Development of a Concept and Draft Terms of Reference for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals

Observations and Conclusions of an
International Review Meeting
Geneva, Switzerland
25-26 January 2000

Report

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1. Introduction

The *International Review Meeting* on the 'Development of a Concept and Draft Terms of Reference for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals' took place on 25-26 January 2000 in Geneva Switzerland. It brought together some 30 participants from countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and other interested parties to participate in the discussion.

Through a series of presentations, plenary discussions, and working groups, participants assessed the potential value and practicalities of operating a Capacity Building Network, highlighted a set of key issues concerning a suite of Network services, and developed a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for further discussion and possible adoption at Forum III.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the issues discussed and views exchanged at the meeting. These events and outcomes contributed to the development of the attached Forum III discussion paper and the draft TOR for the Network, which essentially provide a more succinct and focussed overview of the meeting results and outcomes.

1.1 Background

During the Third Intersessional Group Meeting (ISG 3) of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), which took place in Yokohama, Japan in December 1998, a thematic session on strengthening national capacities and capabilities for the sound management of chemicals was organised. During this session, a working group discussed a proposal introduced by the European Commission on the development of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals to enhance co-ordination and co-operation, and to develop partnerships, to assist both developing and developed countries to increase the effectiveness of capacity building projects.

The proposal received broad-based support, however, within the short time frame, it was not possible to reach agreement on the exact nature and functions of a Capacity Building Network, as the term "network" raised different expectations and had a wide range of interpretations. A recommendation was therefore agreed upon by ISG 3 to make use of the time between ISG 3 and Forum III in the year 2000 to further develop the concept of a Capacity Building Network with the following wording: "ISG 3 supported the establishment of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals and invited UNITAR, in collaboration with other IOMC Participating Organisations, countries, and other interested parties, to develop

a draft TOR for the network, for discussion and possible adoption at Forum III".

In response to this recommendation, UNITAR initiated in mid-1999 a consultative process which includes:

- development of a "Discussion Paper" by UNITAR in 1999 which was circulated to members of the Forum Standing Committee (FSC), the Inter-organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Participating Organisations (POs), and other interested parties for initial review and comments (October 1999);

- discussion among IOMC POs during the 12th meeting of the IOCC (2-3 December 1999);

- organisation of an International Review Meeting (25-26 January 2000);

- discussion of the FSC (February 2000); and

- completion of final Forum III working paper and draft TOR (February 2000).

1.2 Goals and Workshop Objectives

The *International Review Meeting* had the main goal to:

- obtain general feedback on the proposed concept of a Capacity Building Network;

- develop a draft TOR; and

- to discuss in-depth specific issues relating to the operation of a Capacity Building Network.

Within this context, specific discussion foci included, inter alia, identifying and elucidating the various views and opinions on: the rationale for development; guiding principles; objectives of the Network; practical services; operational aspects; the role of participating countries and organisations, and possible functions and procedures for designating Points of Contact.

2. Participants' Statements-of-Interest

2.1 Workshop Opening Remarks

Mr. Marcel Boisard, Executive Director, UNITAR, welcomed participants on behalf of UNITAR and highlighted the importance of the workshop in developing further the concept of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals. He expressed his gratitude to representatives from countries, international and regional organisations, and non-governmental groups for their participation in the meeting and thanked the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation for their financial support of the Workshop.

Ms. Nadine Speich, Programme Officer, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), spoke about the importance of information exchange and co-ordination in chemicals management and expressed SDC's general support for a Capacity Building Network. She suggested that a Network should address the needs of developing countries and cover activities for all dangerous chemicals.

2.2 Introduction to the Network Concept

Mr. Achim Halpaap, Senior Programme Co-ordinator, UNITAR, introduced the Discussion Paper and offered guidance on the general framework of the meeting. He stressed the importance of carefully thinking through key issues related to the Network concept; recognising and highlighting differences of opinion; determining the organisations and countries which should become involved in the development and operation of the Network and in what capacity; and through this, collaboratively developing a better picture of what the Capacity Building Network could deliver and how this might be accomplished.

Mr. Jan Huismans, Senior Special Fellow, UNITAR, summarised the comments submitted by the participants prior to the Workshop and addressed some of the overall key issues raised through this correspondence. He emphasised the issues to be taken into consideration, the potentially comprehensive nature of the Capacity Building Network and stressed the importance of a transparent and systematic development process. Many comments suggested that a Capacity Building Network should be multifaceted, cross-sectoral and address, to varying degrees, training and technical assistance related to the full life-cycle of chemicals. It was acknowledged that a Capacity Building Network would involve multiple actors - both providers of assistance and recipients - with different backgrounds, needs, and capabilities and that these qualities need to be thoroughly considered. Concerning the development process, and reflecting the opinions of the participants, Mr.

Huismans suggested that the workshop should initially develop a 'conservative' concept of a Capacity Building Network - a prototype network - while ensuring flexibility for more ambitious, but circumspect, scope in the future.

2.3 Statements of Participants

Participants from developing countries, countries with economies in transition, developed countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and others also shared their perspectives and experiences related to the Network concept. Participants welcomed the anticipated role of a Capacity Building Network as a mechanism to help collect and disseminate information in order to enhance co-operation among countries and organisations with the goal of sound chemicals management. A network was viewed as a potentially useful platform for sharing lessons learned, promoting innovative solutions, and making better use of existing materials, thereby encouraging capacity building activities and avoiding duplication of effort. Participants noted the potential value of having access to a comprehensive suite of information on chemicals management related capacity building activities to create synergies and avoid duplication of efforts.

Participants' statements also highlighted the broad range of expertise and experience represented in the meeting, as well as the various perspectives and areas of interest. Many participants noted activities of their organisations or countries (or of their colleagues) which could be of interest to a Capacity Building Network and, in turn, to countries in their efforts to strengthen national chemicals management programmes. Several participants expressed the potential willingness of their organisations to actively support the proposed functions of a Capacity Building Network.

