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Preparation of National Profiles to Assess the National Infrastructure for the Sound Management of Chemicals

Prepared by: UNITAR in co-operation with the IFCS Secretariat

IFCS/ISG3/98.14B

French and Spanish versions of this document have been provided by UNITAR as a contribution to ISG3

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Annex I: Overview of National Profile Preparation in Countries

1. Background

At its first meeting (April 1994, Stockholm) the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) recommended that National Profiles to indicate the current capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals and the specific needs for improvements should be elaborated as soon as possible and no 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 and invites UNI-TAR/IOMC Participating Organizations and countries to report back on progress to ISG3."

In June of 1996, UNITAR published a guidance document under the auspices of the IOMC entitled *Preparing a National Profile to Assess the National Infrastructure for Management of Chemicals: A Guidance Document* which was disseminated to about 600 national focal points of international organizations in more than 170 countries¹. The document was made available in English, French and Spanish. Meanwhile, the document has also been translated into Bulgarian, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian and Russian in the context of country based activities.

Through financial support provided by the Governments of Austria, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United States and the European Commission, the UNITAR/ IOMC National Profile Support Programme has assisted 38 developing countries and countries in economic transition to prepare comprehensive National Profiles during 1996-1998². Participating countries were selected from among a total of 81 country applications received in 1996. In addition, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) provided support to several countries to prepare National Profiles.

Although at the outset National Profiles were intended to serve mainly as a tool for developing countries and countries with economies in transition as a starting point for strengthening national capacities and capabilities for the sound management of chemicals, in the meantime several OECD countries have also prepared, or started to prepare, comprehensive National Profiles following the UNITAR/IOMC Guidance Document.

2. IFCS/UNITAR Survey on National Chemicals Management Profiles

In order to provide an overview of National Profile preparation and to obtain a better understanding of the priorities identified by countries, the President of the IFCS and the Executive Director of UNITAR sent out a survey to 193 countries in March 1998 requesting information, *inter alia*, on:

• the current status of National Profile preparation;

¹ The mailing list is available from UNITAR upon request.

² A typical UNITAR National Profile assistance project had a total cost of approximately US\$ 25,000 per country which included: a country grant averaging US\$ 10,000 to 12,000, participation of an external expert/facilitator in the national planning meeting and project management costs incurred by UNITAR.

Box 1 : Country Feedback

"This country Profile is of great importance and has been useful as a reference document for the identification of priorities and establishing action plans that will help us to achieve sustainable development.

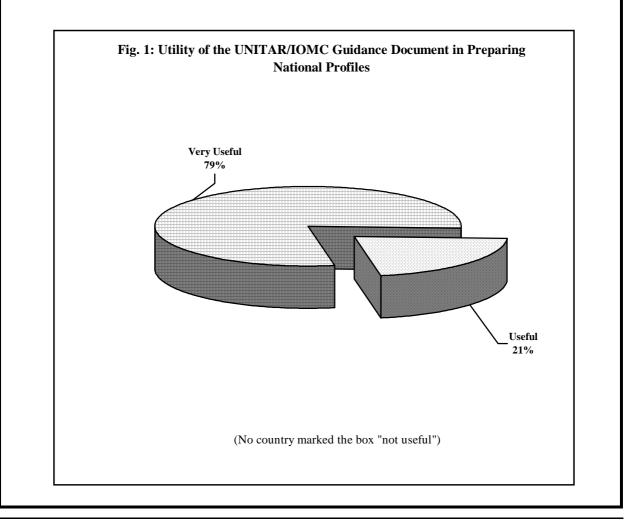
Ministry of Labour, Nicaragua

"The Guidance Document provided a comprehensive methodological approach to prepare a National Profile. It indicated the manner of initiating a multi-stakeholder programme; the type of information to collect; and how to conduct an analytical interpretation of the data.

National Research Centre on the Environment (CNRE), Madagascar

"Without a Guidance Document the preparation for the National Profile in Slovenia would be much more difficult or impossible.

Ministry of Health, Slovenia



e.g. through the Internet;

- the overall contribution of National Profiles to national chemicals management;
- specific priorities for national chemicals management capacity building as identified through the National Profile preparation process; and
- possible follow-up activities following the completion of a National Profile, such as National Priority Setting Workshops and/or National Action Programmes.

