It is of the utmost importance that private industry also be a key partner for chemicals management - otherwise chemicals-related regulation and/or other approaches (e.g. voluntary) becomes much more difficult, if not impossible, to implement. Workers who produce or use chemicals (and therefore likely have a higher potential for exposure to harmful chemicals) have a similar, critical stake in the outcomes of any process or programme addressing integrated chemicals management. Academics can bring expertise and an analytical perspective that may be more "arm's length" from any process or programme, and thus add value as well.

Country Examples: Ensuring Interministerial Co-ordination and Stakeholder Involvement

Senegal

As a participating country in the Programme *Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, a Ministerial decree (Number 000852 of 8 February 2003) established a permanent National Commission on Management of Chemicals for coordination and harmonisation of policies, with two sub-committees – one responsible for pesticides and the other for industrial chemicals. The Commission will also oversee the further implementation of activities related to poison control centre development and GHS implementation. Part of the formal commitment made by each ministry regarding this committee is a core commitment to work towards chemical safety in all their activities.

Slovenia

In 1996, Slovenia formed (by government resolution) an Intersectoral Committee on the Management of Dangerous Chemicals, made permanent in 2001 (and renamed the Intersectoral Committee on the Sound Management of Chemicals). Two types of membership were identified: full membership for, among others, 10 ministries responsible for dangerous chemicals; and associate membership for sectors such as NGOs and labour unions. The chair of the committee rotates from meeting to meeting. The principal goal of the committee is the better protection of health and the environment from the negative effects of chemicals - i.e. improved chemical safety. The working method is to find mutual solutions acceptable to all responsible and interested parties by their active engagement.

Numerous subcommittees were also set up which addressed a wide variety of chemicals-related issues, including, inter alia, implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, hazardous waste, chemicals accidents and good laboratory practices. As the committee's work progressed, it became more apparent that close cooperation between sectors on chemicals issues was necessary in order to promote integrated chemicals management.

Ecuador

During the course of the Programme *Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, Ecuador prepraed in 2002 a draft legal instrument to institutionalize a Permanent Committee for Inter-institutional Coordination for the Sound Management of Chemical. The present Project Committee will, under the authority provided by the instrument, form the core for the new coordinating body on chemicals management in Ecuador. While government ministries/institutions will be core participants, stakeholders outside of government that are have an interest in/are affected by chemicals management issues, will also be included.

Governments should therefore consider how representatives of these groups could be most effectively involved in the identification of priority problems and in the development and implementation of practical solutions. Moreover, it is probably not enough to obtain the views of non-governmental affected and interested parties but fail to take their input into account. Seeking affected and interested parties' input, but not acting upon or addressing the suggestions and concerns raised may generate distrust and friction.

A set of key principles and processes can be considered in any effort to meaningfully engage stakeholders in policy development and implementation for an integrated national programme. Indeed, many components of these principles and processes are applicable not only to the involvement of stakeholders, but also for inter- and intra-ministerial engagement on chemicals issues. Key principles and processes include: transparency, ensuring roles and responsibilities are clear, comprehensive participation, two-way communication, understandable and timely information disclosure, stakeholder education and adequate funding.[25]

Involving stakeholders in chemicals management, to the extent and in the capacity that is appropriate, should therefore be considered both prudent and imperative. Such an approach can help to:

- provide chemicals management with greater legitimacy by allowing affected and interested parties, where appropriate, an opportunity to influence related decision-making and programme development;
- ensure greater transparency of, and increase overall affected and interested parties' confidence in, chemicals management and related decision-making and programme development;
- improve chemicals management through the inclusion of local knowledge and values and the examination of expert knowledge by various affected and interested parties; and
- incorporate the different, and attempt to resolve conflicting, interests of the various affected and interested parties.

Indeed, Agenda 21 emphasises the importance of involving stakeholders in environmental decisionmaking. The possible contributions of stakeholders as partners with governments in fostering chemicals management and safety are numerous. The potential role of the various stakeholder groups are discussed in more detail below. [26]

8.1 Industry and the Private Sector

Industry - be they importers, manufacturers or users of chemicals - have a central role to play in developing an integrated national programme. Their cooperation in chemicals management issues is essential. Industry and the private sector may undertake voluntary initiatives such as product stewardship and 'Responsible Care' to reduce potential risks associated with their products and processes, thereby exceeding 'protections' and risk reductions which may have

[25] The principles are developed further in section 8.6.
[26] United Nations. 1993. *Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development*, Section 23.2.

been achieved through government regulation alone. Industry is also likely to have significant expertise and technical capacities which can be of great use, for example, in responding to chemicals-related accidents, generating essential hazard data, and developing alternatives.

8.2 Labour Unions

Labour unions represent the interests of workers who may be directly involved in any stage of the chemicals life cycle. Workers can be directly affected by chemicals accidents and overexposures to the point where lives can be in danger. Therefore workers have a particularly pivotal role in chemicals management. Labour unions may be an important source of information for workers on how to protect themselves from potential risks at the workplace, and have to react in case of chemicals incidents, thereby helping to create a well-informed workforce and contributing to the attainment of occupational health and safety standards.

8.3 Public Interest Groups

Public interest groups encompass a diverse spectrum from, for example, small, community-based organisations focussing on local issues to large, well-resourced, high-profile environmental or consumer groups. Their points of entry into the chemicals management field are almost as diverse. They often can play an instrumental role in increasing the public's understanding of the potential risks of hazardous chemicals and providing information on how chemical products can be properly used, managed and disposed of and/or destroyed. They can often also represent the end-users of chemical products, such as those who have been or are potentially affected by the injudicious use of chemicals (including specific target audiences such as women and children).

8.4 Universities and Research Institutes

Schools and universities are likely to play a role in educating the general public about chemicals and in building the necessary knowledge and skills of future managers and decision-makers (e.g. through detailed courses on chemicals management at the graduate level). Moreover, given that they are likely to have certain technical capacities (e.g. laboratories) and related expertise, research and academic institutes may be able to aid governments in assessing the impacts caused by certain priority chemicals and in considering potential policies and measures for risk reduction.

8.5 Common/Complementary Strengths

All of the above interested and affected parties have varying degrees of political influence. This can be very beneficial when interests are working together, but can be a challenge when some choose to work outside of a multi-stakeholder process. Many stakeholders often have international networks and experiences they can "bring to the table". This collection of expertise and experiences can be used to avoid making repeated mistakes, or at least inform participants about other potential solutions to challenging problems.

Most governments already engage external stakeholders at one or more levels as they deal with chemicals issues - through, for example, their participation on individual committees or initiatives, and often when consulting for general policy advice. Engaging stakeholders in a more integrated structure, however, can remain a challenge.

Stakeholder participation is an integral part of efforts for integrated chemicals management in many countries (see Slovenia example, p. 35). Maintaining a separation between a body with stakeholder representation and one that is purely governmental in nature is critical. Civil servants are an integral part of government, with unique roles, responsibilities and accountability to the public through their respective ministers. Thus, the mandate and functions of a body with stakeholder representation would usually be advisory in nature, and stakeholder membership (as is the case with Slovenia) should be of a different nature. Nevertheless, a Minister may decide to give such a body decision-making power, under some limited circumstances.