2.4 OECD Survey

In March 1996, the ISG of the IFCS invited the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to develop an information exchange programme to facilitate co-ordination of capacity building assistance provided by OECD Member countries to developing countries in the field of chemicals/pesticides management. The OECD is now in the process of preparing it's third Survey of Development Assistance Activities for Capacity Building, which will be ready by Forum III. Concerning the medium- and long-term view, this work is closely related and may contribute to the implementation of a Capacity Building Network.

3. Key Discussion Themes

A number of key discussion topics emerged to be of particular interest to participants in the context of workshop discussions. Key issues which where addressed included Network objectives, focus and principles, Points of Contact, central co-ordinating node, steering/advisory group, resources, access, language, implementation processes, perspectives of countries, and the catalysing function of the Network to develop National Priorities and Plans of Action.

3.1 Objectives

Workshop participants discussed the objectives of the Network and agreed that the primary objective of the Network should be to facilitate the exchange of information relating to chemicals management related capacity building projects, for example, by providing information on ways, means, and formal procedures to apply for assistance, and by ensuring that guidance and training material is better known and accessible to all interested parties.

3.2 Focus

Workshop participants discussed whether the Capacity Building Network should comprise an evaluative component in addition to providing a series of information exchange services. Some participants suggested that the Network should not comprise an evaluative component nor act, in any capacity, as a granting or funding agency, but rather focus exclusively on information exchange. Others suggested that an evaluative component to the Network would indeed be of considerable benefit, for example, in reviewing programmes or analysing the geographical distribution of assistance. Overall, the participants recognised the difficulties with designing and implementing an evaluative component. The value of an evaluative component of chemicals management capacity building efforts was, however, recognised and the addition of such a component to the Network was considered a possible future option if and when appropriate.

3.3 Scope of the Network

It was agreed that the scope of the Capacity Building Network should be comprehensive and all-encompassing and cover information exchange on capacity building activities related to all chemicals and all stages of the chemical life cycle, e.g. importation, production, distribution, storage, transport, productions, use, and disposal[1].

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[1] Disposal in this context refers to prevention and disposal of obsolete chemicals, rather than capacity building activities related to the sound management of hazardous waste, which is addressed through Chapter 20 of Agenda 21.

3.4   Guiding Principles

With the scope in mind, the participants considered the guiding principles of the Network. It was concluded that the Network should, inter alia, be a simple and flexible mechanism; provide "added value" to existing activities and not interfere with, but rather provide an umbrella framework for, specialised network arrangements already in place or under development; require only minimal co-ordinating functions; and be introduced in a phased or step-wise approach.

Also, workshop participants agreed that the Network will be voluntary in nature. Those making contributions to, and using, the Network will determine its usefulness and "added value". The Network will be self-generating, building upon its successes as the benefits of voluntary participation and contributions are realised.

3.5   Points of Contact (POCs)

In an effort to facilitate the dissemination of information and co-ordinate the input of a wide range of constituencies, the designation of POCs was deemed necessary. Suggestions were made as to where Network POCs could be best located. It was believed that the designation of POCs should be facilitated through IFCS National Focal Points. Participants also agreed that a single governmental POC might not be sufficient, but rather multiple POCs might be required. However, it was emphasised that if the nomination of multiple POCs is deemed necessary, there would be a need for formal co-ordination among them. It would also be useful to have POCs pertaining specifically to different stakeholder groups (e.g. government, non-governmental organisations, industry, etc.). Moreover, it was agreed that different POCs would inevitably have different functions depending on who they would serve, e.g. recipients of assistance, donors, etc.

3.6   Secretariat/Central-Coordinating Node

An important operational aspect of the Capacity Building Network, which was discussed in detail, was the implementation of some type of core secretariat or co-ordination node. While participants were concerned about the resource implications of a Network secretariat, it was felt that at least a basic Central Coordinating Node (CCN) would be necessary; ideally one supplemented with certain Network tasks carried out among interested participating countries and organisations. Indeed, it may be possible that such co-ordinating tasks could be shared on a structured basis by participating countries and organisations. Workshop participants proposed various options for location of the CCN and suggested that an existing international organisation should probably first be considered as a possible location.

3.7 Steering/Advisory Group

The establishment of a Steering/Advisory Group comprising representatives from various interested countries, international/regional organisations, and other stakeholder groups, was determined to be necessary to provide on-going guidance to the operation of the Network, including the selection and preference given to the order in which the various functions are phased in; mobilise external support; actively encourage/solicit participation in the Network; review progress made; and report back to the IFCS.

3.8 Resource Issues

The draft TOR has been conceptualised with a limited supply of funding in mind. Indeed, the proposed nature of the Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals emphasises simple and low maintenance services, decentralised information input, and a considerable level of operational activity assumed by various participating countries and organisations.

It is hoped that a Central Co-ordinating Node would be responsible for only basic operational aspects that require centralised effort and supervision. Participating countries and organisations are encouraged to take 'ownership' of a particular service and, in doing so, accept some of a Network's resource implications.

Moreover, operating primarily as a web-based service, a 'virtual' Network would allow maximum access and communication at a minimal cost. It is envisaged that the Network, acting solely as an information exchange mechanism, would serve as a starting point for more detailed communication beyond the Network's remit.

Many participants, however, were concerned about the resource implications of the Capacity Building Network. The major Network tasks would entail collating information, ensuring that it is updated, and presenting it in the most appropriate and optimally utilisable form. Such tasks may result in considerable 'hidden' financial and human resource implications. While the workshop participants collaborated in an effort to determine expected cost implications, further consideration of the resource implications is necessary. Participants agreed, however, that a key focus at the initial stages of developing the Network would be to 'harvest the low hanging grapes' before expanding efforts and focus.

3.9 Access to Network Information

Since the Capacity Building Network would likely operate primarily as an Internet site, accessibility to the Network requires careful and considerable consideration. Many participants, particularly from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, were concerned that a web-based Network could inhibit their ability to optimally benefit from its services. It was suggested that, where Internet access is not feasible or sufficiently developed at this stage, Network information should be made available by other means (e.g. CD ROM, diskette or hard copy).