A total of 71 countries responded to the UNITAR/IFCS questionnaire as of 31 July 1998. This represents 47% of all countries which have designated/confirmed a national IFCS Focal Point and/or shown an interest in the National Profile concept, and 37% of all countries to which the survey was sent.

As not all sections of the IFCS/UNITAR questionnaire were relevant to all countries, the analysis provided in this document is based only on the responses received to any given question. Additional information received by UNITAR from countries in the context of the UNITAR/ IOMC National Profile Support Programme, as well as from other international organizations involved in National Profile projects (e.g. the Southern Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP)), was also taken into consideration.

3. Global Status of National Profile Preparation

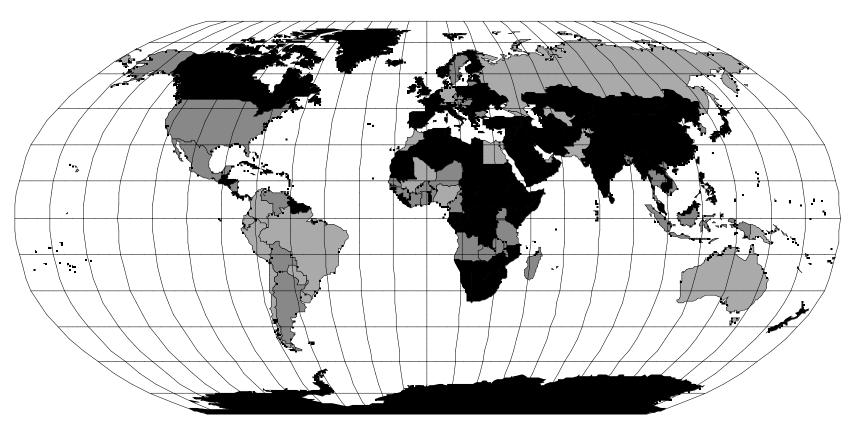
Seventy countries have prepared or are in the process of preparing a National Profile (Map 1). Of these, sixty countries prepared/are preparing a comprehensive National Profile (sometimes with the preparation of a Mini-profile as a first step) and ten countries prepared/initiated the preparation of a Mini-profile³. Annex I provides a detailed account of comprehensive National Profile preparation in countries. First official versions of National Profiles are available from about 30 countries, 21 of which have been officially endorsed by a national multi-stakeholder committee.

4. Regional Status of National Profile Preparation

Preparation of National Profiles is actively underway in all the five IFCS regions (Figure 2). Survey findings reveal a relative balance between regions in the development of National Profiles, with four of the five regions indicating that around half of their respective countries having prepared/are preparing a National Profile. In specific sub-regions however, there is a noticeable lower rate of progress. These include South and West Asia, Central and Southern Africa and Western Europe.

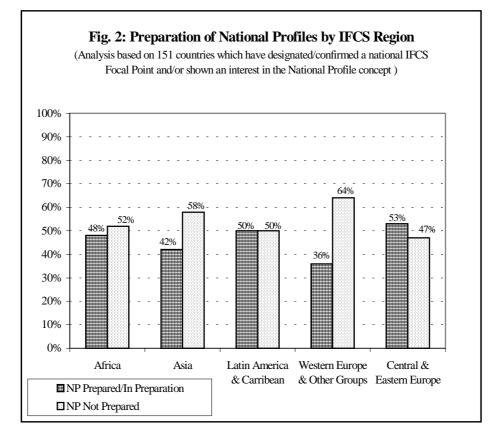
³A comprehensive National Profile is a thorough national assessment of a country's national chemicals management infrastructure prepared through a process involving all concerned parties and following, as appropriate, the UNI-TAR/IOMC National Profile guidance document. A Mini-profile is a document of about 15-20 pages which mainly summarises the legal and administrative elements of a country's chemicals management scheme.

