

Protecting People and the Environment through  
Chemical Hazard Communication

# WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)

## Annual Report 2004



### *About WSSD Partnerships for Sustainable Development*



Partnerships for sustainable development aimed at implementing Agenda 21 are an important outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. At the Summit, governments agreed on a series of commitments in five priority areas backed up by specific government announcements on programmes, and by Partnership initiatives. It is important to continue to build on the momentum created by the WSSD, since Partnership initiatives can contribute significantly to the implementation of sustainable development at all levels.

Additional information about Partnerships can be found at:

<[www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm)>.

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## A Message from the Founding Partners

The 2008 target for GHS implementation, as agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, is approaching. As a result, the interest and commitment of countries and stakeholders to implement the GHS is growing, both in developed and developing countries. Equally important, the benefits of GHS implementation are becoming clearer, including the contribution of the GHS to the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and towards facilitating the trade of chemicals. Finally, a growing number of developing countries are interested in taking advantage of the GHS to develop basic capacities for sound chemical hazard communication and chemicals management in general. It is in support of these efforts that UNITAR, ILO and OECD established the *WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS*.

2004 marked an important year for the Partnership. Pilot projects in South Africa and Zambia were successfully completed and resources for a second round of seven pilot projects scheduled to start in 2005 were mobilized. In addition, supporting activities to facilitate GHS implementation at the regional level continued, including a sub-regional GHS workshop for countries of the Mercosur and Andean Community regions, and a survey on GHS implementation of Asia-Pacific countries. In support of global GHS capacity building efforts, a first roster of GHS experts was developed through collaboration of UNITAR and the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS. Lastly, a number of countries with existing chemical hazard communication systems (such as Canada and the US) published their first assessments of changes needed to implement the GHS. More details about these and other exciting developments are included in this 2004 Annual Report, the third published since the initiation of the Partnership in 2002.

UNITAR, ILO and OECD appreciate and would like to acknowledge the core contribution of the Government of Switzerland and the European Union (pledged for 2005-2006), as well as contributions from the US Department of State, GTZ, and the SCHC for supporting activities held during or initiated in 2004. Equally important, we would like to thank the members of the Programme Advisory Group of the UNITAR/ILO *Global GHS Capacity Building Programme* who have provided continued technical and advisory support to the Programme and the Partnership in 2004. Other governments and major groups are invited to join the Partnership and support core activities in 2005-2006 in order to meet the growing interest and commitment for GHS capacity building in developing and transition countries.

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### **Selected Partnership Highlights 2004**

- Second regional GHS workshop held in November-December 2004 for countries of the Mercosur and Andean Community regions. Funds mobilized for a third regional workshop in ASEAN for 2005.
- UNITAR and the Ministry of Environment of Japan initiate survey of Asia-Pacific countries on GHS implementation.
- Funding mobilized and preparations begun for an expanded second phase of country-based pilot projects in up to seven countries starting in 2005.
- First GHS Roster of Experts developed.
- GHS awareness raising events and situation analyses take place in a number of countries and regions, including Canada, the United States, Asia and Europe.

# 1. Background to the Partnership

## *Development of the GHS*

Communicating hazards of dangerous chemicals to workers and the public is a key foundation for protecting human health and the environment.

Communicating the hazards of dangerous chemicals to workers and the public is a key foundation for protecting human health and the environment. As a major break-through in this area, the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) was adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS (SCEGHS) in December 2002 and endorsed by ECOSOC in July 2003, following more than a decade of technical work and negotiations after the Rio Summit in 1992. The GHS has the ultimate goal of ensuring that information on chemical hazards (such as labels and safety data sheets) is made available to workers and consumers in a harmonized and comprehensible format in countries around the world.<sup>1</sup> Early feedback from developing countries has documented that widespread adoption of the GHS and effective chemical hazard communication is only likely to occur if adequate support, training and technical assistance is made available to committed countries in need of building appropriate GHS-relevant legal and technical infrastructures.

## *UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme*

The UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Programme supports national and regional GHS capacity building activities, and develops and pilots GHS training materials.