3.10 Language

On the issue of the working language(s) of the Network, there was a general consensus that it would be useful for at least certain components of Network services to be presented in languages other than English. Given the likely financial constraints on the Network, the participants acknowledged the possible difficulties in ensuring a multilingual Network, but deemed the language issue to be of paramount importance and worthy of further discussion. It was recognised that it would likely be possible to present Network service 'entry points' in multiple languages, however, this would be difficult to extend to core Network service data.

3.11 Phased-in Implementation

The workshop participants unanimously recognised the benefits of a phased-in approach to the implementation of the Capacity Building Network. Within this gradual implementation process, the early establishment of clear indicators to continuously measure success of individual services was emphasised to ensure monitored and iterative implementation.

3.12 Perspective of Countries

The workshop included participants representing a broad range of developed countries, developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. As a result, a wide range of capacity building and general Network issues which were particularly pertinent to certain countries were raised and discussed in the meeting. Participants provided critical insight from their respective country-based perspectives thereby ensuring that national and regional issues were addressed. For example, participants from developing countries and countries with economies in transition emphasised the benefits of improved access to information concerning opportunities for chemicals management assistance, while cautioning against a Network that cannot be adequately accessed without Internet or computer access. Concerning participants from developed

countries, the benefits of increasing the opportunity to learn from each other's trials, errors, and successes was stressed.

3.13 Catalysing Function of the Network to Develop a National Priority and Plans of Action

It was suggested that the Network could act as a driving force for catalysing a systematic approach for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen national capacities and capabilities through multi-stakeholder co-operation (i.e. acting as an impetus to developing National Profiles, Priority Setting, and Plans of Action). While this notion was recognised, other participants cautioned that such steps should not be considered the sole mechanism for providing information about priorities and assistance needs. Indeed, other mechanisms (such as regional workshops) may also contribute to the development of priorities and countries which are less advanced in their chemicals management capacity building strategy (e.g. those which have not developed National Profiles or held National Priority Setting Workshops) should also be able to contribute valuable information.

4.   Specific Network Services - Working Groups

Workshop participants discussed 6 possible Capacity Building Network services which could be implemented in a phased-in manner, at varying stages, and co-ordinated by different Network Partners. The following are the relevant conclusions of various working groups which developed practical suggestions for the development of specific Capacity Building Network services. In further developing each Network service, a more complete and service-specific Terms of Reference will be required.

A variety of cross-cutting issues among the various services were recognised. These include, inter alia, the need to:

•   provide "added value" to existing activities and meet a documented demand presently not addressed;

•   consider the form of the Network services (e.g. presenting the services in a searchable web-based database and making the databases available in various other formats, such as CD ROM, diskette, and non-searchable hardcopy);

•   promote concept of Network and related benefits to potential participants; and

•   determine indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of each service (e.g. number of times website visited, number of countries that have obtained assistance, etc).

4.1   Listing of Priorities, Plans of Actions, and Related Needs

This service would provide an opportunity for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to place, on a global Internet homepage or other means, summary information about their national priorities, plans of action, resource needs, etc.

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

•   provide summarised information on the following key categories: national priorities, plans of action, technical assistance, and information needs;

- provide a global overview of existing needs for chemicals management and present opportunities for future collaborations (e.g. with regard to seeking assistance);

- play a pivotal role with respect to the planning and matching of funding and assistance and in helping to reduce resource redundancy (e.g. where donors would otherwise be unaware of each others support in the same area, or where collaboration is lacking, but both possible and worthwhile);

- offer a 'tangible' and promising medium for communicating the state of a country's chemicals management programme and related needs; and

- provide an impetus to countries to take the first steps (or enhance their current efforts) toward developing a 'National Profile', setting national priorities, and developing Plans of Action.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- review National Profiles and National Priority Setting Workshops for developing a template of the type of information desired;

- consider using existing UNITAR/ECB National Profile Homepage as an initial forum for hosting this service;

- recognise that the setting of priorities and requests for assistance may be made not only at the national level, but also at the regional level; and

- make efforts to accommodate countries across all the various stages of developing a capacity building strategy, since this service may favour countries which have considerably developed their national priorities and national action plans.

4.2 "Getting a Project Started" Information Service

This service would provide summary information about means and official procedures to apply for, and access potential support of, organisations and countries providing assistance. Initial activities would include providing linkages and references to respective homepages and documents of relevant organisations, donor agencies, etc. Subsequent activities could involve developing fact sheets for relevant donor agencies and organisations which provide practical information on procedures for applying/obtaining assistance.

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

- provide a comprehensive list of website linkages, which could be useful as a key entry point for countries and organisations seeking assistance; and

- act as repository of, and provide clarity on, critical information such as donor agencies' contact information, donors' policy, programme details, Points of Contact, etc.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- research, link to, and categorise, existing websites of donor agencies and organisations providing chemicals management and capacity building assistance; and

- compile a list of, and contact, relevant donor organisations and agencies to provide abstracts of information relevant to "getting a project started" with the assistance of their organisation.

4.3 Information Exchange System on Past, On-going, and Planned Projects

This service would ensure that interested parties would have enhanced access to a minimum set of updated information on capacity building projects carried out by countries and organisations ("who is active where, when, and on what?"), taking into consideration the work of OECD, i.e. the lessons learned from the OECD survey on bilateral assistance activities.

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

- serve as an initial 'one stop shop' of critical information for both donors and recipients by providing key information on bilateral, multilateral, and NGO-run capacity building projects;

- provide summarised information on capacity building projects (e.g. project title, objective, duration, implementing agency, project partner/country, and contact addresses);

- facilitate information exchange, assistance co-ordination, regional co-operation, and planning capabilities; and

- enable countries to learn of other countries involvement in similar projects and thereby potentially encouraging some form of collaboration.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- review experience gained from OECD Survey of Development Assistance Activities for Capacity Building;

- build upon OECD Survey (on bilateral assistance activities) to include projects of IOMC POs, etc.;

- develop means for collecting project information;

- incorporate data from OECD Survey; and

- determine efficient system for regularly updating database.

