

WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)

Annual Report 2002



About WSSD Partnerships

Partnerships in sustainable development aimed at implementing Agenda 21 are an important outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. At the Summit, governments agreed on a series of commitments in five priority areas backed up by specific government announcements on programmes, and by Partnership initiatives. It is important to continue to build on the momentum created by the WSSD, since Partnership initiatives can contribute significantly to the implementation of sustainable development at all levels.

Additional information about Partnerships can be found at:
<www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>.

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A Message from the Founding Partners

The UN Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is a major breakthrough towards achieving chemical safety world-wide. The system has the ultimate goal of ensuring that information on chemical hazards (such as labels and safety data sheets) is made available to workers and consumers in a harmonized and comprehensible format in countries around the world. The GHS can therefore be considered one of the “success stories” of Agenda 21.

Developing countries and countries with economies in transition have indicated that widespread adoption of the GHS and effective chemical hazard communication is only likely to occur if adequate support, training and technical assistance is made available to committed countries in need of building appropriate GHS-relevant legal and technical infrastructures. Suitable training and education will be required to ensure the proper use of GHS tools in different national contexts.

This report summarizes the 2002 activities – and proposed future directions – of the *WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS*, as well as related activities to build capacity for the appropriate classification and labelling of dangerous chemicals. The Partnership, which was formally announced at the WSSD, is directly linked to paragraph 23(c) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which encourages countries to implement the GHS by 2008.

To help reach this goal, the Partnership strives to catalyse co-operation and to mobilize resources both at the international level and in participating partner countries. It also seeks – beyond government support – the broader involvement of and contributions from concerned industries, corporate associations and non-governmental organizations in international and national efforts to implement the GHS.

UNITAR, ILO and OECD would like to thank the Government of Switzerland and the Government of The Netherlands, as well as ICCA, for their financial contributions to the initial implementation and coordination of the Partnership. We invite and encourage other governments and major groups to join the Partnership and support its core activities in order to initiative expeditious action towards reaching the WSSD 2008 target and, more importantly, to protect people and environment from potentially dangerous chemicals.

Signed,



Marcel A. Boisard
UN Assistant Secretary-General
Executive Director, UNITAR



Jukka Takala
Director, SafeWork Programme
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Robert Visser
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What is the GHS?

The UN Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is an important new tool that countries can draw upon to develop national chemical hazard communication systems by providing a basis for the establishment of comprehensive chemical safety programs. It represents an important step in harmonizing national chemical hazard communication systems worldwide and has a great potential to improve chemical safety across all relevant sectors.

The GHS is a consistent and coherent approach to identifying the hazards of chemicals, and providing information on these hazards and associated protective measures to users or those who may be exposed. The system is structured so that appropriate elements for classification and communication, which consider the target population, can be selected. Those who then use chemicals can take the proper steps to protect themselves and the environment.

Target populations include employers, workers, including those involved in transport, consumers, and emergency responders. Others who provide services to these people will also find the information useful (e.g., doctors, nurses, safety engineers and occupational hygienists). The GHS includes harmonized criteria for the definition of physical hazards (such as flammability), health hazards (such as carcinogenicity) and environmental hazards. These internationally-developed criteria are used to evaluate the hazards of both substances and mixtures.

The GHS covers all hazardous chemical substances, dilute solutions and mixtures and addresses how labels and safety data sheets should be used to convey information about their hazards, and how to protect people from these effects. It also provides a basis for safety training and health promotion.

The System is expected to:

- enhance the protection of people and the environment by providing an internationally comprehensive system for chemical hazard communication;
- provide a recognised framework for those countries without an existing system;
- reduce the need for duplicative testing and evaluation of chemicals; and
- facilitate international trade in chemicals whose hazards have been properly assessed and identified on an international basis.

More information about the GHS can be obtained from the Secretariat (UNECE) of the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS at:

www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs.html.

1. Background to the Partnership

Development of the GHS

Communicating hazards of dangerous chemicals to workers and the public is a key foundation for protecting human health and the environment.

Communicating the hazards of dangerous chemicals to workers and the public is a key foundation for protecting human health and the environment. As a major break-through in this area, the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) was adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS (SCEGHS) in December 2002 and endorsed by ECOSOC in July 2003, following more than a decade of technical work and negotiations after the Rio Summit in 1992. The GHS has the ultimate goal of ensuring that information on chemical hazards (such as labels and safety data sheets) is made available to workers and consumers in a harmonized and comprehensible format in countries around the world. Early feedback from developing countries has documented that widespread adoption of the GHS and effective chemical hazard communication is only likely to occur if adequate support, training and technical assistance is made available to committed countries in need of building appropriate GHS-relevant legal and technical infrastructures.

UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme

The UNITAR/ILO GHS Programme supports national and regional GHS capacity building activities, and develops and pilots GHS training materials.

In response to growing requests from countries for GHS capacity building, UNITAR and ILO initiated in 2001 the UNITAR/ILO GHS Training and Capacity Building Programme. The Programme aims at assisting countries to build capacities for the implementation of the GHS through national, sub-regional and regional activities, in accordance with their own capacities and capabilities and through collaboration between various government bodies as well as parties outside of government. Building upon existing initiatives of international organisations, countries and others, the programme provides guidance documents, training materials, expert training and educational, awareness-raising and resource materials regarding the new system. Relevant activities cover topics such as chemical hazards, labelling, safety data sheets (SDSs), as well as related support measures such as legislation, comprehensibility testing, awareness raising workshops, etc.¹ Details regarding 2002 progress in pilot countries and other programme activities is found throughout this Annual Report.

