

**THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON SYNERGIES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING UNDER  
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ADDRESSING CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

30 March – 2 April 2004

Opening Remarks of Mr. Marcel Boisard, UNITAR Executive Director and  
UN Assistant Secretary General

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues,

I welcome you to the Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management. This is the first meeting held in this room as this new annex building to the International Environment House has just been finished.

Originally this event was planned as a small workshop to prepare for pilot projects on integrated chemicals and waste management in four countries—Armenia, Jamaica, Jordan and Chad—but the more than 180 applications received by UNITAR shows the great interest which countries have in developing integrated national approaches towards the implementation of international agreements. With the generous support of OPWC and SDC, we were able to accommodate at least some of these requests, and I am pleased to see here today more than 80 participants representing some 60 different countries and organizations. I also would like to express my appreciation for the international partnership that evolved in developing this workshop, including also UNEP SBC, Participating Organizations of the IOMC, the UNECE and the Geneva Environment Network.

One of the central principles of UNITAR's programme in chemicals management — which has received core funding by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation — is to try to touch new grounds and to develop innovative approaches towards integrated national chemicals management. I understand that it is a challenging task to find synergies for capacity building under international chemicals and waste agreements. Your task will be to explore these challenges, identify opportunities and discuss practical issues of implementation at the national level.

In closing please be reminded that this is not a political meeting, so please feel free to share your thoughts and ideas openly. Don't worry about your English; express yourselves! The results will be of value to the four pilot countries, and they will also be channeled by UNITAR into the international process to develop a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). I wish you a successful workshop.