4.4 Reference Library of Existing Training and Guidance Documents

This service would facilitate the exchange of information and provide reference to existing documentation and training packages available through organisations and countries participating in the Network, taking into consideration the work of UNITAR to develop an annotated resource guide on guidance and training documents available through Participating Organisations of the IOMC.

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

- provide summarised information on the following categories: key subject areas, available documents, authors and contact points, and publication offices;

- provide a thorough and easily accessible database of such material which could help to raise awareness about capacity building opportunities and chemicals management generally, and offer direction toward the attainment of the most appropriate capacity building tools; and

- clarify areas where literary deficiencies may lie through a scoping exercise of the relevant training and guidance documents available.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- review and incorporate existing databases of relevant training and guidance documents (e.g. UNITAR's document *Guidance and Training Materials of IOMC Participating Organisations for Chemicals Management Capacity Building: An Annotated Resource Guide*);

- research and compile list of existing training and guidance documents not as yet recorded on databases;

- consider that both donors and recipients currently have inadequate access to training and guidance documents related to chemicals management;

- address the paucity of 'readable' and broad-ranging literature on chemicals management[2];

- possibly expand the Reference Library of Existing Training and Guidance Documents to incorporate such documents as they become available; and

- consider the deficiency of training materials which transcend socio-cultural and language barriers[3].

4.5 Project Case Study Library

This service would initiate an information exchange system through which lessons learned through specific projects - both substantive and process-related - would be shared in a more systematic way ("keeping the project memory alive").

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

- provide summarised information on the following categories: project title, type, duration, successes, and mistakes;

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[2]   Most of the literature on chemicals management is of a highly technical nature (e.g. pertaining to risk assessment, etc.) and does not adequately address more general needs. The set of existing literature is believed to be insufficient for creating awareness at the political level and therefore worthy of further investigation.

[3]   While this service is not the best forum for addressing such issues, it may contribute to raising the profile of this issue by providing a general survey of the type and volume of materials available.

- 'textually' convey lessons learned from past projects (e.g. exchanging experiences, providing contact names to facilitate the further exchange of information and, in turn, ensure greater transparency among world-wide chemicals management efforts) where this may otherwise be difficult due to the geographically broad range of past chemicals management projects; and

- help to provide information which may be critical to the prudent planning of future projects - to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- determine which types of projects will be covered through this service (e.g. national, regional, bilateral, etc.);

- design and administer survey to collect information which is easily comparable, and input and analyse data;

- standardise database and limit to simple data sets so that data can be easily read and compared;

- determine whether data should be limited to a select sample of more objectively evaluated projects or if self-evaluated project data should be accepted;

- incorporate information on the process used to identify and implement capacity building programs (e.g. documentation on: (1) how countries identified their priority needs; (2) how these needs were matched with donor support; (3) how the program was managed, (4) has it been sustained, etc.);

- consider difficulty in obtaining project information due to government bureaucracy, degree of confidentiality, differences in policy, etc.; and

- consider incorporating an updated compendium of relevant national legislation details, Designated National Authorities (DNAs), and other pertinent items.

4.6 Publication of a Listing of Points of Contact (POCs) for the Network

This listing would provide up-to-date information about officials involved in the development and implementation of chemicals management related capacity building projects.

The potential value of this service would be, inter alia, to:

- provide contact details (e.g. names, contact information) to obtaining additional information and advice and to developing chemicals management projects; and

- act as the first port of call to clarify queries about the Network or to obtain specific advice on appropriate organisations and chemicals management programmes.

Issues which would require further consideration include, inter alia, the following:

- collate relevant contact details following designation of POCs;

- ensure that there is a sufficient number of POCs to meet the specialised needs of participating countries, organisations, and stakeholders;

- develop guidelines for functions of various types of POCs (ref. Sec 3.5); and

- review process/screening of POCs prior to inclusion.

5. Draft Terms of Reference for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals

Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals:
Draft Terms of Reference

as agreed by participants of an International Review Meeting,
25-26 January 2000, Geneva, Switzerland

1. Overall Goal of the Network

The Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals (CBN) is a multifaceted information exchange mechanism designed to enhance effective co-operation among countries and organisations which are providing and/or receiving assistance related to the sound management of chemicals. The Network has an overall and long-term goal to facilitate the systematic exchange and public accessibility of information and experiences which are relevant to planning, implementing, evaluating, and co-ordinating capacity building projects[1] for the sound management of chemicals. As such it will contribute to international, regional, and national efforts to raise awareness about the need for increased assistance to strengthen national capacities and capabilities for the sound management of chemicals.

2. International Policy Framework for the Network

The Network is endorsed by, and receives guidance from, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS). It follows the general IFCS principles of co-operation, i.e. the involvement of, and partnerships among, governments, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations to promote the sound management of chemicals in all countries. The Network also provides a general framework for ensuring linkages among global, regional, and national capacity building activities, including those facilitated through the IFCS regional groups and in the context of international agreements, such as ILO Convention 170, the Rotterdam Convention, a future convention on POPs, and others.

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[1] The IOMC Analytical Report on Capacity Building Activities (IFCS/IFCS/ISG3/d98-20b) defines "Capacity Building" as any activity aimed at improving or expanding institutional capacities for the sound management of chemicals.

3. Scope of the Network

The scope of the Network is comprehensive and all-encompassing and covers information exchange on capacity building activities related to all chemicals and all stages of the chemical life cycle, e.g. importation, production, distribution, storage, transport, productions, use, and disposal.[2]

4. Guiding Principles for the Network

Taking into consideration that capacity building activities of various partners participating in the IFCS are, and will continue to be, independently organised by the respective countries and organisations, the Network will:

• be a simple and flexible mechanism;

• provide "added value" to existing activities;

• require minimal co-ordinating functions;

• be introduced in a phased approach;

• not interfere with, but rather provide an umbrella framework for, specialised network arrangements already in place or under development;[3] and

• not act as a granting or funding agency, nor be given the authority (i.e. those operating or co-ordinating the Network) over a country, organisation, or donor agency to direct either projects or funding.