In response to growing requests from countries for GHS capacity building, UNITAR and ILO initiated in 2001 the *UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Training and Capacity Building Programme*. The Programme aims at assisting countries to build capacities for the implementation of the GHS through national, sub-regional and regional activities, in accordance with their own capacities and capabilities and through collaboration between various government bodies as well as parties outside of government, in particular industry and civil society. Building upon existing initiatives of international organisations, countries and others, the programme provides guidance documents, training materials, expert training and educational, awareness-raising and resource materials regarding the new system. Relevant activities cover topics such as chemical hazards, labelling, safety data sheets (SDS), as well as related support measures such as legislation, comprehensibility testing, awareness raising workshops, etc.<sup>2</sup> Details regarding 2004 progress in pilot countries and other programme activities are found throughout this Annual Report.

<sup>1</sup> Further information about the GHS can be found in Annex 2.

<sup>2</sup> Further information about this programme can be found at: <[www.unitar.org/cwm](http://www.unitar.org/cwm)>.

## ***The WSSD Plan of Implementation and the GHS***

WSSD encouraged countries to implement the GHS with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

Chemical safety, including hazard communication and GHS implementation, is one of the issues which received specific attention at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). In paragraph 23 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, governments renewed their commitment to the sound management of chemicals across a variety of important sectors. The need for support for developing countries to strengthen their capacities for the sound management of chemicals, through the provision of technical and financial assistance, was highlighted. More specifically, it was agreed to “encourage countries to implement the new globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008”.<sup>3</sup> This target had also been adopted by the third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety in 2000.

## ***Initiation of the WSSD GHS Partnership by UNITAR, ILO and OECD***

Over 25 governments, international organizations and NGOs responded with strong interest to participate in the Partnership.

In April 2002, UNITAR and ILO, in collaboration with OECD, initiated the *WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS*.<sup>4</sup> The main goal of the WSSD GHS Partnership is to mobilize resources and implement a number of specific support activities to strengthen capacities at all levels and sectors – in particular in developing and transition countries – towards implementing the GHS for industrial chemicals, agricultural chemicals, chemicals in transport and consumer chemicals. In response to a call for Partners prior to the WSSD, over 25 governments, international organizations and NGOs responded with an interest to participate in the Partnership.

## ***Partnership Announcement at the Johannesburg Summit***

In July 2002, the Partnership proposal was submitted to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and placed on the WSSD website following a review by DESA that it met the guiding principles developed by the WSSD Preparatory Committee in preparation for the Summit.<sup>5</sup> At the Summit the Partnership was formally launched as part of the official WSSD Programme on Friday, 30 August 2002. UNITAR’s Executive Director Dr. Marcel Boisard convened a partnership panel including: James Phiri, *Executive Director, Environmental*

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<sup>3</sup> A/CONF.199/20, paragraph 23(c).

<sup>4</sup> Further information on relevant international bodies related to the GHS can be found in Annex 3.

<sup>5</sup> The list and details of selected Partnerships, including the Global GHS Partnership, can be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>.



*Council of Zambia, Conchita Poncini, International Confederation of University Women and President, NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Larry Kohler, Specialist, Sustainable Development, ILO, Kenneth Ruffing, Acting Director, Environment Directorate, OECD and Ambassador Beat Nobs, Head of Division, International Affairs Division, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL).*

### ***First Meeting of Partners, July 2003***

The First Meeting of Partners was held in July 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. Representatives from 16 governments, 8 intergovernmental organizations and 12 NGOs discussed and agreed a number of important elements, including:

- the framework workplan and four Partnership programme areas;
- that Meetings of Partners would take place about every two years, if possible prior to submission of bi-annual progress reports for the Partnership to the CSD Secretariat;
- that the UNITAR/ILO Programme Advisory Group (PAG) will continue to provide technical and coordinating support for Partnership Activities;
- that UNITAR will provide the Secretariat for the Partnership (dependent on mobilization of adequate resources), working closely with ILO and OECD;
- highlighting the importance of ensuring sustainable core funding both to support Partnership activities and to provide the functions of the Partnership Secretariat; and
- linking GHS capacity development needs and implementation activities with other international priorities for sustainable development (such as poverty eradication, protection of water supplies and protection of marginalised groups such as women and children).

Partners highlighted the need to ensure sustainable core funding for the Partnership and the importance of linking GHS capacity needs to broader sustainable development goals.

A full report of the meeting is available from UNITAR.