The net result of incorporating stakeholder participation would be the expansion of the chemicals dialogue to all sectors of society that are "represented" at the table. If such a network is working effectively, the benefits for sound chemicals management and for society at large are obvious.

Building on Complementary Strengths for an Environmental Emergency: The Case of the L.T. Grand

In February 2002, a distress call was received by the Port of Colombo, Sri Lanka, from a ship at sea, the L.T. Grand. The ship, carrying a cargo of hazardous pesticides from China to Iran, was on fire and was granted permission under international law to put in at the Port. Benefitting from increased coordination and knowledge gained as a project country in the UNITAR/IOMC Programme on Integrated Chemical Management, an at-the-ready response network consisting of a variety of authorities swung into action to assess the situation, ensure that the fire was put out, that the area near where the ship was docked was evacuated of non-essential personnel, that protective equipment was worn, and that the local medical authorities were engaged, including the local poison control centre. In addition, organisations at the international level were also engaged to assist with determining whether the remains of containers involved in the fire constituted hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention. After the fire was safely extinguished with no casualties, and issues of liability were settled and a bond posted by the ship-owners, the ship was sent on its way.

8.6 Principles for Cooperation with Stakeholders

The following is a series of brief overviews of key principles and processes which should be considered in any effort to meaningfully engage stakeholders. While this section has been written in the context of cooperation with stakeholders participating at a relatively high level, the principles and processes can be easily adapted for a variety of stakeholders and levels of engagement. In fact, these principles are also applicable for inter- and intra-ministerial engagement on chemicals issues.

Transparency

The key principle underlying successful cooperation is *transparency*. In cases where bodies are charged with making decisions and seeking stakeholder opinions, those who provide input into decision-making need to have the opportunity to have their views adequately heard, considered and responded to - especially if the decision made is contrary to what they sought. In order to maximise transparency, decision-makers must adequately communicate the reasons for the decision and the related factors that were considered. Anything less - for instance giving a decision without providing the reasons behind it - can sow mistrust among those who provided input and may affect their future participation in such processes.

Ensuring Roles and Responsibilities are Clear

All stakeholders need to have clear roles and responsibilities. Coordination with stakeholders should commence with the development of a sound Terms of Reference. Such Terms of Reference are, in effect, the ground rules for participation. They can outline how decisions will be made - for example, by consensus where possible and by government officials where it is not. The Terms of Reference should also make it clear whether stakeholders are to receive feedback and input from their respective constituencies, or simply try their best, from their own experiences, to represent what they think their constituencies' views will be.

Comprehensive Participation

One of the key elements to improving stakeholder participation is to involve stakeholders, where possible and appropriate, throughout the chemicals management process (e.g. from decision-making and programme planning to programme implementation and review). Of particular importance is the inclusion of stakeholders at the early and formative stages, especially when decisions are to be made in the development of public policy. Involving stakeholders as early as possible may result in the identification of issues which might have otherwise been overlooked or not considered important, but which could prove to be of significant importance for certain stakeholders or for the matter in question. Moreover, where stakeholder participation occurs exclusively at the latter stages of policy discussions or development, those not present at the start are often incapable of influencing the selection of alternative decisions or key variables since key decisions will likely have already been made.
In order to facilitate comprehensive participation, policy discussions should occur with stakeholders present whenever possible. Stakeholders who know what the limits of their influence are in the process (if it has clear Terms of Reference) should be able to give their

input freely with the understanding that their advice will not always be adopted. In general, however, the overall process should greatly benefit from such participation.

Two-way Communication

In order to maximise the gain from comprehensive stakeholder participation in chemicals management, a communicative relationship between and among stakeholders and government must exist. Successful stakeholder involvement will be severely challenged if these relationships are not characterised by two-way communication, rather than a mere one-way flow of information from the 'chief' decision-makers (e.g. government) to the remaining stakeholders. There are a variety of ways to both involve, and facilitate an interactive relationship between, stakeholders (and government), which can be strategically employed to complement all stages of chemicals management. These include advertisements, leaflets, media, displays, exhibitions, questionnaires and surveys, telephone 'hot lines', open houses, personal contact, community liaison staff, community advisory committees, presentations, roundtables, workshops, public meetings and public inquiries.

Understandable and Timely Information Disclosure

Another factor which can greatly affect the degree and efficacy of involving stakeholders in chemicals management is the provision of information which sufficiently caters to the differing needs of the various participating stakeholders. Clearly written documents and related materials are of crucial importance for stakeholders. The timely provision of information is also vital - especially in terms of building trust and confidence for those that are new to a process. Language barriers and a possible lack of technical expertise among stakeholders must also be addressed.

Despite sufficient access to information - even information which has been written with the readability of the wider stakeholder population in mind - some stakeholders may still find the often technical nature of chemicals management and the related environmental effects perplexing. While individual stakeholder representatives who participate at relatively high levels are likely to be highly familiar with chemicals issues, those who participate at other levels could be less knowledgeable. Poor understanding of chemicals management will undoubtedly devalue the availability of quality literature and documentation. Another means of improving stakeholder involvement, which works towards addressing these issues, is stakeholder education.

Stakeholder Education

Educating stakeholders about chemicals management can empower stakeholders to engage more actively and effectively in shaping the outcome of chemicals management activities, and in protecting their interests. Often, certain stakeholders, such as the public, are inadequately informed concerning their potential role(s) in chemicals management. Various methods, however, can be used to improve upon such a deficiency which include stakeholder training programmes, computer-based participation, open houses, plain language, phone lines, educational publications and videos.

Adequate Funding

Armed with sufficient skills and materials to make informed and meaningful contributions to chemicals management, certain stakeholders may still be at a severe disadvantage concerning their involvement due to a lack of financial resources. Insufficient resources can significantly impact certain stakeholders' involvement in chemicals management, greatly reducing the effectiveness and credibility of their participation and discouraging involvement. For example, at the early stages of developing a chemicals management programme, certain stakeholder groups may require technical advice on the characteristics of the matter in question in order to ensure that all key issues and contentious aspects are identified. In addition, other costs, such as travel, incurred as part of the participation process, can severely debilitate certain stakeholder groups, such as the public, who inevitably will not have resources comparable to private groups, such as industry representatives.

As those responsible for developing chemicals-related policies and programmes reach out for input into decision-making, some decisions, however, even in a politically charged field like chemicals management, can be relatively easy to reach by consensus from the participants. As long as participants feel like they have been treated as equals around the table, and the structure of who has final decision-making power and other ground rules are clear throughout, such processes can be effective pillars of a sustainable platform for integrated chemicals management.

9. Ensuring Interest and Commitment of Decision-Makers

A wide range of national decision-makers are typically involved in policy and budgetary decisions that affect the sound management of chemicals, including ministries such as Agriculture, Environment, Health, Industry and Labour, as well as ministries of Finance, Planning and Foreign Affairs. Local authorities and parliamentarians may also have a relevant role to play.[27] The "buy-in" and support of such decision-makers will be needed to secure necessary human and financial resources. Such support is also needed to ensure that chemicals management concerns will be taken into account in the development of other policies and programmes that, although not of direct relevance, will ultimately impact on chemicals management concerns (e.g. economic policies, trade, agricultural policies). Generating support and commitment among decision-makers outside of government, such as industry executives, environmental advocates and community leaders, is also important. As is the case with the issue of a national policy on chemicals, ensuring interest and commitment of high-level decision-makers is particularly helpful for mobilising financial resources.