5. Objectives of the Network

Activities implemented through, and services provided by, the Network serve the following objectives:

• to develop a mechanism in which countries that seek external assistance can provide information about relevant activities and needs (e.g. national priorities, national plans of actions, etc.) to potential external partners;

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[2] Disposal in this context refers to prevention and disposal of obsolete chemicals, rather than capacity building activities related to the sound management of hazardous waste, which is addressed through Chapter 20 of Agenda 21.

[3] For example, the clearinghouse mechanism discussed in the context of negotiating legal agreements on POPs, the Network of PRTR Resource Persons initiated through the IOMC, PRTR Co-ordinating Group, etc.

- to provide interested parties with up-to-date information on past, ongoing, and planned capacity building projects which have been or will be implemented by countries and organisations providing external assistance;

- to provide governments and other stakeholder groups in countries seeking assistance with pertinent and up-to date information about technical assistance and funding sources available from countries and organisations which provide support; including information on ways, means, and formal procedures to apply for such assistance;

- to ensure that guidance and training material developed and used by countries and organisations, both providers and recipients, is better known and accessible to all interested parties; and

- to ensure that practical lessons learned through relevant projects for the sound management of chemicals do not get 'lost' and are shared with others as a basis for more effective implementation of new projects in the future.

6.   Participating Countries and Organisations

Participation in the Network is open to governments, intergovernmental organisations, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations, including, *inter alia*:

- governments of all countries participating in the IFCS;

- regional organisations;

- participating organisations of the IOMC (i.e. UNEP, WHO, ILO, FAO, UNIDO, UNITAR, and OECD);

- other international organisations (e.g. UNDP, UNECE, etc.) and secretariats of relevant conventions (e.g. OPCW, secretariats of Rotterdam Convention and Montreal Protocol, etc.);

- multi-lateral and regional development banks and finance institutions;

- bi-lateral development co-operation agencies;

- private sector/chemical industry associations;

- public and labour interest groups; and

- academic/research bodies.

7.   Network Services

The Network shall be comprised of a number of specific services which are implemented and catalysed through the Network, as resources become available. Each Network service shall:

•   have clear and measurable goals;

•   meet a documented demand presently not addressed (i.e. provide "added value");

•   take into consideration, and build upon, relevant existing activities;

•   take into consideration, and where possible accommodate, different language requirements; and

•   be available, as feasible, by means other than the Internet to accommodate users who lack electronic access.

Initially, the Network will comprise a focus on information exchange in the areas listed below. Subsequent steps could include, subject to further discussion, evaluation activities and the development of recommendations for improvement within specific areas.

Specific Network services, which should be initiated as a matter of priority, include, *inter alia*, the following:

(1)   Listing of Priorities, Plans of Actions, and Related Needs

This service would provide an opportunity for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to place, on a global internet homepage, summary information about their national priorities, plans of action, resource needs, etc.

(2)   "Getting a Project Started" Information Service

This service would provide summary information about means and official procedures to apply for, and access potential support of, organisations and countries providing assistance. Initial activities would include providing linkages and references to respective homepages and documents of relevant organisations, donor agencies, etc.

(3) Information Exchange System on Past, On-going, and Planned Projects

This service would ensure that interested parties would have enhanced access to a minimum set of updated information on capacity building projects[4] carried out by countries and organisations ("who is active where, when, and on what?"), taking into consideration the work of OECD, i.e. the lessons learned from the OECD survey on bilateral assistance activities.

(4) Reference Library of Existing Training and Guidance Documents

This service would facilitate the exchange of information and provide reference to existing documentation and training packages available through organisations and countries participating in the Network, taking into consideration the work of UNITAR to develop an annotated resource guide on guidance and training documents available through Participating Organisations of the IOMC.

(5) Project Case-Study Library

This service would initiate an information exchange system through which lessons learned through specific projects - both substantive and process-related - would be shared in a more systematic way ("keeping the project memory alive").

(6) Publication of a Listing of Points of Contact (POCs) for the Network

This listing would provide up-to-date information about officials involved in the development an implementation of chemical management related capacity building projects.

8. Functions to be Performed by Participating Countries and Organisations

The functions to be performed by participating countries and organisations depend upon the particular nature of the Network services that are actually put into operation and on whether a country or organisation is a provider of capacity building projects or primarily seeking external assistance. Certain services will require input from both groups (see Table 1).

9. Designation of Points of Contacts in Participating Countries and Organisations

During the initial phase of putting the Network into operation (i.e. the start-up phase), the following Points of Contacts shall be designated. These will be responsible for providing information and co-ordinating the input of a wide range of constituencies:

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[4] E.g. project title, objective, duration, implementing agency, project partner/country, and contact addresses.

- **National POCs** - to be designated by the national IFCS Focal Points, in co-operation with other parties both within and outside of government;

- **POCs in international organisations** - to be designated by IOMC POs, multi- and bi-lateral development banks, etc.;

- **POCs in international NGOs** - designation to be facilitated by IFCS representatives participating in the Forum Standing Committee; and

- **Other POCs** - all other bodies or organisations which have an interest in the Network.

In designating the POCs, functions which need to performed shall be taken into consideration. Following review of the experience gained during a start-up phase, the process for nominating POCs may be revised/adapted in the medium and long-term.

10.   Operation of the Network

The Network itself does not have implementing functions. However, to co-ordinate and deliver certain Network services, a number of catalysing core activities are required. Those can be implemented either by the organisation providing the 'Central Co-ordinating Node' (see below) or by one of the Network Partners, working in co-operation with, and receiving guidance from, other interested Network Partners.

Steering/Advisory Group

A Steering/Advisory Group shall be established comprising representatives from various interested countries, international/regional organisations, and other stakeholder groups with the tasks to provide continued guidance to the operation of the Network, mobilise external support, actively encourage/solicit participation in the Network, review progress made, and report back to the IFCS. The group would mainly work through electronic means.