**The Contribution of the GHS to Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

Implementation of the GHS can have broader benefits related to national issues of sustainable development. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of time-bound and measurable targets for reducing poverty and addressing other issues. MDG Number 7 is to “ensure environmental sustainability.” It was recommended that this be done, *inter alia*, by reducing “exposure to toxic chemicals in vulnerable groups” and to “improve frameworks for chemical management.” Further, harm from exposure to chemicals can disproportionately affect traditionally disempowered persons, including women, children and the poor. Agenda 21, and Chapter 19 in particular, also recognize the vulnerability of these groups to toxic chemicals. The GHS can provide a framework for helping to improve chemical management and safety for such populations. Along with providing a tool for achieving international sustainability goals, GHS implementation can also help to protect water supplies, ensure safe transport of chemicals and facilitate trade.

## 2. Partnership Objectives and Framework Workplan

### *Goal and Objectives*

The WSSD GHS Partnership strives to mobilize support and catalyze partnerships for capacity building activities at the global, regional and national levels.

The goal of the WSSD GHS Partnership is to mobilize support and catalyze partnerships for coordinated activities at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen capacities in developing countries and countries in transition towards effective implementation of the GHS. In the medium and long-term, the Partnership is expected to lead to a decrease in environmental and human health related effects attributable to the use of hazardous chemicals. It thus makes a direct contribution to important objectives of sustainable development including protection of marginalized groups, protection of water supplies and drinking water, poverty eradication and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Specific objectives of the Partnership include mobilization of resources for:

- awareness raising and capacity development for GHS implementation at the regional level;
- awareness raising and capacity development for GHS implementation at the national level; and
- development of GHS guidance, training and resource material.

### *Partnership Programme Areas and Activities*

To be recognized as a contribution to the Partnership, an activity should fall within any of the following four Programme Areas and make a significant contribution towards achieving Partnership indicators. The Partnership's programme areas are:

- (1) GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level
- (2) GHS Capacity Development at the National Level
- (3) Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials
- (4) Supporting Activities and Services for GHS Capacity Development

Projects and activities executed through the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme are directly linked to the above Programme Areas and constitute a core contribution to the Partnership. Other Partnership activities can be implemented directly by Partners, working in close collaboration with the UNITAR/ILO Programme and its Programme Advisory Group. See text box below.

### **What Constitutes a Core GHS Partnership Activity?**

The GHS Partnership attempts to mobilize support for a number of agreed activities. Activities constitute a contribution to the GHS Partnership if they fall within the programme areas, as agreed at the first Meeting of the Partners. Activities are either implemented through the UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme or directly by Partners. In all cases, activities are co-ordinated through, and technically reviewed by, the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Programme. Not all core Partnership activities are therefore executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may also execute Partnership activities independently, if the activity contributes to one of the Partnership indicators and is coordinated through the PAG. It is also recognized that many other valuable GHS capacity development activities are organized independently of the WSSD GHS Partnership. Those activities do not belong to the core program of the Partnership, but are presented in a special section of the annual progress reports for the Partnership.

## *Partnership Indicators*

At the first Meeting of the Partners in July 2003, Partners discussed proposed time-bound targets for the Partnership. However, in light of the uncertainty for funding beyond 2003, it was agreed that targets should be replaced by more general indicators against which progress could be evaluated.

The recommended indicators are the following:

- Number of Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Number of Regional GHS capacity assessments and implementation strategies prepared.
- Number of Regional partner organizations identified.
- Number of Country-based pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in each UN region, including: awareness raising workshop, situation analysis, action plan development and implementing legislation.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries.
- GHS and hazard communication awareness raising materials prepared, peer-reviewed and widely disseminated.
- GHS capacity building guidance and training materials prepared, peer-reviewed and pilot tested.