Chemicals management in itself is often not among the top priorities of high-level decision-makers who may be focussed on other societal and development goals, such as economic and industrial development, agricultural production and public health protection, and whose decisions are impacted by driving forces, such as globalisation of trade, economics and

[27] In Zambia in 2002, for example, new parliamentarians were engaged in the development of a national policy on chemical hazard communication and GHS implementation.

international/regional policy commitments. There are, however, very real linkages between these concerns and the objectives of chemicals management. Therefore the key to generating support among decision-makers, including those within as well as outside of government, is to highlight these linkages and illustrate how their priorities and concerns relate to and are impacted by chemicals management issues. For example, chemicals management can be shown to intersect with trade when one considers that ensuring a continued market for the country's export crops may depend on the country's ability to meet the pesticide residue limits of its major trading partners. Strong arguments can also be made to decision-makers of the costs of postponing necessary prevention and control activities for chemicals, citing examples such as significant chemicals accidents and disasters that affect human health and the environment.

Some possible means for raising awareness and generating support among decision-makers that countries may wish to consider include[28]:

- using the news media;
- organising publicity events;
- organising a national chemicals safety day;
- securing the commitment and involvement of one or several key leaders (e.g. respected scientist, politician, business leader) who will be able to bring others on board; and
- using the international policy context to focus national political attention on chemicals management issues (e.g. international conventions, Agenda 21 commitments).

[28] Also see Section 13.

Part C: Practical Suggestions for Developing an Integrated National Programme

This part of the document outlines a range of activities and provides practical (meaning realistic and implementable) suggestions for taking concrete actions towards developing and sustaining an integrated national programme for the sound management of chemicals.

10. Preparing a National Profile

A good understanding of the present situation in a country with regard to chemicals management is key to any effort to enhance coordination and integration of chemicals-related activities. Discussions during the early 1990s in various fora indicated, however, that only a few countries had prepared an authoritative document which could provide a good overview of chemicals management activities in the country and which was prepared through co-operation among all concerned ministries, as well as parties outside of government.

Taking these discussions into consideration, the IFCS, at its first meeting in April 1994 in Stockholm, recommended that "National Profiles to indicate the current capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals and the specific needs for improvement should be elaborated as soon as possible and not later than 1997". At Forum II (February 1997, Ottawa), IFCS reiterated this recommendation and encouraged countries "to prepare and continuously update National Profiles, using the UNITAR/IOMC guidance document, with the involvement of all concerned parties, and to use conclusions based on these assessments to define priorities to be addressed through national action programmes for strengthening chemicals management". Forum III (October, 2000, Salvador, Brazil) continued its support of the National Profile process by setting the goal for a majority of all countries to complete a National Profile, with multistakeholder input, by 2002. Recently at Forum IV (November 2003, Bangkok, Thailand), organizations and UNITAR in particular were requested to seek additional resources to assist countries with National Profile development.

10.1 What is a National Profile?

A National Chemicals Management Profile provides a comprehensive overview and assessment of the national administrative, institutional, legal and technical infrastructure for the management of chemicals[29]. It includes information on, *inter alia*: chemical production, import, export and use; legal instruments and non-regulatory mechanisms; ministries, agencies and other institutions involved in managing chemicals; relevant activities of industry, public interest groups and the research sector; inter-ministerial commissions and co-ordinating mechanisms; data access and use; technical infrastructure; and international linkages.

If carefully prepared, a National Profile:

[29] As defined in the UNITAR/IOMC guidance document entitled "*Preparing a National Profile to Assess the National Infrastructure for the Sound Management of Chemicals*".

- provides practical information on ongoing programmes and activities in the country which are concerned with the management of chemicals;
- helps to establish a process which can facilitate the exchange of information and dialogue among government ministries concerned with the sound management of chemicals, and to assist ministries in learning from experiences of each other as a basis for improved cooperation;
- facilitates the exchange of information and dialogue between government and parties outside of government such as industry, labour and the broad range of public interest organisations;
- facilitates the exchange of information at the international level with regard to the state and experience of chemicals management at the national level;
- provides a baseline against which progress or lack of progress can be judged; and
- results in an authoritative document which can serve as a basis for further efforts to strengthen an integrated national programme through involvement of all concerned parties.

As of November 2003, some 98 countries, including developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries with advanced chemicals schemes, have prepared or were in the process of preparing a National Profile.

10.2 Principles for Preparing a National Profile

In accordance with the spirit of Agenda 21, the following general principles should guide countries when preparing a National Profile:

- a National Profile should be prepared at the country level through a process which involves all concerned ministries and other government institutions, as well as other interested national organisations ("by countries for countries");
- a National Profile should provide a means for improved coordination among and within interested governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- a National Profile should provide a basis for cost-effective allocation of resources by including information on the resources available for the management of chemicals, including financial resources and human skills/capabilities, as well as an indication of resources needed for undertaking priority actions;
- a National Profile should initiate a process by which a country will be able to identify gaps in the existing legal, institutional, administrative and technical infrastructure related to chemical management and safety; and
- a National Profile should be a "living" document and periodically reviewed, and updated as appropriate, to remain an authoritative national document.

The National Profile Development Process in Cambodia

In December 2003, Cambodia held its National Profile Planning Meeting, which was attended by some 70 participants from 15 Ministries and numerous parties outside of government. While the development of the Profile was part of related planning work to implement the Stockholm Convention, Cambodia nevertheless decided that a broad, inclusive National Profile was needed. As a result of significant preparatory efforts by the Project Coordinator, the Minister of Environment – the lead agency for the project – and Deputy Ministers from three other important Ministries – Mines and Natural Resources; Agriculture, Commerce – made direct commitments to play a significant role in the National Profile development process. Each took part in the opening ceremonies for the workshop, and ensured that key staff were present and followed up on their commitments. The Cambodian National Profile should be finalised by mid-2004.

10.3 Using the National Profile as a Starting Point for Analysis

Many countries that have prepared a National Profile have found that it can serve as a good "jumping off" point for a national initiative to strengthen the chemicals management infrastructure and related capacities. The National Profile provides a snapshot of the existing situation in the country, including details on existing problems, programmes in place, responsible bodies and officers, and ongoing activities.

The National Profile may reveal potential shortcomings and gaps in the current national chemicals management scheme including areas/topics which may warrant priority attention. For example, National Profiles prepared by countries revealed issues such as:

- insufficient coordination among and/or within concerned ministries;
- lack of access to and exchange of information among those involved in chemicals management;
- failure of existing sectoral policies to address all stages of the chemical life cycle;
- the need for better enforcement of existing legislation; and
- weaknesses in the technical infrastructure, e.g. lack of analytical capacities.

Thus, the preparation and review of the National Profile may be one of several starting points for taking action toward strengthening certain aspects of the national chemicals management infrastructure.

