

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or "Rio Conference") adopted Chapters 19 and 20 of Agenda 21 outlining efforts to protect human health and the environment from dangerous chemicals and wastes. The number of chemicals and wastes-related international agreements has also increased significantly and each of these international agreements has precise purposes, objectives, and consequent obligations which countries commit to carry out. This growing number of obligations, whether binding or voluntary, poses a challenge to the capacities and capabilities of many developing countries and countries in economic transition.

2. INCREASING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) called for efforts to encourage and improve coordination – as well as support developing countries – in the implementation of relevant international instruments on chemicals and hazardous waste. Some agreements of note include, *inter alia*:

- Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1987;
- Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, 1989;
- ILO Convention C170 concerning Safety in the use of Chemicals at Work, 1990;
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, 1992 (Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC);

- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, 1998;
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2000;
- FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, 2002 (revised); and the
- Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), 2003.

Many of these agreements, or decisions taken by their governing bodies, emphasize the need for improved coordination among the existing initiatives. For example, Decision VI/29 of the sixth COP of the Basel Convention (2002) promotes cooperation to “undertaking joint activities to improve coordination and coherence between chemical and waste programme activities”.

Several activities have been initiated, mainly at the regional and global levels, to identify and strengthen synergies for capacity building. For example, the Geneva Environment Network and its partners have held three workshops in Africa and Latin America during 2002-2004 to promote the coordinated implementation of chemicals and wastes MEAs. Similarly, the “inter-linkages” initiative of the United Nations University seeks to promote enhanced coordination among multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to support a more integrated approach to environmental management. Finally, a process has been initiated to develop a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) through collaboration of participating organizations of the IOMC, IFCS, UNDP and the World Bank.

3. THE CHALLENGES OF IDENTIFYING AND IMPLEMENTING SYNERGIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

For many developing countries, a significant challenge has emerged: how to integrate implementation of international

agreements – and related capacity building activities – into a coherent National Programme for Chemicals and Waste Management. For example, National Focal Points can be dispersed among different ministries (e.g. the POPs focal point can be in the Ministry of Environment, the PIC focal point in the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Basel Convention focal point in the Ministry of Industry); information exchange may be weak or non-existent; awareness of the various agreements outside of each Ministry (or even within) can be low; and no one person or position within the government may be familiar with the overall framework of obligations. Lessons learned from UNITAR pilot countries regarding integrated chemicals management (2001-03) also reveal that coordination issues are a priority at the national level and indicate the benefits of developing integrated approaches.

4. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The thematic workshop provides an opportunity to obtain lessons learned to date in identifying and implementing synergies for capacity building under relevant international agreements at the country level. The event will take stock of existing international initiatives and regional activities and serve as an important preparatory activity for country-based pilot projects on integrated chemicals and waste management, commencing in March 2004.

The workshop will also develop recommendations aimed at countries, intergovernmental organisations, non-government organisations, and other key actors to assist with integrated capacity building for implementing national-level solutions towards implementing chemicals and wastes related international agreements.

Key questions to be addressed by workshop participants include, *inter alia*:

- Which international agreements and initiatives should be included in national attempts to identify and implement synergies for capacity building?

- Which important “horizontal” themes or obligations, which cut across international agreements concerned with chemicals and waste management, are relevant for national capacity building?
- Which of these relevant cross cutting themes would benefit from a co-ordinated or integrated approach at the national level and what specific action should be taken?
- What are some obstacles in practice to implement co-ordinated or integrated approaches for capacity building under relevant international agreements?

5. WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The workshop will be held over three and a half days in Geneva, Switzerland. During the first part of the workshop representatives of developing countries, countries in transition, industrialized countries and international organizations will have an opportunity to present case studies and other experiences relevant to the subject of the workshop. The second part of the workshop, undertaken in working groups, will focus on identifying commonalities and synergies between international agreements and subsequently determining appropriate ways and means for implementing national level solutions. The third part will provide a roundtable discussion regarding national level implementation issues. The final part will develop draft recommendations and conclusions based on the outcomes of the working groups.

6. WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

The workshop is organized by UNITAR in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Basel Convention and OPCW, the Geneva Environment Network (GEN) and other international organizations. Funding is provided by the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation and the OPCW.

The workshop is open to participants from developing countries, countries in economic transition, and developed country representatives, as well as representatives of intergovernmental organizations (including convention secretariats) and non-governmental organizations. Participants from countries are expected to be senior governmental officials responsible for chemicals/waste management. Participants from organizations should have responsibilities for relevant capacity building programs or for developing strategies for chemicals and wastes related activities. The language of the workshop will be English.

7. REGISTRATION AND SPONSORSHIP OF PARTICIPANTS

A limited amount of travel and subsistence support, covered by UNITAR/OPCW, is available for approximately 30 participants. Representatives from developing or transition countries and public interest groups interested to be fully or partially sponsored should indicate this on the registration form. A statement/abstract indicating the interest in or experience related to the workshop should be attached to the registration form. The statement of interest/abstract will inform the selection process, together with an attempt to ensure regional balance. Please note that in light of the number of requests received, available resources are not likely to be sufficient to sponsor all interested participants. Other participants who may be able to secure their own funding are very much welcome to submit a registration form and participate.

The deadline for registration and submission of statements/abstracts to UNITAR is **19 February 2004**. UNITAR will notify selected participants by 27 February 2004.

8. DRAFT AGENDA

Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management

Geneva, Switzerland
30 March – 2 April 2004

Day 1

Opening

Workshop Objectives and Methodology

Introductory Presentation

Part I – Background Presentations

- Perspectives of Governments
- Perspectives of Stakeholders
- Perspectives of International Organisations and Convention Secretariats

Summary Presentation of Day 1

Day 2

Part II – Thematic Working Groups

Thematic Working Groups on Topics Identified on Day 1

Day 3

Working Groups continue

Part III – Roundtable discussion on national implementation issues

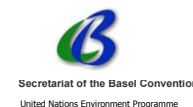
Day 4 (morning only)

Part IV – Summary

Review of Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations

The Secretariat will table the main observations and conclusions of the workshop for discussion and possible adoption by participants.

Close



INTER-ORGANISATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS
A cooperative agreement among UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, WHO, WHO, WHO, WHO, WHO

Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Deadline: **19 February 2004**

Please fax/mail to: Training and Capacity Building Programmes
in Chemicals and Waste Management
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
FAX: + 41 22 917 8047
Email: cwm@unitar.org

Country/Organisation:.....

Family Name:(Mr/Ms)

First Name:

Title:

Address:

.....

.....

TEL FAX EMAIL:

Government IGO NGO

Signature:

Sponsorship (relevant for developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and public interest NGOs):

- My participation depends on full sponsorship
- I would be able to participate with provision from the organizers of a stipend of USD 1,000.-- (payment by bank transfer after the workshop)

About the Thematic Workshops on Priority Topics of National Chemicals Management Capacity Building

The *Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management* is the eighth in a Series of Thematic Workshops on Priority Topics of National Chemicals Management Capacity Building being organized by UNITAR, in cooperation with other interested partners and under the auspices of the IOMC.

The Series of Thematic Workshops covers selected topics which have emerged as priorities in the context of National Profile preparation, national priority setting workshops and national action programmes, and for which countries have indicated that a practical exchange of experience in a workshop setting would be of great value. Each thematic workshop brings together a range of interested countries and organizations and results in a set of pragmatic and innovative ideas which countries can use in developing strategies to fit their national needs. The workshop outcomes also provide input into ongoing international discussions on the selected topics.

Past thematic workshops have addressed the topics of capacity building for national chemicals information systems (September 1998), education and awareness raising for chemical safety (October 1998), chemicals management legislation and policies (June 1999), risk management decision-making for priority chemicals (October 1999), chemical analysis and monitoring (November 2001), interministerial coordination (August 2002) and financial resource mobilisation (November 2002).