### **2004 Financial and In-kind Contributions to the WSSD GHS Partnership**

UNITAR/ILO/OECD would like to thank the following countries and organizations for their contributions to the Partnership in 2004:

#### **A. Support of Partnership Coordination and Secretariat**

Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) USD 80,000

#### **B. 2004 Financial Support to Core Partnership Activities Implemented through the UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme**

Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) USD 811,000

National GHS capacity building projects in 3 developing countries (The Gambia, Nigeria and Thailand) commencing in 2005-2006

National GHS capacity building project in Slovenia and regional activities in Central and Eastern Europe, 2005-2006

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) USD 245,000

National GHS capacity building project in Senegal, 2005-2006

US Department of State USD 50,000

South America Regional GHS Workshop, Nov. 2004

Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC) USD 2,000

South America Regional GHS Workshop, Nov. 2004

#### **C. In-kind Financial Contributions in 2004 to Core Partnership Activities**

##### GTZ

Support for 30 Participants, South America Regional GHS Workshop, Nov. 2004

##### Health Canada

Participation of resource person, South America Regional GHS Workshop, Nov. 2004

### 3. GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level – Programme Area 1

Regional free trade initiatives increasingly deal with environmental issues.

Countries within regions often share similar needs and approaches towards chemical hazard communication. Also, regional economic cooperation or free trade initiatives increasingly take on board environmentally related issues. This programme area includes activities such as regional GHS awareness raising workshops, regional capacity assessments and the facilitation of regional GHS implementation strategies.

Initial indicators for this Programme Area include the following:

- Number of Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Number of Regional GHS capacity assessments and implementation strategies prepared.
- Number of Regional partner organizations identified.

#### *2004 Activities and Progress Made*

##### Second Regional Workshop held in South America

The second regional GHS workshop was held in Nov-Dec 2004 for the 14 countries of Mercosur and the Andean Community.

The South American Sub-regional Workshop on Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation was held in São Paulo from 29 November – 2 December 2004, hosted by the Government of Brazil and supported by GTZ, the US Department of State, UNITAR, ILO, and the Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC). It was the second in a series of regional and sub-regional GHS workshops which are co-ordinated and supported through the *UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme*. The workshop was attended by some 65 representatives from ten countries of the Mercosur and Andean Community regions,<sup>6</sup> along with other stakeholders and resource persons. Through a series of working groups and plenary sessions, the workshop developed recommendations for action towards GHS implementation at the national and regional levels. A report of the workshop is available from UNITAR.

##### Survey of Asia-Pacific on GHS Implementation

UNITAR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, initiated a survey related to GHS implementation in

<sup>6</sup> Mercosur includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile (as a candidate country). The Andean Community includes Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

countries of the Asia-Pacific region during the second half of 2004. The purpose of the survey was a preliminary assessment of GHS awareness, preparation for implementation, and capacity needs in the region.

Based on responses received to date, preliminary results indicate that:

Preliminary survey responses show that almost all countries in Asia-Pacific intend to implement the GHS.

- many countries have existing chemical classification and hazard communication systems, though most often in the agriculture chemicals and industrial chemicals sectors;
- almost all countries indicated at this point that they intend to introduce the GHS into their national chemical management systems;
- most countries cited lack of GHS awareness and lack of capacities/resources as the main obstacles to GHS implementation.

These preliminary results were presented at the IFCS Asia-Pacific regional meeting held in Manila in November 2004. It is expected that a final report of the survey will be ready early in 2005.

### ***Plans for 2005-2006***

With support from the European Union and Switzerland, at least one regional workshop for ASEAN countries is planned for the second half of 2005. Subject to the provision of resources, proposals to host regional workshops in 2005-2006 in ECOWAS (West Africa), and the Central and East European and Arabic-speaking regions have also been received and are under consideration.

Other possibilities in 2005 for activities at the regional level include: projects to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and labour unions to participate in GHS-related activities in SADC and in ASEAN, and planning for regional workshops and implementation strategies in other regions. Countries and organizations that are interested in sponsoring such activities, or that may be in a position to support the organization of additional regional workshops through the UNITAR/ILO programme, are encouraged to contact UNITAR.



## 4. GHS Capacity Development at the Country Level - Programme Area 2

GHS pilot projects provide important feedback to the international community regarding opportunities and challenges to implement the GHS in developing and transition countries

Country-based GHS projects can serve to catalyse national action through multi-stakeholder collaboration and provide a testing ground to review drafts of GHS-related guidance and training material. They also provide important feedback to the international community regarding opportunities and challenges associated with GHS implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Activities in this programme area include support of national GHS awareness raising workshops, GHS capacity self-needs assessments and national GHS implementation strategy development involving all interested and affected parties.

Initial indicators for this Programme Area include the following:

- Number of Country-based pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in each UN region, including: awareness raising workshop, situation analysis, action plan development and implementing legislation.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries.