Global Status of Comprehensive National Profile Preparation



Legend

CompetensiveNationalProfileinPeperation	(23)
CompetensiveNationalRotalPrepared	(37)



Many coun-

tries

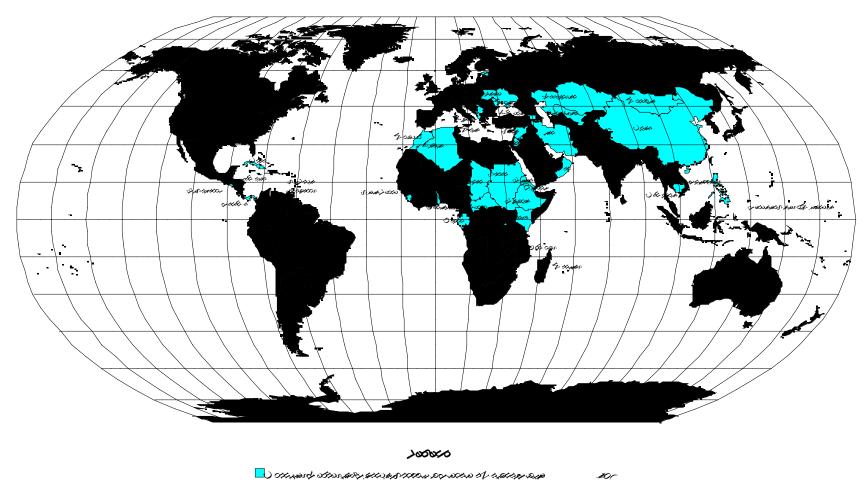
(fifty-one) that did not embark on the preparation of a comprehensive National Profile did indicate an interest to do so in the future, the majority of which (80%) identified financial resource constraints as the principal impediment. A few countries reported a lack of awareness or information on the National Profile concept, and in exceptional cases amongst developed countries, a lack of interest or uncertainty regarding the utility of the National Profile was indicated, (see Annex I for details). Map 2 provides an overview of the countries which have requested financial support to prepare/complete a comprehensive National Profile.

5. National Agencies and Organizations Participating in the National Profile Process

A key feature of the preparation of National Profiles in many countries has been the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders from within and outside of government. Due to the intersectoral nature of chemicals management and the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders at various stages of the chemical life-cycle, the active involvement of these groups, as suggested in the UNITAR/IOMC National Profile Guidance Document, has reportedly been achieved. With regard to government actors, two-thirds of countries reported collaboration of at least seven different government ministries or agencies (Figures 3 & 4).

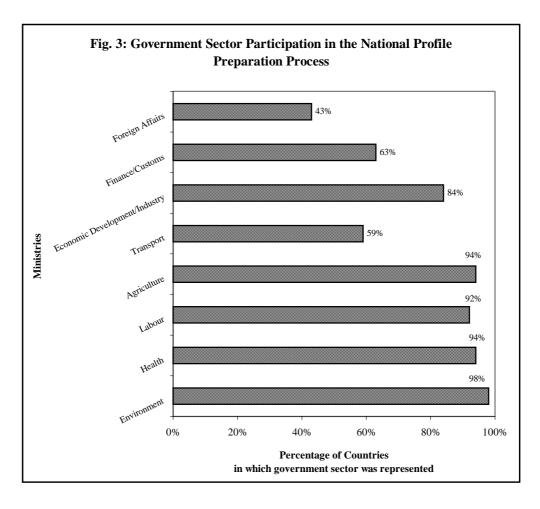
National co-ordinating agencies for the preparation of National Profiles originated in various government sectors, with Ministries of Environment, Health, Labor, and Agriculture playing a particularly important role (Figure 5).

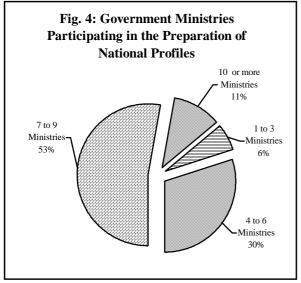
Countries which have Requested Financial Support to Prepare/Complete a Comprehensive National Profile

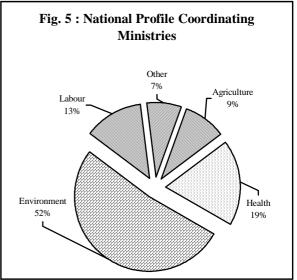


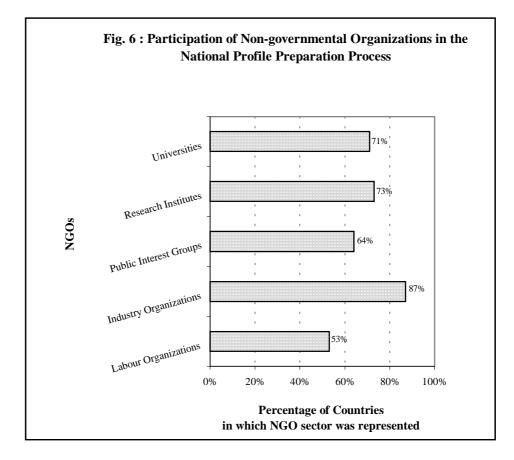
Of the countries shown above, Armenia, China, Morocco and Uzbekistan have initiated the preparation of a National Profile but indicated the lack of resources as an impediment. The remaining countries have not yet initiated the preparation of their National Profiles. (See also Annex I)