10.4 Using the National Profile as a Starting Point for Coordination and Collaboration

The preparation of the National Profile is also often the first time that the various concerned and interested parties within and outside of government have joined together on a common project. Because it serves as a tool for revealing existing challenges and opportunities, and because it has brings together many of the key actors, the National Profile process can provide an opportune basis for follow-up activities, or at least provide an opportunity for strategic dialogue. In some cases, countries have organised a National Priority Setting Workshop (see Section 11.2) or other national forum during which the outcomes of the National Profile process are discussed and priorities for action are identified and agreed.

11. Developing and Coordinating Priorities

Another key activity that a country could consider for an integrated national programme is the development and coordination of priorities. Information exchange activities that have taken place in many countries as part of their National Profile processes have often led to at least a preliminary priority-setting exercise. These priority-setting processes have often been facilitated through a National Coordinating Platform.

A *priority* is something which is given prior (or superior) attention; to *prioritise* is to arrange in order of importance. Building upon these definitions, a priority in the present context is considered to be a topic/area in which the level of interest (e.g. due to its importance/urgency) and level of support (e.g. organisations and people willing to commit their time and resources) are sufficiently high that a decision is usually taken to initiate action. Other topics may also be considered important, but if there is no commitment to act upon them, they have not achieved priority status. This is important to keep in mind when setting priorities, otherwise one runs the risk of ending up with topics/issues on the list for which there is no real commitment to act. This will inevitably lead to a situation in which no action is taken, which in turn may lead to discouragement among involved parties and may even jeopardise the viability of the overall initiative. It is important to recognise that priorities exist at different levels: within ministries, within stakeholder groups and national priorities related to foreign affairs.

While there may be numerous possible activities which could be undertaken to strengthen an integrated national programme, it will never be possible to address all of them at one time. Thus, setting priorities is an important part of the planning process. A priority-setting process can be undertaken regardless of whether or not the country has developed a formal national policy. If such a policy has been agreed to, however, it should serve as the framework within which the setting of specific priorities for action should be undertaken. If a national policy does not yet exist, the priority-setting process takes on even greater importance, as it will determine the direction and focus of the country's efforts in the coming months and years to strengthen its capacities and programmes for managing chemicals. Such a process also provides an opportunity to strengthen information exchange mechanisms within government - a fundamental part of any scheme for integrated chemicals management. In many cases, the

development of a national policy and the setting of specific priorities may be undertaken as part of the same process.

11.1 Entry Points for Setting Priorities

Experience gained in the context of some 15 national priority setting workshops organised by countries around the world with the support of UNITAR have revealed certain patterns concerning how countries have chosen to initiate national action on particular aspects of chemicals management. Also, the IFCS/UNITAR National Profile Survey published in 1997 provides an indicative listing of topics for which countries have taken or were planning to take national action. These experiences documented that Action Plans are sometimes developed for relatively "narrow" or "horizontal" areas, e.g. the development of a mechanism for information exchange among ministries and other interested actors at the national level. In other cases, the entry point for national action may be a comprehensive implementation of an international convention, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants or ILO Convention 17O which addresses chemical safety at the workplace. Such a comprehensive approach may entail the need to divide the topic covered by the respective convention into more manageable "sub-goals" which can be considered to be "stand-alone" goals or Action Plans. In the case of POPs, for example, this may require the development of a seris of "stand-alone" Action Plans addressing different POPs categories including pesticides, unwanted by-products, and industrial chemicals respectively, under the overall umbrella of a national POPs Action Plan.

The following sections attempt to group various entry points for action in a way that illustrates the wide range of choices open to countries. In reading the following four sections, it should be kept in mind that the four groups are not mutually exclusive. Also, the boundaries of each group may not always be clear. The classification below is merely meant to be a reflection of the different ways that countries have decided to take action for sound management in the past. It is intended to contribute to the task of identifying, setting and acting on priority issues as a step towards integrated chemicals management.

Initiating Action on a Particular Priority Chemical

In many countries, individual chemicals or groups of chemicals - "priority chemicals" - have been singled out for national action, in particular for risk reduction and/or risk elimination activities. For example, Slovenia singled out asbestos when setting national priorities in 1997, among other priorities, as a chemical which required targeted risk reduction action. Similarly, a country which participates in the Rotterdam Convention may decide that national import decisions need to be made on substances included in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure, or that steps need to be taken to address a certain chemical that is causing environmental problems under local conditions of use. Additional chemical-specific entry points include POPs and other persistent toxic substances, asbestos (an insulating material whose trade has been challenged on health grounds in the international sphere), lead (still used in gasoline and other products in some countries), arsenic and mercury.

Experiences gained in the past indicate that countries with a relatively weak national chemicals management scheme, as a result of inadequacies with their infrastructure, face significant challenges when they attempt to take action on a particular chemical or group of chemicals. An example of this would be a country that lacks a basic chemicals law, and therefore would not be able to adequately or effectively take legal action to restrict or ban the use of a particular chemical without first developing and passing a basic (and broader) chemicals law. For such reasons, many developing countries focus their initial efforts on developing the basic building blocks of a national chemical management system as outlined in Programme Area E of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

Initiating Action to Strengthen Basic Elements of a National Chemicals Management Infrastructure

For countries in which chemicals management is not at an advanced stage, the development of a basic infrastructure for managing chemicals is likely to be one of its most important goals. This observation is supported by the types of priorities chosen in many developing countries in the context of their national priority setting workshops. These priorities for action are often those which are described by *Programme Area E* of Chapter 19 as "core element[s] of a national chemicals management system" and include:

- adequate legislation;
- information generation, gathering, use and dissemination;
- capacity for appropriate hazard and risk assessment, interpretation and communication;
- establishment of risk management policy, including evaluation of safer chemical alternatives and non-chemical options;
- capacity for implementation and enforcement of laws;
- capacity for rehabilitation of contaminated sites and poisoned persons;
- education, awareness raising and training programmes; and
- capacity to respond to emergencies.

Taking national action in any of the above areas is, however, not only of interest to countries where a basic infrastructure for chemicals management does not yet exist. Often, countries with rather advanced schemes realise, for example through preparation of a National Profile, that some of the above topics require attention due to an overlap of activities conducted by various ministries. This is often the case in the area of legislation, where, due to the sectoral approaches of the past, existing legislation for specific stages of the chemical life cycle may be duplicative and overlapping, while legislation may be nonexistent for other stages. The entry point for taking action would therefore still be "adequate legislation", but the focus would be on harmonising and streamlining existing laws and regulation, rather than developing new legislation.[30]

[30] In 1998, IPCS and UNITAR released a guidance document entitled "Key Elements of a National Programme for Chemicals Management and Safety." The document proposes a framework for a cross-sectoral, comprehensive approach to chemicals management. It is provided as a resource for countries to be used in their efforts to establish, update or implement national programmes and policies related to chemicals management.

Initiating Action on a Specific Chemicals Management Instrument or Subject Area

A third "point of entry" for taking action by many countries addresses a range of specific instruments or chemicals management subject areas, which address a specific and important purpose. They can also be considered key building blocks of an integrated national programme, but in a more narrow and specialised sense compared to the rather broad areas addressed through Programme Area E of Chapter 19.