### *2004 Activities and Progress Made*

#### Follow-up Activities in Past Country Projects

Two past pilot countries in the UNITAR/ILO GHS capacity building programme, Zambia and South Africa, continued to work on developing national chemical hazard communication and GHS implementation strategies in 2004, though the formal projects supported by UNITAR had ended.

In Zambia, changes to the sectoral legislation that exists have been proposed in order to contribute to their commitment to the international target of GHS implementation by 2008. Zambia's request for formal membership to the UN SCEGHS, in which they participated as observers during the UNITAR-supported project, was also approved.

**Potential Challenges for Developing a National GHS  
Implementation Strategy**

Although the GHS is a tool that harmonizes chemical classification and hazard communication world-wide, implementing the GHS is likely to have different implications for different countries, depending on a number of factors. This can also prove to be a challenge when developing useful and effective guidance materials. Some of the challenges can include:

- differences in levels of industrial development,
- differences in existing capacity across countries
- differences in capacity across sectors; and
- different institutions and stakeholders across sectors.

Past pilot countries continued GHS implementation activities in 2004, though the formal projects supported by UNITAR had ended.

In South Africa, a national implementation strategy was developed and related activities have started. An agreement was reached in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) the GHS will be incorporated into a national standard, including through relevant legislation. Implementation of the system will require a significant training initiative and work has commenced in the Chemical Industry Education and Training Authority (TISA) to identify existing training courses and to identify gaps where new courses need to be developed.

The South African Chemical and Allied Industries' Association held a series of workshops to familiarise its members with the requirements of the GHS system. Funding has been approved and a consultant appointed for the extension of the existing website of the Chemical and Allied Industries' Association to cover chemical safety, including GHS implementation. A memorandum of understanding has been accepted amongst SADC states on standardization, accreditation and certification.

#### Mobilization of Resources and Preparation for Initiation of New Country Pilot Projects

Through contributions to the global UNITAR/ILO trust fund for GHS capacity building, Nigeria, Senegal, Slovenia, The Gambia and Thailand are expected to initiate country-based pilot projects in early 2005, with resources provided by the Government of Switzerland. With the co-funding of the European Commission and Government of Switzerland, two additional ASEAN countries (in addition to Thailand) are also expected to initiate country-based pilot projects early in 2005








#### ***Plans for 2005-2006***

During 2005, other country projects could be added, taking into consideration other possible donor contributions.

### Communicating Hazards to End Users...

A useful tool to explain the GHS to end users, in particular those unfamiliar with technical terms, is a card showing GHS pictograms and explaining the hazards in simplified language. The card below was developed as part of a methodology for the assessment of the comprehensibility of labels and SDS for chemical hazards. A rapid comprehensibility testing instrument has been developed by the University of Cape Town in South Africa, in collaboration with UNITAR and with support from the Government of Switzerland and the European Union. The card was widely distributed for use during pilot testing of comprehensibility testing in South Africa.

**GHS SYMBOLS & MEANINGS**  
 The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is a new system for communicating hazard information on labels and Safety Data Sheets. Its goal is to protect human health and the environment.

MEANINGS OF SELECTED SYMBOLS/PICTOGRAMS	
	<b>SKULL AND CROSS BONES:</b> This chemical is dangerous.
	<b>FLAMMABLE:</b> A flammable chemical is one that can easily catch fire and burn.
	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD:</b> This is a chemical that can damage or kill fish, or other aquatic organisms.
	<b>EXPLOSIVE:</b> This chemical is one that can blow up and cause an explosion.
	<b>OXIDIZING:</b> This chemical can react, even in the absence of air, with other chemicals and cause fire.
	<b>CORROSIVE:</b> This chemical can cause severe damage to eyes, skin, metal and other materials.
	<b>ACUTE HAZARD</b> This chemical may be harmful if not used as directed, causing immediate health effects, such as skin rashes and irritation.

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## 5. Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials – Programme Area 3

Activities in this programme area include the development of GHS information brochures, a GHS capacity building guidance and training package, *e.g.* for implementation strategy development, comprehensibility testing guidance, and training modules on various GHS-related topics (such as classification, labelling and development of SDS).