Parties and organizations outside of government also played an important role in the development of National Profiles, most notably industry, public interest groups, and labour organizations (Figure 6). In many countries the preparation of the National Profile marked the first time that government agencies as well as parties outside of government had formally collaborated in a chemicals management project.

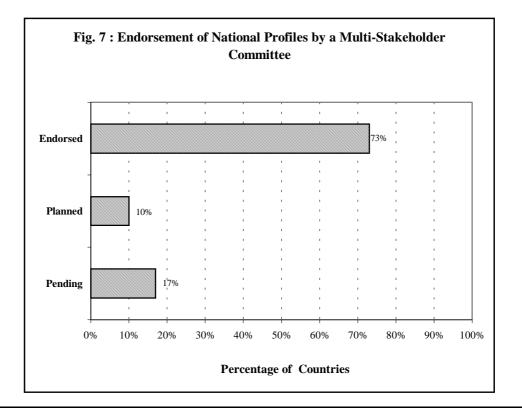








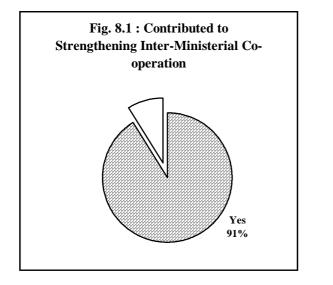
National Profiles have also enjoyed considerable political support in many countries and have been officially endorsed by a national multi-stakeholder committee in at least twenty-one countries (Figure 7).

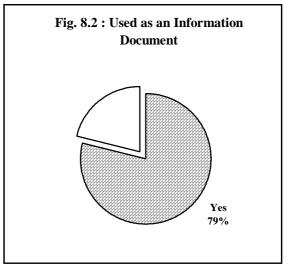


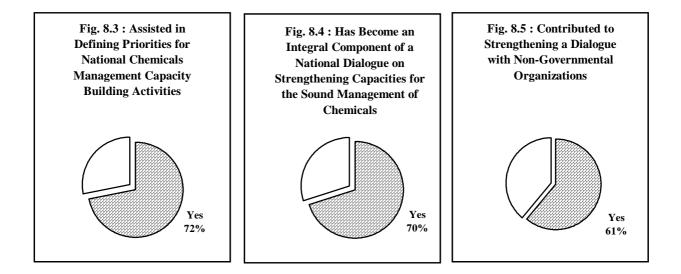
6. Contribution of National Profiles to National Chemicals Management

The preparation of National Profiles has reportedly contributed in a valuable manner to several aspects of national chemicals management, ranging from consolidating widely dispersed information into one single document, to assisting in defining national priorities for chemical management capacity building.

The one contribution of National Profiles to chemicals management which can be singled out as of particular importance is the constructive role the preparation of a National Profile has played in strengthening inter-ministerial co-operation. This points to the value of National Profiles in facilitating communication among government sectors and in improving multi-stakeholder dialogue on chemicals management issues. Details on the contribution of National Profiles to national chemicals management, as reported through the survey responses, are provided in Figures 8.1 - 8.5.