Examples of specific instruments, all of which require careful planning and consideration prior to implementation, include:

- pesticides registration schemes;
- inventories of chemicals in use;
- a framework national law on chemicals; and
- Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs).

Chemical management subject areas are closely related to the instrument concept introduced above and cover national action in areas such as:

- pesticide poisoning prevention and control;
- accident preparedness and response; and
- classification and labelling.

For many of the instruments and chemicals management subject areas mentioned, a wealth of experience is available from countries which have experimented with these approaches in the past. For certain areas, such as pesticides registration and PRTRs, significant expertise is also available through international organisations.

Senegal: INP Catalyses Further Development of a Poison Control Centre

A Working Group, led by the Ministry of Health (in cooperation with the University of Senegal), worked towards the goal of developing a plan for establishing Poison Control Centre. A November 2002 joint WHO-UNITAR mission to review the priorities and available infrastructure identified through preparation of an action plan has led to the direct involvement of the Government of France in supporting twinning arrangements for training of poison control center staff. The WHO Regional Office for Africa also agreed to provide limited support to Senegal for poison center development. In addition, a facility that will house the information center – a local university – has also been identified, and initial steps have been taken to open the center.

Initiating Action to Implement a Particular International Agreement

The growing concern associated with chemicals has led to a significant increase in the number of international agreements dealing with chemicals (examples include the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, various conventions addressing

chemical safety in the workplace, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); see also section 3. While some of the conventions remain rather vague with regard to required implementation arrangements in participating countries, others, such as the POPs Convention, specifically require the development of Action Plans (APs) (known as, Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention, Implementation Plans).

Particularly (though not exclusively) for those agreements that require the development of APs, countries are likely to quickly realise that some of the convention implementation issues closely relate to more general aspects of chemicals management as introduced above, e.g. development of a sound legislative framework, or the establishment of an information exchange system. Therefore, while it may be politically important to emphasise and "focus" on the implementation of a particular agreement, it is ultimately the existence of a core chemicals management infrastructure and the implementation of specific instruments and programmes which will allow a country to comply with international obligations under various agreements - finding a good balance between the two is a key challenge and will determine which entry points will be selected.

11.2 Organising the Priority-Setting Process

Recognising Existing Sectoral Priorities

It is important to take into account ongoing work of relevant parties when identifying priorities. It may not be necessary to develop new priorities for action or new areas of work: a reiteration and renewed commitment to ongoing work may often be a pragmatic way forward. In fact, a failure to take into account ongoing work during the priority setting process may diminish the interest and commitment of those who are involved in existing projects.

Considering the Existing Chemicals Management Framework from a Life Cycle Perspective

Another useful approach is to look into how chemicals are managed at each stage of the life cycle. Such an exercise can aid in identifying possible gaps, weaknesses or inconsistencies which may need to be addressed. Developing a more integrated national programme means ensuring not only that all stages of the life cycle are sufficiently managed, but also that the activities of the range of parties responsible for sound management at the various stages are co-ordinated and consistent. Thus, examining the existing situation from a life cycle perspective may serve to elucidate important opportunities for improvement, and in particular those which stand to benefit from a multi-sectoral problem-solving approach.

Establishment of Priorities Through a National Priority Setting Workshop

Defining the priorities to be addressed through decentralised activities which contribute to integrated chemicals management, and defining the structure to facilitate communication and action concerning those key concerns may be the two main objectives of a National Priority

Setting Workshop. These can serve as components of the planning process for an integrated national programme (often following preparation of a National Profile). Broad participation among all interested and affected parties is crucial to the success of a workshop of this type. Workshop participants should be of sufficiently high authority to effectively engage in priority-setting and decision-making and be a catalyst for action within their respective organisations.

A National Profile, if available, will serve as an important reference for identifying and prioritising the areas of chemicals management to be further considered for action. The input of the various interested and affected parties participating in the workshop will also aid in identifying areas of priority concern. In order to facilitate an effective priority-setting process, an appropriate workshop format should be selected. The UNITAR/IOMC document entitled *Organising a National Workshop on Chemicals Management and Safety: A Guidance Document* provides additional information and suggestions.

Key outputs of the National Priority Setting Workshop include:

- a list of chemicals management issues to be addressed;
- a membership list of key stakeholders and ministries;
- a work plan and time frame for planning and implementation;
- the development of an organisational structure and operating procedures of a National Platform or similar structure; and
- actions for ongoing follow-up, including *e.g.* proposed date and location of the next meeting of a body charged with follow-up activities.

Key Resolutions from a Workshop on Integrated Chemicals Management in Indonesia

As a result of two years of targeted work on chemicals issues in Indonesia, a national resolution was drafted outlining key principles and actions to enhance chemical safety. Key resolutions included:

- a call for all concerned parties including government institutions, agencies, industry associations and non-governmental organisations to fully participate in national and local efforts to achieve chemical safety at all levels;
- agreement to establish a National Coordinating Forum as an interim step towards the possible formalisation of a National Coordinating Body with the goal of ensuring harmonisation and coherence of all chemicals management measures in Indonesia;
- agreement to thoroughly review, as a matter of urgency, the feasibility of developing a national framework law on chemicals that would build upon and complement existing legislation and regulations; and
- a call for all relevant parties at the national level and relevant international and bilateral organisations to participate in a resource mobilisation strategy to secure the required additional funding.

Keeping the Number of Priorities Realistic

Generally speaking, priority setting involves identifying a broad range of options based on input from stakeholders and ministries. This initial list is then narrowed down and prioritised according to agreed criteria. Decisions need to be made on which and how many of the items that appear at the top of the list should be slated for immediate action. This last step is generally a matter of available human and financial resources. Issues/topics for which resources are not currently available are not forgotten, but rather are set aside so that they can be taken up at a later point in time.

A key to this process is the identification of the criteria to be used in deciding what is a priority and what is not. Some possible criteria might include, for example:

- Feasibility - Can the problem/issue be effectively addressed, taking into consideration existing or readily obtainable capacities and resources?
- Time frame - Will benefits/results be Realise within an acceptable time frame? There may be good reasons to select at least some issues for which early successes can be assured.
- Potential Impact - Will addressing the problem/issue have a significant positive impact?
- Stakeholder Commitment - Is there sufficient interest and commitment among stakeholders, particularly those whose cooperation and efforts would be needed in order to successfully tackle the issue?

- Potential for Support - If it is an issue that is likely to require external support and expertise, are there international organisations and/or other outside parties that are prepared to provide guidance and assistance?
- Assessment - Will it be possible to track or measure progress achieved in addressing the problem/issue?

The identification of decision-making criteria and their application to the various options on the table should be undertaken in a transparent way and with the involvement of interested and affected parties. Once the criteria are agreed, the various options can be compared as to how well they measure up. This may often require additional information, thus it is important to have the involvement of those who are working in relevant areas and who have first-hand knowledge of circumstances, existing constraints, etc. In some case, the information needed to answer criteria-related questions - for example, what are the potential resource implications of addressing this topic? - will be lacking or difficult to obtain. In such cases, drawing upon the expert judgement of the key ministries and agencies involved in chemicals management and others involved in the priority-setting process will be particularly important.