Functions and Designation of a Central Co-ordinating Node

The operation of the various Network services will require a Central Co-ordinating Node (CCN) to provide catalysing support in developing and implementing specific Network services. The functions of the CCN include, *inter alia*:

- overseeing the development of the concept for specific Network services;

- developing and maintaining the central homepage of the Network;

- serving as the 'secretariat' for the Network Steering/Advisory Group; and

- maintaining communication with participating countries and organisations.

The CCN shall be located either:

- within a country participating in the IFCS;

- within the IFCS Secretariat; or

- within an international or intergovernmental organisation active in the field of chemicals management capacity building, e.g.:

  - one of the implementing agencies of GEF (i.e. UNEP, UNDP, or World Bank);

  - UNITAR; or

  - any other relevant organization.

Resource Issues

Countries and organisations in a position to do so are encouraged to provide resources to support the operation the Network. Such resources and support may be provided in various ways and may include: (1) taking the lead for co-ordinating and implementing a particular Network service; (2) direct financial contributions to the organisation providing the CCN; or (3) secondment of professional staff to the CCN.

Other Operational Issues

The Network will operate mainly through information maintained and provided through its contributing countries and organisations. The lead for the development of specific services could be taken on by potentially interested organisations as a contribution to the Network; particularly where certain activities have already been undertaken which address, or partially address, specific Network objectives. The Network will operate primarily -- but not exclusively -- as an Internet site. The main site would be constructed and maintained as an initial gateway for those seeking information as well as those who wish to facilitate access to information and documentation. It is also envisaged that the Network will contribute and be linked to efforts under the IFCS to strengthen regional co-operation.

Table 1

Functions to Be Performed by Participating Countries and Organisations

	Countries and Organisations Seeking Assistance	Countries and Organisations Providing Assistance
Listing of Priorities, Plans of Actions, and Related Needs	X	
"Getting a Project Started" Information Service		X
Information Exchange System on Past, Ongoing, and Planned Projects		X
Reference Library of Existing Training and Guidance Documents	X	X
Project Case Study Library	X	X

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Annex A: Decision Document for Forum III

DECISION DOCUMENT FOR FORUM III

Discussion on and Possible Adoption/Endorsement of a Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals

*Prepared by UNITAR Based on the Outcomes of an
International Review Meeting, Geneva
25-26 January 2000*

1. **Issues for Consideration and Action Requested of Forum III**

This paper proposes that Forum III reviews and adopts the attached draft Terms of Reference for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals to be developed under its guidance. This action should be seen as a further step in the overall effort of the IFCS to facilitate communication among parties involved or interested in chemicals management capacity building and to enhance coordination and create further opportunities for cooperation between providers of resources and assistance and potential recipients. One of the added values of the Network will be to avoid duplication of efforts and overlaps, resulting in significant potential cost savings, and more effective use of scarce financial and human resources.

The Network will be introduced in a phased manner and not duplicate or interfere with already ongoing or planned network arrangements which are more specialised in nature and address specific groups of chemicals (e.g. ozone depleting substances, persistent organic pollutants, etc.). Rather, it will provide an umbrella framework which brings various capacity building initiatives and programmes into a wider and more integrated international framework, under the guidance of the IFCS.

The Network will have a flexible structure and focus initially on information exchange, taking into consideration, as much as possible, access (e.g. Internet issues) and linguistic capabilities of Network participants. It is envisaged that the Network would mainly operate through services, resources and information provided by independently working Network Partners. However, the Network will require a small Central Co-ordinating Node, overseeing, *inter alia*, the development of the Network concept and the implementation of various Network services. A steering group, mainly working through electronic means, will provide guidance to the Central Node and on the further development of the Network.

Specific Action Requested by Forum III

Forum III participants are requested to provide their views on the Network concept and the draft Terms of Reference. Specifically, Forum III is invited to consider the following draft recommendations for adoption:

Forum III supports the development of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals and adopts/endorses its Terms of Reference.

In order to initiative concrete action by Forum IV, Forum III:

- *requests* countries and organisations to designate Points of Contact (POCs) for the Network (in accordance with Section 9 of the draft TOR) and to provide information relevant to implementing the objectives of the Network;

- *encourages* countries and organisations to provide support for initiating the start-up phase for the Network (in accordance with the different options provided in Section 10 of the TOR);

- *calls upon* the Forum Standing Committee to assist in establishing a Steering/Advisory Group for the Network; and

- *requests* the IOMC Participating Organisations to seek an appropriate location for a Central Co-ordinating Node for the Network;[1]

- *requests* that a report on progress made and lessons learned during the start-up phase of the Network is made available at Forum III for consideration and possible further action.

2.   Background

During the Third Intersessional Group Meeting (ISG 3) of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), which took place in Yokohama, Japan in December 1998, a thematic session on strengthening national capabilities and capacities for the sound management of chemicals was organised. During this session, a working group discussed a proposal introduced by the European Commission on the development of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals to enhance co_ordination and co_operation and to develop partnerships to assist both developing and developed countries to enhance the effectiveness of capacity building projects.

The proposal received broad_based support, however, within the short time frame available, it was not possible to reach agreement on the exact nature and functions of the Capacity Building Network, as the term "network" raised different expectations and had a wide range of interpretations. A recommendation was therefore agreed upon by ISG 3 to make use of the time between ISG 3 and Forum III to further develop the concept of a Capacity Building Network with the following wording: "ISG 3 supported the establishment of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals and invited UNITAR, in collaboration with other IOMC Participating Organisations, countries and other interested parties, to develop a draft Terms of Reference for the network, for discussion and possible adoption at Forum III".