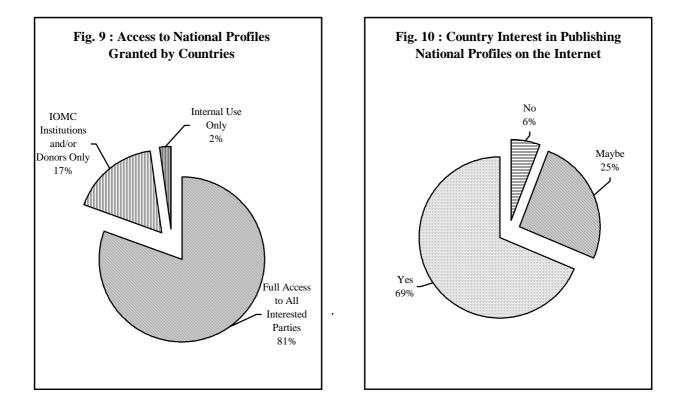






7. Accessibility and Dissemination of National Profiles

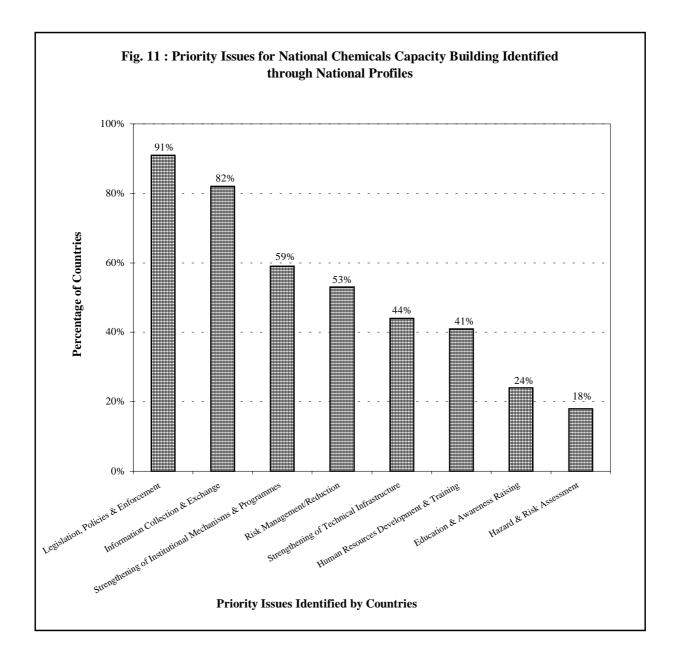
Almost all countries expressed an interest in obtaining access to National Profiles of other countries. This was particularly emphasised by countries that are interested but have not yet embarked on the preparation of a National Profile. A large majority of countries also indicated their willingness to make their National Profiles available to all interested parties. The possibility of obtaining easy and systematic access to countries National Profiles may therefore not only enhance the transparency of the National Profile process and results at the country level, but it may also provide practical guidance to countries which are interested in initiating the preparation of National Profiles in their own country.



One possible way forward to strengthen access to and exchange of National Profiles is to utilise the Internet technology. More than two-thirds of countries confirmed their interest to explore possibilities of placing their National Profile on the Internet. To this end, UNITAR and the European Chemicals Bureau (ECB) of the European Union in Ispra, Italy, concluded an agreement to develop a National Profile Homepage on the World Wide Web.

8. National Profiles: A Starting Point for Priority Setting

In reviewing the priorities identified by countries through their National Profiles, common patterns have emerged with regard to aspects of national chemicals management capacity building which are of particular importance to developing countries and countries in economic transition. Main chemicals management topics identified include: (i) legislation, policies and enforcement; (ii) information collection and exchange; and (iii) strengthening of institutional mechanisms and programmes (Figure 11).



Box 2 : Priorities for National Chemicals Management Capacity Building

Eight main thematic clusters could be discerned from country responses in their identification of priority areas for action. These are:

1. Legislation, Policies & Enforcement

- Strengthening of Existing Legislation
- Development of Framework Chemicals Legislation
- National Harmonization of Sector-Specific Legislation
- Development of Regulations on Chemical Fertilizers
- Development of Regulations on Biocides
- Harmonization of National Legislation with Interna tional/Regional Requirements
- Enforcement of Existing Legislation
- Safe Handling/Use Regulations
- Development of a National Policy on Chemical Safety/Integrated Chemical Management
- Registration of Chemical Products
- Strengthening of Import Control Mechanisms
- Development of Non-Regulatory Instruments
- Development of Right-to-Know Policies

2. Information Collection & Exchange

- Inventory of Obsolete Chemicals
- Inventory of Chemicals in Use
- Register of Chemical Products
- Establishment of a National Chemical Information System/Network
- Dissemination of Chemical Information
- Development of a Laboratory Information System
- Implementation of a Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
- Strengthening International/Regional Co-operation for the Exchange of Chemical Information
- Dissemination of Chemical Information

3. Education & Awareness Raising

- Public Awareness Raising on Chemical Hazard
- Awareness Raising of Workers on Chemical Hazards