The initial two indicators for this Programme Area are the following:

- A range of GHS and hazard communication awareness raising materials prepared, peer-reviewed and widely disseminated.
- A range of GHS capacity building guidance and training materials prepared, peer-reviewed and pilot tested.

### *2004 Activities and Progress Made*

#### Process for Updating of Guidance Materials

UNITAR/ILO have initiated a process to update the guidance methodology used in pilot projects (originally developed in 2001). Comments were received from the pilot countries (Zambia and South Africa) in 2003 and a preliminary, revised framework was discussed at the December 2004 PAG meeting. It is expected that the revised materials will include an updated GHS situation and gap analysis component, as well as increased focus on the assessing existing legislative frameworks and choosing options for GHS implementing legislation. Catalysing funds were mobilised in 2004 from Foreign Affairs Canada to assist with these activities in early 2005. Revised materials are expected to be reviewed at the planned Global Thematic GHS Workshop planned for the second half of 2005 (see entry in section 6).

UNITAR/ILO draft guidance for GHS national implementation strategy development will be reviewed based on the experience in the first round of pilot countries and comments from the PAG.

### ***Plans for 2005-2006***

The widespread and effective implementation of the GHS will require the development, revision and use of guidance and training materials across a number of GHS-related subjects and building upon the 2001-2003 pilot testing activities. In addition to the completion of the activities listed above and subject to availability of resources, UNITAR/ILO, working together with interested Partners, will pursue in 2005 other opportunities for development of awareness raising and guidance materials, for example:

- materials to assist civil society groups such as public interest NGOs and labour unions to determine their role and activities to contribute to national GHS implementation strategies;
- an information brochure/booklet for the public to highlight the use of GHS symbols and their meanings in an easily understandable format;
- a “GHS media briefing package”, including a sample press release and other tools that countries would be able to adapt for use in their national situation to publicise the importance of the GHS and proper use and understanding of labels; and
- sample guidelines for industry regarding key steps and issues related to GHS implementation at the company level.

Countries and organizations that are interested in sponsoring such activities are encouraged to contact UNITAR.

## 6. Supporting Activities and Services for GHS Capacity Development – Programme Area 4

Activities in this programme area include the provision of supporting services for GHS capacity development which do not easily fall in any of the previous Programme Areas. They include, for example, activities such as a GHS capacity needs assessment survey, or development of a GHS capacity building website.

### *2004 Activities and Progress Made*

#### Development of a Roster of GHS Experts

UNITAR/ILO developed a roster of GHS experts in 2004 in response to the request from IFCS Forum IV.

In response to the GHS Action Plan adopted by IFCS Forum IV in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2003, UNITAR/ILO, as the focal point for capacity building in the UN SCEGHS, and in collaboration with the Sub-committee, developed an initial roster of GHS experts during 2004. The roster contains a list of GHS experts who can provide support on training and capacity building activities on the application of GHS classification, labelling, and safety data sheets. Experts listed in the roster are included in their personal capacity and not as the official nomination of any government or organization. The roster was presented to the December 2004 session of the SCEGHS, but further nominations to the roster are welcome.

#### Calendar of Events on GHS Partnership Website

Due to the substantially increasing number of GHS-related events and activities, the GHS Partnership Secretariat (UNITAR) has developed a calendar of events page to coordinate and improve access to information about ongoing events at [www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs\\_partnership/events.htm](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership/events.htm). The calendar includes global, regional and national events. Events for inclusion in the calendar should be submitted to UNITAR.

## ***Plans for 2005-2006***

### Global Thematic Workshop on Capacity Building to Implement the GHS

A Global Thematic Workshop on Capacity Building to Implement the GHS is planned for the second half of 2005, hosted in South Africa and with support mobilised from the Government of Switzerland and OPCW. The workshop, the ninth in a series of workshops on priority topics for national chemicals management capacity building organized by UNITAR, will be open to participants from developing countries, countries in economic transition, and developed country representatives, as well as representatives of intergovernmental organizations (including convention secretariats) and non-governmental organizations with experience in chemical classification, hazard communication and GHS implementation. The workshop will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences with GHS implementation, take stock of current activities and needs, and undertake a review of guidance materials and methodology.



## 7. Related Initiatives and Activities in 2004

A number of GHS activities were implemented in 2004 or were in the planning stages which were not directly co-ordinated through the UNITAR/ILO Programme Advisory Group, but nevertheless are important activities contributing to the WSSD goal of GHS implementation by the year 2008.