As a follow-up, UNITAR has developed a discussion paper which was sent to the Forum Standing Committee, Participating Organisations of the IOMC and other countries and organisations which had indicated their interest to participate in the consultation process. Many written comments as well as general support for the Network concept were submitted

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[1]   The wording of this draft recommendation was suggested by the FSC. Section 10 of the draft TOR (Functions and Designation of a Central Co-ordinating Node) contains other options agreed upon at the International Review Meeting that Forum III may want to consider.

to UNITAR. An International Review Meeting took place on 25-26 January 2000 in Geneva, bringing togther some 30 participants from countries, international organisations, NGOs and others to participate in the discussions. The consultation process resulted in a draft Terms of Reference which is attached as an annex to this document.

Annex 1:
Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals:
Draft Terms of Reference

See Section 5 of the Draft Report of the International Review Meeting for the 'Development of a Concept and Draft Terms of Reference for a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals'.

Annex 2:
Current Situation/Status Related to Information Exchange and Co-ordination of
Capacity Building Projects for the Sound Management of Chemicals

The number of chemicals management related training and technical assistance programmes organised by countries, international organisations and other groups participating in the IFCS is significant and likely to grow as sound chemicals management receives an increasing amount of national and international attention. Activities implemented through these various bodies range from organising workshops to long term projects involving significant transfer of financial resources.

Major capacity building initiatives are implemented by the following actors:

- Participating Organisations of the IOMC (i.e. UNEP, WHO, ILO, FAO, UNIDO, UNITAR and OECD);[1]

- other international (e.g. UNDP) and regional (e.g. UNECE, EC) organisations and convention secretariats (e.g. OPCW);

- multi_lateral and regional development banks and finance institutions (e.g. World Bank, ADB, GEF, etc.);

- bi_lateral development co_operation agencies (e.g. SDC, Danida, USAID, etc.);[2]

- ministries/agencies responsible for chemicals management (e.g. USEPA, KEMI, etc.);

- private sector entities (e.g. member companies of CEFIC, CMA, GCPF, etc.);

- public and labour interest groups (e.g. PAN, ICEM, etc.);

- academic/research entities (e.g. IUPAC, universities, etc.).

Considering the myriad of ongoing activities and the number of organisations and countries involved worldwide, the issue has arisen to what extent these activities are well known, reasonably well co_ordinated, etc. Specific questions that are relevant in this context include, *inter alia*:

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[1] A report issued by the Inter_Organization Co_ordinating Committee (IOCC) of the IOMC on relevant activities conducted in 1996_1997 revealed that almost all IOMC Participating Organisations (POs), both through their regular budgets and with extra_budgetary resources, carry out significant training and capacity building activities addressing various areas of chemicals management (IFCS/ISG3/92.20B).

[2] The second OECD Survey of Development Assistance Activities for [Chemicals Management] Capacity Building (1998) identified no less than 230 ongoing bi_lateral projects, supported by some 17 OECD Member States and the European Commission (http://www.oecd.org/ehs/capacity/index.htm).

- Where/how can up_to_date information on ongoing and planned projects implemented through the above actors be easily obtained?

- Who are the points of contacts in organisations and countries providing assistance who could provide relevant information about past, ongoing and planned training and capacity building activities?

- For which topics are training and guidance documentation already available and where/how can these materials be accessed/obtained?

- Are the experiences gained and lessons learned through various capacity building projects (the "project memory") documented in a simple format, and if so, are they available to interested parties?

- Are there opportunities for "piggy backing" projects, i.e. building on achievements in a stepwise fashion thus leading to increased potential for sustainable capacity?

- Are there possible duplications of efforts and non_beneficial overlaps and, if so, how can they be avoided?

- What are the procedures and formal channels to apply/obtain external assistance through various organisations, development co_operation agencies, etc.?

Although several organisations have made significant progress to document and co_ordinate their activities, opportunities remain to provide potentially interested parties with more systematic and up_to_date information about various aspects of capacity building activities, as outlined above. Having such information more readily available will help to avoid duplication of efforts and will allow more effective use of scarce financial and human resources. It is within this context that ISG 3 has called for a consultative process to develop a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

Annex B: List of Participants

1. Government

Brazil

Ms Andrea **Watson**
Third Secretary
Mission permanente du Brésil
Ancienne Route 17b
1218 Grand-Saconnex
Switzerland
TEL +41 22 929 09 17
FAX +41 22 788 25 05
Email andrea.watson@ties.itu.int

Cameroon

Mr Dudley Achu **Sama**
National Coordinator, Chemicals
Management
Permanent Secretariat of the
Environment
Ministry of the Environment and
Forestry MINEF/SPE
Immeuble ministériel No. 2
Yaounde
Cameroon
TEL +237 226 909 or 228 738
FAX +237 22 12 25, 22 66 85
Email delamei@hotmail.com
or dudley86@usa.net

Germany

Dr Matthias **Kern**
GTZ
Wachsbleiche 1
D-53111 Bonn
Germany
TEL +49 228 985 7014
FAX +49 228 985 7018
gtzkern@aol.com

Dr Susanne **Scholaen**
GTZ
Wachsbleiche 1
D-53111 Bonn
Germany
TEL +49 228 985 7015
FAX +49 228 985 7018
gtzscholaen@aol.com

Ghana

Mr Sam **Adu-Kumi**
Programme Officer
Environmental Protection Agency
PO Box MB 326
Accra
Ghana
TEL +233 21 664 697/8
FAX +233 21 662 690
Email sakumi@epa.gov.gh

Hungary

Dr Zoltan **Adamis**
Deputy Director
National Institute of Chemical Safety
Nagyvarad ter. 2
H-1096 Budapest
Hungary
TEL +361 215 9044
FAX +361 215 9044
Email okbi@elender.hu

Indonesia

Mr Weddy **Mallyan**
Ministry of Health
Jl. Percetakan Negara 23
Jakarta 10560
Indonesia
TEL +62 21 420 7683 or 424 5523
FAX +62 21 420 7683
Email

Japan

Mr Jun **Yoshida**
Deputy Director, Office of
Environmental Chemical Safety
Environmental Health Bureau
Ministry of Health and Welfare
1-2-2 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8045
Japan
TEL +81 3 3595 2298
FAX +81 3 3593 8913
Email JY-AFW@mhw.go.jp