4. Hazard & Risk Assessment

- Strengthening Understanding & Use of Risk Assessment
- Risk Assessment on Endocrine Disruptors

- Risk Assessment for Chemical Carcinogens
- Risk Assessment for Persistent Organic Pollutants
- Risk Assessment for Detergents (biodegradation)

5. Risk Management/Reduction

- Classification & Labelling of Chemicals
- Chemical Accident Preparedness & Response
- Establi shment of Poison Control Centres
- Prevention, Management & Disposal of Chemical Waste
- Safe Handling and Use of Chemicals/Pesticides
- Pesticides

6. Strengthening of Institutional Mechanisms & Programmes

- Establishment of National Co-ordinating Mechanisms
- Initiating/Strengthening of Multi-stakeholder Participation in Chemicals Management
- Preparation of a National Profile
- Establishment of National Priorities
- Implementation of a National Action Programme
- Conducting Needs Assessment
- Mobilization of Financial Resources
- Strengthening National Institutions for Chemical Management

7. Strengthening of Technical Infrastructure

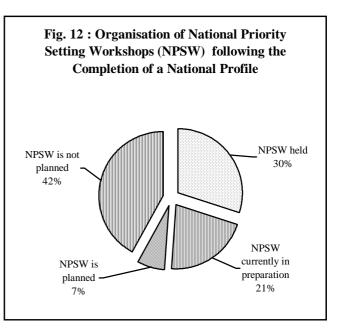
- Strengthening the Laboratory Infrastructure
- Monitoring of Chemical Residues & Concentrations
- Strengthening of National Research Capabilities

8. Human Resource Development & Training

- Strengthening National Decision-Making Capacities
- Training in Chemical Management/Safety
- Training in Chemical Legislation
- Training for Customs Officials
- Training for Senior Managers

9. Initiation of Follow-up Capacity-Building Activities

Many countries have used the National Profile as a starting point for national follow-up activities, such as the organization of a National Priority Setting Workshop during which a manageable number of topics for follow-up national capacity building activities are selected. Well over half of the countries which prepared/are preparing a National Profile indicated that they have already held or are currently in the process of organizing a National Priority Setting Workshop (Figure 12). Many countries which are not planning to hold a National Priority Setting Workshop indicated that resource constraints impeded the organization of such an event.



Four countries (Argentina, Ghana, Indonesia, and Slovenia) have initiated the implementation of a formal National Action Programme on Integrated Chemicals Management with support of UNITAR/IOMC. In the context of these action programmes, task forces have been established to systematically address national chemicals management priorities. Fifteen other countries have already taken preliminary steps to initiate such formal programmes, the majority of which have indicated the need for additional external support in order to be able to move forward. These include: Bolivia, Cameroon, Croatia, Ghana, Hungary, Korea (Republic of), Lithuania, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Niger, Slovakia, Tanzania, Thailand, Venezuela and Vietnam.

10. Issues for Consideration

Based on the IFCS/UNITAR survey results, experiences gained in the context of the UNITAR/ IOMC National Profile Support Programme and discussions which took place during the First Meeting of the Informal Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals, Geneva, Switzerland, 11-13 November 1997, a number of issues are emerging which may need further consideration:

10.1 Support of National Profile Preparation in Additional Countries

Despite generous donor support, many applications to participate in the UNITAR/IOMC National Profile Support Programme had to be turned down, due to a lack of available funding. Past experience has shown that financial resources needed for National Profile preparation are relatively moderate and small grants have catalysed national activities in addition to mobilising additional national financial and human resources.

• How could further interest and commitment be generated at the country level and would donor countries be in a position to support the preparation of National Profiles in additional countries actively participating in the IFCS?

• How can countries which have prepared a National Profile assist other countries in preparing theirs?

10.2 Facilitating Access to National Profiles

An overwhelming majority of countries expressed an interest in being able to access National Profiles of other countries. Also, many countries have indicated that, following official endorsement and publication, their National Profiles could be made available to interested parties. At the moment no formal mechanism exists for providing access to and/or disseminating National Profiles.

- What mechanism could be established for facilitating access to National Profiles, including the use of modern means of communication, such as the Internet?
- Are there any obstacles with regard to profiles which are not available in official UN languages?
- Should the placement of National Profiles on the UNITAR/ European Chemicals Bureau (ECB) National Profile Homepage be encouraged by the IFCS?