Once priorities have been selected, it is important to communicate these to all interested and affected parties. This can help generate interest and support among those whose input may be needed to address the selected topics/issues.

12. Strengthening National Information Exchange

An important lesson learned by many countries as they prepared their national profiles was a lack of knowledge of activities in ministries that were duplicative of, or related to, activities in other ministries that were not adequately communicating with one another. A key, concrete achievement of any sustainable, integrated national programme for the sound management of chemicals is the development and ongoing use of mechanisms for information exchange on relevant initiatives and activities among the different ministries and stakeholders.

While overlapping mandates may not be resolved through information exchange, such activities can provide a platform for working together in a co-ordinated way. For example, one ministry - such as an agricultural ministry - might encourage use of a particular pesticide because it kills insects effectively. The government's environment ministry may have evidence, however, that the same pesticide may harm the biodiversity of certain sensitive ecosystems located near areas where the pesticide is used. Additionally, the health ministry may have concerns about possible effects of the pesticide on human health. Sharing such information among ministries may lead to the agriculture ministry reconsidering its support of the pesticide, and may be a catalyst to find less harmful alternative pesticides. Without effective information exchange the same pesticide could have remained in use until major, avoidable damage to biodiversity or human health was uncovered. To take this hypothetical example one step further, all three ministries could then develop a common position for adoption outlining a plan for the pesticide to be banned and replaced by less harmful alternatives. This position could then be put forward at the next opportunity on the international stage - perhaps (if appropriate) as a candidate chemical to be added to the

Rotterdam Convention's Prior Informed Consent Procedure.

Strengthening Information Exchange: Sri Lanka

Prior to *Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, there was a recognized weakness in chemicals information exchange in Sri Lanka. As a result of the project a "Charter for Inter-Ministerial Information Exchange" has been developed and agreed upon by stakeholders. The charter was developed through a workshop on Chemicals Information Exchange, held for the Project Committee in February 2002.

Sri Lanka also initiated the development of a "National Chemical Information Centre" (NCIC), designed to act as a focal point for information exchange among all those concerned with chemicals management issues at the national level. Incorporation of existing information bases, such as reference materials that are in place for Sri Lanka's Poison Control Centre, is planned.

Information exchange, then, involves sharing information about activities (such as policy discussions, research results and decisions) within a Ministry, and relevant information generated internationally (from, for example, other countries or international organisations), or from stakeholders (such as industry and public interest organisations).

Mechanisms for Information Exchange

Mechanisms for information exchange on chemicals issues that a country might consider span a broad range. They include, *inter alia*:

- regular updating meetings (at mid- to high-levels), on a topical basis, among ministries with similar mandates/responsibilities;
- broadening circulation of official correspondence/decisions on chemicals issues;
- technical means such as developing a National Chemical Safety Webpage which includes (or provides links to) chemical safety information from relevant national sectors and stakeholders, and/or an email "listserve";
- "hard copy" activities summaries in bulletin, newsletter, or other forms;
- regular interministerial workshops, with stakeholder representation, on issues of common interest.

Co-ordinated, effective information exchange is essential for countries who would like to complete, in an effective way, the further activities outlined below.

13. Outreach & Communication

Obtaining the support and understanding of relevant groups and the general public is critical to ensure the success and sustainability of an integrated national programme. Developing and implementing a communications/outreach strategy can help to sustain such interest and support. The primary aims of such a strategy are to communicate key developments and achievements of the integrated national programme to interested parties and to allow for input from stakeholder groups as the process evolves. A communication/outreach strategy is likely to entail activities at various levels. For example, efforts might be undertaken to disseminate information to the general public on national chemicals management goals and initiatives, to inform certain stakeholder groups (e.g. industry, workers) of progress made in addressing topics in which they have a particular interest, and/or to provide information to the international community on national capacity building initiatives and achievements.

Tools for Outreach and Communication

There are numerous tools and approaches that can be used for communication and outreach: each country will have to find the approaches that best meet its needs. For example, a multi-stakeholder committee or other active body may decide to send periodic letters or arrange meetings with certain key groups to inform them of progress made and encourage their continued involvement and support. Such activities are likely to have close links to resource mobilisation efforts. Other means of outreach might include providing brief project updates through relevant publications (e.g. newsletters of professional associations, industry or workers' organisations) and making use of the news media (e.g. newspapers, radio, television) in order to reach out to the general public. Statements by high-level officials aimed at publicising progress towards specific milestones (e.g. reduction in illegal importations, improvements in worker safety) can be particularly effective for attracting media coverage.

In addition to ongoing outreach activities, participants in these efforts may also wish to consider more formal means for disseminating results and assessing progress on a periodic basis. Issuing a national report on the integrated national programme every 2-3 years can be a useful means for communicating key priorities and achievements to stakeholder groups. The National Profile, and its periodic updates, can also serve as an important vehicle for providing in-depth information on the status of the national chemicals management infrastructure and needs for improvement. A national chemicals management Internet site on which information on ongoing activities is posted and through which various groups can exchange information on ongoing activities and concerns is another potentially valuable approach.

The communications and outreach strategy should also address the need for interaction and two-way communication with concerned parties. Events, such as national or regional workshops, interministerial meetings, and consultations with industry and other non-governmental groups, are some of the approaches to be considered in this regard.

In many countries, issues of chemicals management may not have a high profile. This can pose a particular challenge when seeking to generate interest and support among the public

and stakeholder groups. Thus, finding ways to help various groups and sectors of society understand how their interests and concerns relate to sound chemicals management may become an important component of the communication/outreach strategy. Participants may also wish to seek opportunities to highlight linkages between sound chemicals management and broader societal goals, such as sustainable economic development and environmental and public health protection. Making a strong case that sound chemicals management is essential for reaching such societal goals will help not only in generating political support but also in the context of resource mobilisation efforts.

Organising Strategic Briefings Sessions

One potentially successful method for communication and outreach is through "strategic briefings". The targets for such briefings include high-level decision-makers, the media (see below) and the general public. Such sessions could include, *inter alia,* statements on the chemicals-related activities being undertaken; a request for public input/involvement; and a "press release" summarising the key messages that the participants wish to convey. In addition, briefings targeted at key decision-makers could be internal, held in advance of public briefings, and use "briefing notes" outlining basic information and points that require high-level decision-making.

Involving the Media

The media are an important mechanism for disseminating information on chemicals issues. Any integrated national programme for the sound management of chemicals could involve the development of a media strategy on particular issues of relevance; planning aimed at predicting issues that may come to public (and therefore media) attention in the future (e.g. a chemicals accident, spills, outbreaks of illness or other emergencies); and the development of media "products", such as press releases (see box opposite). Press releases are key tools for conveying important messages about chemicals issues. Additionally, meeting with editorial boards and other key decision-makers in the media about programme activities can help to garner public support.

