

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

30 March – 2 April 2004

Closing Remarks of Dr. Franz Perrez, Head of Section Global Affairs;
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The moment has come to conclude this stimulating and rich workshop. Three days ago, we began the workshop with welcome remarks that already went beyond the normal purely ceremonial welcome addresses. Thus, Bijoy Chatterjee, Nelson Sabogal and Jeremy Wates presented the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, of the Basel Convention and of the Aarhus Convention. I think this promising start was typical of the constructive and issue-oriented atmosphere of the workshop. Then, after an introduction by Achim Halpaap into the workshop's objectives and methodology, Peter Peterson and Jonathan Krueger of UNITAR gave an overview of the most important international instruments on chemicals and waste management and synthesized the relevant national capacity requirements.

After a short introduction from me in which I stressed that while the word synergy does not have four letters, it is nevertheless treated sometimes in international negotiations like a four-letter word, and that we, therefore, should not only look at the benefits that synergies provide but also at the obstacles that are established against the effective realization of synergies and at possible solutions to overcome these obstacles.

We benefited from seven presentations that provided insight into the different perspectives of our common theme: Ibrahima Sow presented the experiences of Senegal in developing an integrated approach to chemicals and waste management. Gilson Spanemberg gave a Brazilian view of the challenges, impediments and needs for synergies. Bengt Bucht made it very clear that chemicals and waste policy is a horizontal and cross-cutting issue that needs a coherent, transparent, integrated and clear approach both at the legislative and institutional levels. He also presented the "5 Cs" of the benefits of synergy: coherence, coordination, consistency, continuity and cost efficiency. Sophie Flensburg reported on the experiences in regional and subregional workshops for coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and presented the potential benefits, barriers and solutions to each approach. Laurent Granier summarized the work of the Global Environmental Facility and Marc Debois, from an EU perspective, indicated that the issues we discussed must be seen as horizontal and not as part of one convention. Finally, Mariann Lloyd-Smith provided an NGO perspective and made clear that synergies can be realized and that information, training, NGO participation, among others, belong to the key areas where we should enhance synergies.

After this stimulating introduction from the podium, we heard statements from participants addressing very specific issues and then the real work began — the work in working groups that led to the identification of a number of concrete challenges, targets,

priorities and to the document that we have just finalized. Let me express at this moment my and my government's sincere gratitude to UNITAR, Achim Halpaap and his team for organizing this workshop. Let me also thank all of you for the constructive spirit in which we have worked over the last three days.

Let me conclude this workshop with some very personal thoughts: I believe that this workshop has made it very clear that everything must be done to enhance synergies in the field of chemicals and waste policy and especially with regard to building and using our capacity for ensuring the sound management of chemicals and waste. Synergies are possible at different levels:

- At the international level, for example, concerning secretariats, COPs, technical cooperation and capacity building
- At the regional level, for example, regional cooperation
- At the national level, for example, through coordination between focal points and agencies
- At the local level, for example, during concrete local implementation and enforcement of chemicals and waste policies.

The benefits have become very clear: an increase of effectiveness, cost-efficiency, coherence, comprehensiveness, a reduction of overlap, duplication and contradiction and missed opportunities, and a safe and healthier environment for all of us. Synergies have to be realized not only within the chemicals and wastes regimes, but also with other sectors and policies, such as trade or poverty eradication policies.

However, there are also obstacles. Enabling synergies means also reducing overlaps and duplication. It implies and requires coordination and cooperation. Thus, sectoral interests may and will be touched. But I am convinced that the overall benefit should weigh much more than the sectoral interests which are often linked to purely personal interests.

This workshop has identified several important challenges and possible solutions. It was rich, stimulating and very productive. Therefore, let us do everything to ensure that it is not only thought provoking, but that it provides also concrete action and has concrete impacts. Transmitting the results of our deliberations to the SAICM process will not be enough. Each of us will also have to apply what we learned to our daily work. Thus, I sincerely hope that synergies in capacity building for the sound management of chemicals and waste stops being a 9-lettered 4-letter-word, but is recognized as an overarching goal with concrete impact — be it on decisions whether institutions dealing with the same issues should be scattered all over the world or clustered together, be it on our policy and legislative work or during our daily, very concrete work on implementation.

The concept of synergies in chemicals and waste management is a great leitmotif, but let us not only admire and praise its beauty. Let us foremost also implement it and let us be guided in our daily work by it.

I wish you now safe travel home. Thank you.