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Agenda item 11

In Partnership for Global Chemical Safety

IFCS/FORUM III/12w
Original: English
21 March 2000

FORUM III
Third Session
of the
Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety

Salvador da Bahía, Brazil
15 - 20 October 2000

**Capacity Building Network
for the Sound Management of Chemicals:**

**Discussion on and Possible Adoption/Endorsement of a
Draft Terms of Reference (TOR)**

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

DECISION DOCUMENT

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/endorse 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 Organizations to seek an appropriate location for the Central Co-ordinating Node;¹
- **requests** that a report on progress made and lessons learned during the start-up phase of the Network is made available at Forum IV 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 to UNITAR. An International Review Meeting took place on 25-26 January 2000 in Geneva, bringing together some 30 participants from countries, international organisations, NGOs and

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 options agreed upon at the International Review Meeting that Forum III may want to consider.

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.

**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 cooperation 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 coordinating capacity building projects¹ 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 cooperation, 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.

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

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.

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.

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;
- 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;

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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 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 projects⁴ 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.

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

(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 and 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:

- **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 be 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

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,

1 A report issued by the Inter-Organisation 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>).

reasonably well co-ordinated, etc. Specific questions that are relevant in this context include, *inter alia*:

- 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.