### *National Activities*

#### Canada

Canada continued to consult with stakeholders on how to implement the GHS. The sectors include pest control products, controlled products in the workplace and consumer chemicals. A multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral General Issues Committee serves as a forum for open discussion and advice to ensure harmonization to the greatest extent possible between the sectors in Canada and between trading partners. In addition, expert working groups are addressing specific issues of environmental and chronic hazard labelling. The goal is to have recommendations for decision by late 2005. Updates on Canadian activities are posted on the website: <[www.healthcanada.ca/ghs](http://www.healthcanada.ca/ghs)>.

#### Madagascar

The Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests made presentations on the GHS during workshops on chemical conventions and IFCS held in Madagascar. The workshops attracted a wide range of public and private sector participants, included people from industry, health, labour and agriculture. These presentations served as a key awareness-raising tool for the new system.

#### United States

The US OSHA signed an alliance with the Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC) to address hazard communication. One focus of this alliance is to distribute information and increase awareness about the GHS. During the last year of the OSHA-SCHC alliance, many presentations were made to promote GHS awareness at many conferences and meetings in the USA and Canada. A comparison of OSHA hazard communication requirements with the GHS is available at: <[www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/GHSOSHAComparison.html](http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/GHSOSHAComparison.html)>

The US EPA issued a paper for public comment on the GHS regarding implementation issues, as well as a side-by-side comparison of current EPA requirements for classification and

labeling of pesticides with the provisions of the GHS. For further information, please visit:

<[www.epa.gov/oppfod01/international/globalharmon.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppfod01/international/globalharmon.htm)>.

## ***Regional Activities***

### Japan activities in ASEAN

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan continued the “GHS Expert Dispatch Program” to ASEAN countries. The purpose is to dispatch qualified experts to each country for around one week to hold workshops centering on practical training, and to exchange information and views with GHS-related ministries. METI dispatched experts to Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. In addition, METI implemented training programs in Tokyo and accepted trainees related to chemical industries from 8 ASEAN countries. During this course, involving around 20 people in total, the GHS was discussed.

### Latin America

The Centro de Informacion Quimica Para Emergencias, based in Argentina, held several GHS related workshops throughout Latin America to train first responders to deal with Hazardous Materials Incidents. Locations for the workshops included Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Peru.

## ***International Activities***

### WHO and ILO

Through an International Technical Group (ITG), WHO and ILO continued to coordinate development and implementation of the International Chemical Control Toolkit (control banding). This toolkit, which has been accepted by UNITAR as a contribution to GHS implementation, is a practical tool for managing exposures to chemicals, particularly in small and medium sized businesses. Activities in 2004 included, the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Control Banding Workshop in Cincinnati, Ohio, which informed the development of a Global Implementation Strategy; an international meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands, to prepare pilot projects to apply control banding in a number of developing countries; and a workshop to further the Brazilian pilot project was held in conjunction with the UNITAR South American Sub-Regional Workshop on Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation.

### WHO / IPCS

Specific activities in 2004 included a workshop in Freiburg, Germany to discuss the training needs of poisons centres in relation to the GHS; and the initiation of a review of relevant IPCS hazard and risk assessment products (*e.g.* EHC, CICADs, ICSC) and related publications (*e.g.* WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard) to ensure that they provide ongoing information about chemical hazards in relation to GHS. More information is at: [www.who.int/ipcs/capacity\\_building/ghs\\_statement/en/](http://www.who.int/ipcs/capacity_building/ghs_statement/en/).



## **8. Further Development of the Partnership in 2005**

It is anticipated that the Partnership will be further developed and strengthened in 2005 taking into consideration progress regarding the overall direction of all WSSD Partnerships. The 2004 meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, will include a “Partnerships Fair” as an official activity of CSD and a summary of its activities will be included in the report of CSD-12. This final section of the Annual Report outlines plans to strengthen the Partnership in 2005.

### ***Capacity Building for Civil Society***

Based upon past experience, a key to the success of national and regional-level GHS capacity development activities is engagement and capacity enhancement of civil society groups. Civil society groups, in particular labour, consumers, and women and youth organizations may be not be aware of or have resources to participate in GHS-implementation activities; yet the individuals represented by these target groups are often the ones most at risk from poorly labeled or misunderstood chemicals. UNITAR intends to develop specific capacity development activities for these target groups, for inclusion in national and regional level implementation strategy processes.