10.3 Preparation of Regional Profiles

At various occasions, IFCS regional groups indicated the need and value of preparing regional profiles based on the information contained in National Profiles. Regional profiles could provide information and highlight issues which are relevant to specific groups of countries and could facilitate regional co-operation on selected issues of capacity building.

- With National Profiles being available in more and more countries, what steps could be taken to use this information for the preparation of regional profiles?
- What purposes would these regional profiles serve?

10.4 Use of National Profiles by Multi and Bi-lateral Assistance Agencies

Comprehensive National Profiles represent a consolidated national effort to assess the national infrastructure for the sound management of chemicals.

• How can countries as well as multi- and bi-lateral donor agencies be encouraged to systematically take National Profiles into consideration when initiating country-based activities, e.g. in the context of national programmes, technical assistance projects, etc.?

10.5 Review and Analysis of Information Contained in National Profiles at the Global Level

At the global level, a systematic review of National Profiles could provide a better understanding of specific problems which are encountered at the country level and constraints which are being faced, as well as needs and opportunities for enhanced external assistance and emerging priority topics for national capacity building.

- How could the information contained in National Profiles be more systematically used to obtain a better understanding of the specific problems and needs at the country level and to provide a systematic overview of emerging issues for capacity building at the global level?
- Are there any obstacles with regard to the language(s) in which the profiles have been prepared?

10.6 Initiation of National Priority Setting Workshops as a Follow-up to the Preparation of National Profiles

The assessments provided through the National Profile process and the structures which have been established in countries in this context provide an ideal starting point for strengthening chemicals management capacities in a systematic manner and with the involvement of all concerned parties. Promising experiences in building upon the National Profile process and planning and implementing national action programmes have been gained in several countries.

- Given these developments, would donor countries be in a position to support the organization of National Priority Setting Workshops in other countries which have prepared National Profiles?
- What could be the role of the IFCS, countries, national coordinating committees and the national IFCS focal points in supporting such activities and establishing linkages to on-going national or regional activities, donor programmes, etc.?

Country	Comprehensive National Profile		Additional Information related to	Mini Profile		National Priority Setting Workshop	
	Prepared	In Preparation	comprehensive National Profile	Prepared	In Preparation		
1. Albania			Funding Requested				
2. Algeria			Funding Requested				
3. Angola ¹	$\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$					In Preparation	
4. Argentina ¹	$\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$					Held	
5. Armenia ¹			Funding Requested		$\mathbf{\overline{\mathbf{A}}}$	In Preparation	
6. Australia ¹		\checkmark			\checkmark	Not Planned	
7. Austria ¹	$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$						
8. Bahrain			Funding Requested				
9. Bangladesh ¹	$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$					Held	
10. Barbados			Funding Requested				
11. Benin ¹	\checkmark^2					Planned	
12. Bolivia ¹	\checkmark^2					Held	
13. Brazil ¹		\checkmark		V			
14. Bulgaria ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					In Preparation	
15. Burkina Faso	√ ²						
16. Burundi ¹			Not knowledgeable about NP Concept				
17. Cambodia			Funding Requested				
18. Cameroon ¹	\mathbf{V}^2					Held	
19. Canada ¹			Not considered useful/no interest	V			
20. Central African Republic			Funding Requested				
21. Chile ¹		\checkmark				In Preparation	
22. China ¹			Funding Requested		\checkmark	Not Planned	
23. Colombia		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					
24. Comoros ¹			Funding Requested				
25. Cook Islands		\checkmark					
26. Cote d' Ivoire ¹	∑ ²					Planned	
27. Cuba			Funding Requested				
28. Croatia ¹	\checkmark			$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$		Not Planned	
29. Cyprus ¹			Not considered useful/no interest	$\mathbf{\nabla}$		Not Planned	
30. Czech Republic ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Not Planned	
31. Denmark ¹				V		Not Planned	
32. Djibouti			Funding Requested				
33. Ecuador ¹		$\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$	- ^			In Preparation	
34. Egypt ¹		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					

¹ A country response to the IFCS/UNITAR Survey on National Chemicals Management Profiles has been received by UNITAR. ² The preparation of the comprehensive National Profile in the country was supported through the UNITAR/IOMC National Profile Support Programme.