Developing and Disseminating Simple Information Products

A press release is an example of a relatively simple information product designed to convey key messages for priority topics of chemicals management. There are many other simple information products that can be developed that are not necessarily media-related. Brochures on chemicals issues written in local languages and in relatively simple terms have proven to be effective tools in many countries. Video, public service announcements and radio or television interview "scripts" all have the advantage of reaching those who are not literate or otherwise easily accessible. Posters, maps and other graphic information can be developed and posted in public places such as post offices, clinics, community centres, town halls and schools.

Informing a Minister: A Short Primer on Ministerial Briefing Notes

Government Ministers, due to the nature of their profession, have very limited time to address a great number of issues, many of which require informed decisions. The Ministerial Briefing Note has evolved in many countries as an effective tool to brief, make recommendations to, and otherwise keep Ministers and other senior officials informed about important issues.

As a country develops an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, information on planning for and developments of the programme should be communicated regularly to senior officials. Clear communication takes on greater importance when decisions are needed that will affect the future direction of chemicals work in the country.

TITLE **DATE**

ISSUE
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.

BACKGROUND
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.

STATUS
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx. xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.

RECOMMENDATION
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.

ACTION OR DECISION RECOMMENDED
- xxxc xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xx xxxxxx xx
- xx xxx xx xx xx x xxx xx xxx.

Name, title, and telephone number, signature

Briefing notes should provide:

- a succinct statement of the case or issue,
- the essential background information, the current status of the matter, and
- the recommendations made or directions sought, if any.

Briefing notes should generally not exceed two pages, and must be clear and accurate.

Point form should be used, unless otherwise requested. Briefing notes should also be clearly dated.

The figure is an example of a briefing note, possible headings and suggested text type.

All briefing notes should be approved by senior officials in accordance with the procedures of the Ministry. The name, title, and telephone number of the official who prepared the briefing note and of the person who approved it should appear along with their signatures at the bottom of the briefing note.

ELEMENTS OF A PRESS RELEASE

Below is an annotated example of a press release that can be used to promote a planning event or other important matter relating to integrated chemicals management that should be communicated to the public at large.

- ***Letterhead***
  The press release should be on Ministry or other official stationary.

- ***A standard introduction for a press release*:**
  FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- ***Who to contact for more information. Include address and phone number*:**
  Contact:_____
  Press Officer: _____
  Government Communications Division, Lead Ministry: _____
  Name and telephone contact : _____

- ***Succinct title that attracts the reader's attraction*:**
  For example: "Country X puts forth plan to protect citizens and the environment from dangerous chemicals".

- ***Begin with the location and date, followed by an introduction covering all major points*:**
  City name, Country name, date and year.

- ***A quote by a government representative is helpful (a Minister is desirable)*:**
  A sample quote: "This new plan, once implemented, will be a concrete step towards sustainable development for our country."

- ***Include information about why this event is newsworthy*:**
  Sample background information: "This Action Plan on pesticides was developed as part of a United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) project, with Swiss government funding, for Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals and Waste Management. This is a new process designed to ensure that our country can plan and work together with all sectors of government and society to strengthen our laws, policies and practices for sound chemicals management. Every year, people and the environment are needlessly exposed to dangerous chemicals. This effort, when implemented, will help to minimise or prevent harm from chemicals, while ensuring that their safe use will continue to provide many benefits to our society. The project, which began in our country in March 2004, will conclude in September 2005."

- ***Conclude with further contact information*:**
  "For more information contact (name, telephone number(s) and web address (if available))".

14. Mobilising Resources

The issue of resources is likely to be a particularly challenging one, and should be addressed early on and throughout the process of developing and sustaining an integrated national programme and developing specific Action Plans. Resources are needed to support ongoing implementation of an integrated national programme and activities, as well as for specific projects such as Action Plan implementation. Experiences suggest that resource mobilisation efforts that are well planned, undertaken on an ongoing basis, and with sufficiently high-level backing will have the greatest chances of success. Thus, it is suggested that a resource mobilisation strategy is developed for pursuing support both from national sources as well as from bi-lateral donors and multi-lateral organisations.

While it is recognised that external resources may be needed to move certain projects forward, the commitment of national/local resources is essential. By committing resources (e.g. funding, staff time, data), officials/organisations demonstrate their interest in and support for the initiative. This commitment bodes well for successful implementation as well as for long-term sustainability. Initiatives that are solely funded from external sources may run the risk of falling flat once the external support has ceased.

Coordination of Financial Resource Mobilisation in Ecuador

As part of *Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, all of Ecuador's government ministries and agencies involved in chemicals management issues agreed to pilot a coordinated approach to mobilizing financial resources from both within and outside of government. This precedent-setting agreement was realized by the creation of a committee through which all proposals for funding will be reviewed and coordinated. The goal is to try to ensure that proposals are as strategic as possible and that overlap and duplication is avoided – while still ensuring that ministries are free to access donor support for their work. Following the ongoing pilot phase results of this approach will be reviewed in 2004 for possible institutionalization.

Understanding the Budgetary and Resource Allocation Process

A critical starting point for a resource mobilisation strategy is to understand how budgetary and resource allocation decisions are made. Often those who are directly involved in chemicals management activities may not be closely involved in such processes and decisions, and thus a concerted effort may be needed to gather information in this regard. A first step might be to contact the relevant parties in the Ministry of Finance, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, budget offices of relevant line ministries (e.g. Environment, Health, Agriculture), the national legislature, and other relevant bodies in order to gain a thorough understanding of the process and the respective roles of the various actors. It is important not only to understand the official procedures, but also to gain insight into how budgetary proposals are typically initiated and what factors can help to support favourable outcomes.

Gaining an appreciation for political priorities and how these affect resource allocation decisions can be particularly important. Understanding the time frame for such activities is also crucial.

In addition to understanding the national budgetary and resource allocation system, it is also important to understand how external donors allocate resources. Each donor entity (e.g. bilateral assistance organisation, multilateral bank) is likely to have specific application procedures through which countries can request support, as well as certain organisational objectives that influence its decisions as to what types of projects it will fund.[31] It may be desirable to develop a list of all of the relevant external donors, in particular those with offices and activities in the country, and seek information on their relevant procedures as well as what types of projects each donor entity is most likely to support. A list of activities currently being funded by the respective donor agencies could also be of interest. To ensure that such information is available on an ongoing basis, setting up a process for periodically gathering/exchanging information on donor activities and priorities should be considered. Such a process could also be used to facilitate better coordination of funding requests.

Senegal: Internal Financial Resource Mobilisation

As part of its participation in the UNITAR/IOMC Programme *Developing and Sustaining an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, a precedent-setting achievement of the Working Group on financial resource mobilization has resulted from project activities. The project has succeeded in ensuring that costed Action Plan activities are now being considered as part of Senegal's internal budget development process. This was the result of a detailed investigation by the Working Group of the processes for internal financial resource mobilization within the country. In addition, the need to further strengthen links between chemicals management issues and the development of broader government priorities (reflected in, for example, the national poverty reduction strategy) was also recognized by the Group, and will be addressed in future work.

Developing a Resource Mobilisation Strategy

Parallel to understanding the procedures and roles of the various donor entities, it is important to develop and maintain working contacts with the relevant officials in such organisations. As discussed below, keeping external assistance agencies informed of national priorities, needs and achievements, and otherwise ensuring effective channels of communication, can increase the likelihood that such entities will respond favourably to requests for support.