### ***Engagement of Industry in GHS Implementation Activities***

Equally important is the involvement of industry groups in the regional and national processes as a key to GHS implementation. UNITAR plans to develop specific activities during 2005 to further engage them in partnerships with government and civil society to strengthen capacities for GHS implementation.



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**Annex 1: List of Acronyms**

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BUWAL	Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape
CEFIC	European Chemical Industry Council
COPASQ	Commission for Chemical Safety (Brazil)
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN)
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
GHS	Globally Harmonized System for Chemical Classification and Labelling
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
IFCS	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOMC	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
NEDLAC	National Economic and Labour Council (South Africa)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSHA	US Occupational Safety and Health Administration
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCEGHS	Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS
SCHC	Society for Chemical Hazard Communication
SDS	safety data sheets
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development





## Annex 2: A Summary of the GHS

The 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.

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.

The 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. It also provides a basis for safety training and health promotion.

The System is expected to:

- enhance the protection of people and the environment by providing an internationally comprehensive system for chemical hazard communication;
- provide a recognised framework for those countries without an existing system;
- reduce the need for duplicative testing and evaluation of chemicals; and
- facilitate international trade in chemicals whose hazards have been properly assessed and identified on an international basis.

More information about the GHS can be obtained from the Secretariat (UNECE) of the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS at:

<[www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs.html)>.



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### **Annex 3: International Bodies and Initiatives Relevant to GHS Capacity Building: A Brief Overview**

#### ***UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS***

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS (UN SCEGHS) is a policy body which maintains existing and develops new technical elements of the GHS, as appropriate, and makes proposals for work and policy decisions to its parent committee, the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods & the GHS. Proposals include the provision of technical guidance to countries and organizations with regard to the further development of the GHS and its implementation. The UN SCEGHS also issues recommendations in the area of GHS capacity building, but does not have an executing function. UNITAR/ILO have been designated as a focal point for this purpose.

#### ***The UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme***

The UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme operates within UNITAR's Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals and Waste Management. It has an executing function and supports national GHS implementation strategy development processes, regional workshops, and develops and pilots GHS training material. The Programme receives technical advice from a Programme Advisory Group (PAG) which includes representatives from several countries and organizations involved in GHS development and implementation. UNITAR/ILO provide regular updates of Programme activities to the UN SCEGHS.

#### ***The Global WSSD GHS Partnership***

The Global GHS Partnership is a WSSD-endorsed framework which brings together countries and organizations committed to supporting specific GHS capacity building activities in developing and transition countries. It was initiated by UNITAR and ILO, in collaboration with the OECD. The Partnership pursues concrete objectives and targets for GHS capacity building activities at the global, regional and national levels and Partners work together to mobilize resources to reach these targets. Technical aspects of Partnership activities are reviewed by the PAG of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme. However, not all core Partnership activities are necessarily executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may execute core Partnership activities independently, as long as the activity contributes to one of the Partnership targets and is coordinated through the PAG. The secretariat function for the Partnership is provided by UNITAR, working together with ILO and OECD.







The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established in 1965 as an autonomous body within the United Nations with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations through appropriate training and research. UNITAR is governed by a Board of Trustees and is headed by an Executive Director. The Institute is supported by voluntary contributions from governments, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and other non-governmental sources.



The International Labour Organization is the UN specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. It was founded in 1919 and is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles which brought the League of Nations into being and it became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. The ILO formulates international labour standards, provides technical assistance and promotes the development of independent employers' and workers' organizations and provides training and advisory services to those organizations. Within the UN system, the ILO has a unique tripartite structure with workers and employers participating as equal partners with governments in the work of its governing organs.



The OECD is a unique forum where governments can pool ideas and expertise to tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of the 21st century globalised economy. It groups 30 market democracies producing 60% of the world's goods and services, but in this era of globalization the OECD does not and cannot work alone. It shares expertise and exchanges views with more than 70 countries worldwide, as well as a vast array of stakeholders and interest groups, on topics of mutual concern from measuring climate change to ensuring transparency and accountability of governments to their citizens.