

## **Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building in Chemicals Management**

**– Geneva, 30 March 2004 -**

**Marc Debois, Development Directorate-General, European Commission**

I would like to give a development perspective.

The issues of “synergies” is becoming more and more essential, in the light of the increasing number of international conventions dealing with chemicals, not mentioning IFCS and SAICM processes. Moreover, in the light of the numerous topics that each developing country has to address in progressing towards sustainable development (poverty eradication, education, trade, rural development, health, environment, just to name a few) chemicals management is likely to receive attention **only** when it is seen as **ONE** issue and not as a series of different topics, each associated with a particular problem, a particular convention or indeed a particular aspect of the life cycle of a chemical.

This is probably the main reason for dealing with synergies between Chemicals Conventions.

A few thoughts, a few ideas which may be of use for the deliberations of this week.

To progress on synergies between the Conventions, the following key questions/issues need to be discussed and preferably answered.

### **1. At which level should synergies be addressed and how?**

#### a) International level

- At the level of Secretariats:
  - strengthening of coordination (suggestion: IOMC to be extended to include Conventions’ secretariats)
  - common source of information – info exchange is a requirement in all conventions (use of INFOCAP)
- At COP level:
  - Joint work programmes (see CBD-CCD-CC joint programme on Forests)
  - Decisions in one COP to systematically crosslink with other COPs decisions

#### b) Country level (the most important level)

- coordination between focal points: coordination is a weak requirement in all conventions – see summary table in doc 8-3
- non-dispersion of responsibilities of “conventions” between various sectoral policies
- policy coherence
- policy dialogue
- joint implementation programmes (INDIVIDUAL programmes likely to receive little attention)

- participatory approach
- ensure political attention to promote Chemical Capacity Building
- links with Development agenda at Country level
- appropriate institutional mechanisms (e.g for coordination and mainstreaming)

Solutions at Country level should be applied at regional level wherever possible.

### c) Local level

Is there a problem in terms of synergies? Not sure.

Synergies may be a fact at local level. Local people deal with problems, not conventions. (e.g in dealing with contamination of water by obsolete stocks of pesticides, they do not care and even don't know that this is relevant for both Stockholm and Basle and perhaps other Conventions)

### **2. At each level, who are the key actors?**

For each action identified during this week, one should identify the actor(s): government, local authorities, civil society, private sector, donors?

### **3. Role of donors**

Donors have also something to do domestically, even if key action remains in recipient countries

For example:

- Coordination at donor level should be improved  
(Coordination between donors but also within each donor organisation)
- Up to now little has been done for a global strategy to implement various Capacity Building activities and programmes under various conventions.
- Awareness raising activities, provision of training
- Sharing their expertise, information and experience in life cycle approach and risk management.

### **3. What kind of tools and actions should be developed to promote synergies?**

Some ideas. Working Groups will find many more during the week.

- Further development of good documents prepared for this meeting by UNITAR (to expand them in order to include all relevant COP decisions and to include other relevant chemical conventions).
- Guidance document on synergies on specific issues?
- No need for more theoretical studies  
Rather: enhance exchange of info on experiences/case studies/best practices.

- Joint programmes at COP level / Secretariat level
- Integrated planning at national level (role of National Profiles)
- Institution building : particular role of customs
- etc

In concluding, I would like to re-emphasize a particular important “entry point” to promote synergies for Capacity Building in chemicals management: to establish the link between chemicals management and the development agenda at the level of each country.

By making such a link, political attention will be raised and chemicals will be part of policy dialogue, which may lead to the strengthening of focal points, of institutions dealing with chemicals and even increase available funds for chemicals management.

#### An example

At WSSD: Water initiative was launched. Many DC are participating.

Goal: better access to water for all, to safe water!

Safe water means i.e. absence of chemicals/pesticides residues

- Dealing with obsolete stocks of pesticides;
- Improving chemical safety by introducing Risk assessment/Risk management concept in chemical legislation;
- Controlling wastes movements;

all of this effectively contribute to water quality.

If policy makers at the highest level become aware of these links, chemical safety may receive higher consideration, including for dealing with synergies. This is also important in getting access to funding.

The link between chemicals management and Development Agenda does not appear in the agenda of this meeting and is not addressed in the background documents.

To be corrected. Suggest that a specific Working Group be set up to address this key issue.

Thank you

Marc DEBOIS  
30/03/2004