Country	Comprehensive National Profile		Additional Information related to	Mini Profile		National Priority Setting Workshop
	Prepared	In Preparation	comprehensive National Profile	comprehensive National Profile Prepared In Preparation	In Preparation	
35. El Salvador			Funding Requested			
36. Eritrea			Funding Requested			
37. Estonia			Funding Requested			
38. Ethiopia ¹			Funding Requested			
39. Fiji			Currently not a Priority			
40. Finland ¹			To be considered			
41. Gabon			Funding Requested			
42. Gambia ¹	▼ ²					Held
43. Georgia		$\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$				
44. Germany ¹		$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$				
45. Ghana ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Held
46. Guinea ¹	∑ ²					Held
47. Hungary ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Held
48. Indonesia	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					
49. Iran			Funding Requested			
50. Jamaica			Funding Requested			
51. Jordan ¹			Funding Requested			
52. Kazakstan			Funding Requested			
53. Kenya ¹			Funding Requested			
54. Kiribati		\checkmark				
55. Korea, Republic of ¹	\mathbf{V}			\mathbf{N}		Not Planned
56. Latvia ¹			Funding Requested			
57. Lithuania ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					
58. Madagascar ¹	\mathbf{V}^2					Held
59. Malawi ¹	\mathbf{V}^2					Not Planned
60. Malaysia ¹				\checkmark		
61. Mali ¹		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
62. Malta			Funding Requested			
63. Mauritius ¹			Funding Requested			
64. Mexico	$\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$					
65. Micronesia, Fed. States			Funding Requested			
66. Moldavia			Funding Requested			
67. Mongolia ¹			Funding Requested			
68. Morocco ¹		$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$	Funding Requested			
69. Netherlands ¹			Different reporting system			
70. Nicaragua ¹	\mathbf{V}^2			\checkmark		Held
71. Niger ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Not Planned

Country	Comprehensive National Profile		Additional Information related to	Mini Profile		National Priority Setting Workshop
	Prepared	In Preparation	comprehensive National Profile	Prepared	In Preparation]
72. Nigeria		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
73. Oman			Funding Requested			
74. Pakistan		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
75. Panama ¹			Funding Requested			
76. Papua New Guinea		$\mathbf{\overline{\mathbf{A}}}$				
77. Paraguay ¹		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
78. Peru		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
79. Philippines ¹			Funding Requested			
80. Russian Federation		$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$				
81. Rwanda ¹			Funding Requested			
82. Solomon Islands		\checkmark	Project on temporary hold.			
83. St. Kitts & Nevis ¹					$\mathbf{\nabla}$	
84. St. Lucia			Funding Requested			
85. Senegal ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Not Planned
86. Sierra Leone			Funding Requested			
87. Singapore ¹			Not considered useful/no interest	$\mathbf{\overline{A}}$		
88. Slovakia ¹		$\mathbf{\overline{\mathbf{A}}}$		$\mathbf{\nabla}$		Not Planned
89. Slovenia ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					
90. Sudan ¹			Funding Requested			
91. Sweden ¹	N					Not Planned
92. Switzerland ¹		$\mathbf{\overline{\mathbf{A}}}$				
93. Syria ¹			Funding Requested			
94. Tanzania ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Held
95. Tchad			Funding Requested			Not Planned
96. Thailand ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					
97. Togo ¹			Funding Requested			
98. Tonga			Planned but not started			
99. Trinidad & Tobago ¹	N					Not Planned
100.United Arab Emirates ¹		\checkmark				
101.Uganda					_	Not Planned
102.Ukraine			Funding Requested			
103.Uruguay		\mathbf{V}^2				
104. United Kingdom ¹			Other reporting activities underway			
105.Unites States of America	\checkmark					
106.Uzbekistan ¹		V	Funding Requested			
107.Vanuatu		V				
108. Venezuela ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$			\checkmark		

Country	Comprehensive National Profile		Additional Information related to	Mini Profile		National Priority Setting Workshop
	Prepared	In Preparation	comprehensive National Profile	Prepared	In Preparation	
109. Vietnam ¹	\mathbf{V}^2					Held
110.Western Samoa ¹			Planned but not started		$\mathbf{\nabla}$	
111. Yugoslavia ¹			Not knowledgeable about NP Concept			
112.Zambia ¹	$\mathbf{\nabla}^2$					Held