Nigeria

Ms Ronke **Soyombo**
Assistant Director
Department of Environmental
Technology and Standards
Federal Ministry of Environment
Independence Way South
P.M.B. 265
Garki
Abuja
Nigeria
TEl +234 9 413 0864
FAX +234 9 523 4932
Email fepa@hyperia.com or
uipt@hotmail.com

Slovenia

Ms Darja **Bostjancic**
Coordinator
Intersectoral Committee on the
Management of Dangerous
Chemicals
Stefanova 5
SI-1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia
TEL +386 61 178 6052 or 6051
FAX +386 61 178 6266
Email darja.bostjancic@gov.si

Switzerland

Mr Peter **Mueller**
BUWAL
CH-3003 BERN
Switzerland
TEL +41 31 322 93 84 or +41 61
721 23 17
FAX +41 31 324 79 78 or +41 61
721 23 17
Email
hanspeter.saxer@buwal.admin.ch
dr.p.m.mueller@swissonline.ch

Ms Nadine **Speich**
Program Officer
Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation (SDC)
Freiburgstr. 130
3003 Berne
Switzerland
TEL +41 31 325 92 93
FAX +41 31 325 93 62
nadine.speich@deza.adm.ch

Tanzania

Ms Josephine **Kalima (Mwaipopo)**
Head, Environment Sub-Section
Government Chemist Laboratory
PO Box 164
Dar Es Salaam
Tanzania
TEL +255 51 113 383/4
FAX +255 51 113 320
Email

Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Devnath **Roopnarine**
Industrial Safety Officer II
Ministry of Labour
Riverside Plaza
Besson Street
Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago
TEL 1 868 623 1462
FAX 1 868 624 4091
Email devnath@tstt.net.tt
or minlab@trinidad.net

USA

Mr Keith **Chanon**
7506C
U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency
c/o WHO Room L 121
20 avenue Appia
1211 GENEVE 27
Switzerland
TEL +41 22 791 43 44
FAX +41 22 791 41 59
Email chanonk@who.ch

Zambia

Mr James S. **Phiri**
Director
Environmental Council of Zambia
Box 35131
Lusaka
Zambia
TEL +260 1 254 130
FAX +260 1 254 164
Email necz@zamnet.zm

2.   Industry, Research, Public Interest Groups and Others

CEFIC

Mr John **Moore**
Regulatory Manager
Avecia Limited
PO Box 42
Blackley
Manchester M9 8ZS
United Kingdom
TEL +44 161 721 2208
FAX +44 161 721 1463
email John.moore@avecia.com

Professor Dr Hans **Illy**
Windaustr. 16
D-79110 Freiburg i.Br.
Germany
TEL +49 761 85091
FAX +49 761 892967
Email abifreruf.uni-freiburg.de

Dr Peter **Pluschke**
Stadt Nürnberg
Adolf-Braun-Str. 55
D-90317 Nürnberg
Germany
TEL +49 911 231 2167
FAX +49 911 231 2989
Email
peter_pluschke@ua.stadt.nuernberg.de

Global Crop Protection Federation

Mr Jakob **Brassel**
R.1004.6.01
Novartis
CP
4002 Basel
Switzerland
TEL +41 61 697 3389
FAX +41 61 697 4956
Email
jakob.brassel@cp.novartis.com

3. International, Intergovernmental and Regional Organizations/Entities

European Commission

Mr Marc **Debois**
European Commission
BU-5 Office 2/76
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium
TEL +32 2 299 03 49
FAX +32 2 295 61 17
Email marc.debois@cec.eu.int

European Commission/Joint Research Centre

Mr José Vicente **Sala Benito**
Joint Research Centre
T.P. 280
I-21020 Ispra/Varese
Italy
TEL +39 0332 785 735
FAX +39 0332 789 963
Email benito.sala@jrc.it

IFCS

Dr Judy **Stober**
Executive Secretary
Intergovernmental Forum on
Chemical Safety (IFCS)
20 avenue Appia
1211 GENEVE 27
Switzerland
TEL +41 22 791 36 50/38 73
FAX +41 22 791 48 75
Email stoberj@who.ch or
ifcs@who.ch

Ms Manuela **Godden**
IFCS Secretariat
Health and Safety Executive
Room 111
Magdalen House
Stanley Precinct
Bootle, Merseyside L20 3QZ
United Kingdom
TEL +44 151 951 4797
FAX +44 151 951 3317
manuela.godden@hse.gsi.gov.uk

OECD

Ms Beatrice **Grenier**
Administrator, ENV/EHS
OECD
2, rue André Pascal
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
France
TEL +33 1 45 24 76 96
FAX +33 1 45 24 16 75
Email beatrice.grenier@oecd.org

OPCW

Ms Sukanya **Devarajan**
International Cooperation Officer,
International Cooperation and
Assistance Division
Organization for the Prohibition of
Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
Johan de Wittlaan 32
NL-2517 JR The Hague
Netherlands
TEL +31 70 416 3775 (direct) or 416
3100 (general)
FAX +31 70 306 3535
Email
sukanya.devarajan@opcw.org

WHO/IPCS

Dr John **Haines**
International Programme on
Chemical Safety
WHO
20, avenue Appia
1211 GENEVE 27
Switzerland
TEL +41 22 791 3573
FAX +41 22 791 4848
Email hainesj@who.ch

UNITAR

Mr Achim **Halpaap**
Senior Programme Coordinator
UNITAR
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 GENEVE 10
Switzerland
TEL +41 22 917 85 25
FAX +41 22 917 80 47
achim.halpaap@unitar.org

Mr Jan **Huismans**
Senior Special Fellow
UNITAR
Domburgseweg 65
NL-4356 NA Oostkapelle
Netherlands
TEL +31 118 583 268
FAX +31 118 583 678
Email: Jhuismans@cs.com

Mr Peter **Peterson**
Senior Special Fellow
UNITAR
19 Asmuns Hill
London NW11 6ES
United Kingdom
TEL +44 208 458 4721
FAX +44 208 455 7276
peter.peterson@virgin.net

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