Obtaining necessary resources can require considerable time and perseverance. To ensure that such efforts are carried out in an effective and sustained manner, it is suggested that a

[31] See also, UNITAR "Fact Sheets on Bilateral Assistance Agencies" which are available for interested countries.

committee with representation from concerned ministries, if it has been established, or a relevant agency develop and implement a resource mobilisation strategy. Such a strategy should be based on a solid understanding of the relevant procedures for requesting and obtaining support from national and external sources. It should address what resources are needed, from what sources such resources will be sought, what actions are to be taken to this end, and who/what entities are responsible. The box below provides a sample outline of what a national resource mobilisation strategy might contain.

It is important that representatives of key ministries, agencies and project managers work closely together, as these individuals will be in the best position to determine what resources and types of support are needed to ensure the success of their respective projects and initiatives. In addition to identifying what resources are needed and from where these might be obtained, is important to think about how to increase the likelihood of success. Presenting project proposals that are tailored to the interests and priorities of those in a position to provide support can be particularly useful in this regard. Each organisation, ministry or external donor has its own objectives and priorities. Therefore, they must not only be convinced of the need for and viability of the proposed project, but they will also want to see how the project will benefit them and contribute towards their own organisational goals. It is the job of those seeking support to identify such linkages and to develop a strategy that will convince potential supporters to become involved.

A November 2002 thematic workshop on *Financial Resource Mobilisation for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, jointly organised by the UNITAR and the Secretariat of the OPCW, brought together some 33 participants from 16 developing countries, countries with economies in transition and, countries with advanced chemicals management capabilities, and international organisations and, plus representatives of donors (including multilateral, bilateral and other organisations).[32] Key recommendations directed at countries regarding resource mobilization included:

- identify the means to raise awareness at the highest levels in order to ensure that chemicals management issues, as a basic pillar of the larger issues of health and environmental protection, are given appropriate priority, including in national sustainable development strategies;
- take advantage of existing subject-specific opportunities in the chemicals management field (such as those provided under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants) to ensure that, at the national level, the foundations of chemicals management programmes are strengthened in an integrated manner; and
- identify opportunities to link chemicals management with other existing projects in support of sustainable development, including poverty alleviation (e.g. including its possible incorporation, where appropriate, in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper developed through a recognised process).

Resource mobilisation is an ongoing task, and one that will change over time with the evolving nature and focus of the country's capacity building efforts. Thus, the development

[32] A full report of this workshop is available from UNITAR.

and implementation of a resource mobilisation strategy is not a one-time undertaking, but rather an integral and ongoing component of an integrated national programme.

15. The Importance of Sound Planning

Working with large and potentially diverse groups to co-ordinate on a particular initiative can be challenging and complex. Coupled with a wide and increasing range of issues pertaining to chemicals management, countries today require strategic approaches to help ensure success in related planning and implementation efforts. Applying the "Action Plan process" to developing an Action Plan can help to make it easier to co-ordinate activities and secure more predictable results.

The purpose of an Action Plan is to provide a clear basis or "blueprint" for the implementation of activities aimed at addressing an identified priority issue. A well-prepared Action Plan outlines the specific goal, objectives and indicators of success to be achieved, related activities to be undertaken, associated responsibilities of the participants, time frames, and resources and evaluation details. It is important that an Action Plan is not seen, however, as a snapshot of a particular situation or a one-time event. Rather, the Action Plan can be modified as necessary as part of an iterative process.[33]

The development of an AP will likely be initiated by a ministry or government agency (hereinafter called the lead organisation) concerned with the sound management of chemicals. Working in partnership with non-governmental organisations can also bring benefits to the process, while still maintaining full governmental involvement. In any case, important components of any AP process are sound interministerial coordination and stakeholder involvement. This becomes particularly apparent when an AP is being prepared for a priority topic of national chemicals management which is cross-sectoral in nature. Ministries concerned with, or who have a role in the management of chemicals can include Ministries of Agriculture, Customs, Environment, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Industry, Justice, Labour, Planning, and Transportation. Other governmental entities which may play an initiating role include central agencies or councils responsible for the development and implementation of laws, regulations, policies and activities related to chemicals management throughout their life cycle, and/or aspects of pollution prevention and control.

Potential benefits of sound planning can include:

- increased transparency in planning and implementing a project;
- increased likelihood of mobilising funding for a project;
- optimum use of resources (e.g. time and money);
- improved results and performance;
- sustained momentum and focus; and
- increased teamwork and commitment.

[33] A guidance package on sound planning/Action Plan Development is available from UNITAR. This includes: Guidance on Action Plan Development for Sound Chemicals Management, Guidance Document and Action Plan Skills-Building Workshop, Training Modules.

16. Evaluating the National Programme

From time to time, perhaps every 2-3 years, it is important to take a step back to consider the direction that the integrated national programme is headed, to reassess national priorities, and to consider whether ongoing initiatives are continuing to meet the country's evolving needs. Each country will have to decide how it will go about this reassessment and at what point in time. Various measurable objectives (as well as specific means for measuring their attainment) should have been identified in a variety of contexts during integrated national programme planning, such as: setting national priorities, designing national policies and laws, preparing Action Plans and developing Terms of Reference on integrating, "horizontal issues". Some of the suggestions on initiating a national dialogue, defining milestones and setting priorities that were discussed in the sections above may be of relevance at this stage.

Assessing Results of Ongoing Activities

By this stage in the process, numerous activities will have been initiated to address various aspects of the integrated national programme, many with a direct link to the priorities set at the beginning of the country's efforts to develop/implement an integrated national programme. An effort should be made to find out what has been achieved through these various and largely decentralised activities. In the ideal case, there will have been ongoing communication between the active bodies. These individuals and groups should have also conducted evaluations of their activities and thus should be in a position to demonstrate the extent to which they have been able to implement their Action Plans and what the results have been.

By gathering information on achievements made and assessing to what extent the initially defined national priorities have been addressed, the active bodies should be able to get an accurate sense of progress made and remaining challenges. The aim of this "taking stock" exercise is not to highlight areas in which results have fallen short of expectations. Rather, it is to ensure that the process of strengthening the integrated national programme is an iterative one, and that it is able to respond and adapt to changing circumstances and needs. Moreover, evaluations of clearly targeted and costed activities and plans can be presented to potential donors to support further phases of an integrated national programme.

Updating the National Profile

Updating the National Profile should be a cornerstone of the evaluation and re-assessment process. The National Profile provides a means for systematically documenting the state of the national chemicals management infrastructure, including legal, administrative, technical and organisational aspects. It also can provide a useful basis for a national dialogue to revisit national needs and priorities.

Convening a National Dialogue

Some countries may find it useful at this stage to reconvene interested and affected parties to review the progress that has been achieved to-date, to revisit the national priorities and revise them as needed, and to set the stage for the next phase of efforts to further develop and implement the integrated national programme. Experiences indicate that continuing the national dialogue through holding such an event regularly can be useful, in that it helps to keep stakeholders informed, may serve to maintain their interest in the process and can ensure that changing needs and priorities of all parties are taken into account.

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