The WSSD Plan of Implementation and the GHS

Chemical safety, including hazard communication and GHS

¹ A brochure outlining this programme in more detail can be found at: <www.unitar.org/cwm>.

WSSD encouraged countries to implement the GHS with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

implementation, is one of the issues which received specific attention at the WSSD. In paragraph 23 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, governments renewed their commitment to the sound management of chemicals across a variety of important sectors. The need for support for developing countries to strengthen their capacities for the sound management of chemicals, through the provision of technical and financial assistance, was highlighted. More specifically, it was agreed to “encourage countries to implement the new globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008”.² This target had also been adopted by the third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety in 2000.

Initiation of the WSSD GHS Partnership by UNITAR, ILO and OECD

Over 25 governments, international organizations and NGOs responded with strong interest to participate in the Partnership.

In April 2002, UNITAR and ILO, in collaboration with OECD, initiated the WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS. The main goal of the WSSD GHS Partnership is to mobilize resources and implement a number of specific support activities to strengthen capacities at all levels and sectors – in particular in developing and transition countries – towards implementing the GHS for industrial chemicals, agricultural chemicals, chemicals in transport and consumer chemicals. In response to a call for Partners prior to the WSSD, over 25 governments, international organizations and NGOs responded with an interest to participate in the Partnership. For a list of interested countries and organizations, please refer to Annex 1.

Partnership Announcement at the Johannesburg Summit

In July 2002, the Partnership proposal was submitted to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and placed on the WSSD website following a review by DESA that it met the guiding principles developed by the WSSD Preparatory Committee in preparation for the Summit.³ At the Summit the Partnership was formally launched as part of the official WSSD Programme on Friday, 30 August 2002. UNITAR’s Executive Director Dr. Marcel Boisard convened a partnership panel including: James Phiri, *Executive Director, Environmental Council of Zambia*, Conchita Poncini, *International Confederation of University Women and President, NGO Committee on the Status of Women*, Larry Kohler, *Specialist, Sustainable Development, ILO*, Kenneth Ruffing, *Acting*

² A/CONF.199/20, paragraph 23(c).

³ The list and details of selected Partnerships, including the Global GHS Partnership, can be found at: <<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>>.

Director, Environment Directorate, OECD and Ambassador Beat Nobs, Head of Division, International Affairs Division, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL).

The importance of chemical hazard communication as a key contributor to sustainable economic development was highlighted by all speakers.

During the meeting the importance of chemical hazard communication as a key contributor to sustainable economic development was highlighted by all speakers. The GHS was commended as a practical and important tool now available to all countries, but lack of awareness and capacity constraints at various levels will need to be overcome in order to reach the ambitious goal set by WSSD. For example, Ms. Poncini highlighted in particular the significant gaps which exist in developing countries with regard to appropriate labelling of dangerous consumer chemicals, often with detrimental results for the health of women and children.

At this meeting, Ambassador Nobs announced a contribution of CHF 100,000 by BUWAL in support of the management of the Partnership and activities in 2002. These resources complemented financial support made available for country-based GHS capacity building activities provided by the Ministry of Development Cooperation of The Netherlands. Mr. Boisard of UNITAR thanked both Governments for their initial support and indicated that the financial resources provided are key towards further developing and firmly establishing the Partnership during the course of 2002/03.

Overall Progress Made in 2002

In 2002, the WSSD GHS Partnership was mainly initiated through and built around the work-plan of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme, working in close collaboration with OECD. The following four sections of this report therefore reflect to a large degree activities undertaken through, and initiatives of, the UNITAR/ILO Programme. It is anticipated, however, that in the coming years, countries and organizations will also take the lead for implementing specific core partnership activities as a contribution towards reaching Partnership targets. A specific section of the Annual Report has been dedicated to recognizing other valuable GHS capacity building activities undertaken by countries and organizations in 2002, but which were not directly linked to or co-ordinated through the Partnership. Countries and organizations are encouraged to review this section and provide additional information to the Partnership secretariat in order to ensure that Annual Reports are as complete as possible.

International Bodies and Initiatives Relevant to GHS Capacity Building: A Brief Overview

UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS

The UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS (UN SCEGHS) is a policy body which maintains existing and develops new technical elements of the GHS, as appropriate, and makes proposals for work and policy decisions to its parent committee, the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods & the GHS. Proposals include the provision of technical guidance to countries and organizations with regard to the further development of the GHS and its implementation. The UN SCEGHS also issues recommendations in the area of GHS capacity building, but does not have an executing function. UNITAR/ILO have been designated as a focal point for this purpose.

The UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme

The UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme operates within UNITAR's Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals and Waste Management. It has an executing function and supports national GHS action plans processes, regional workshops, and develops and pilots GHS training material. The Programme receives technical advice from a Programme Advisory Group (PAG) which includes representatives from several countries and organizations involved in GHS development and implementation. UNITAR/ILO provide regular updates of Programme activities to the UN SCEGHS.

The Global WSSD GHS Partnership

The Global GHS Partnership is a WSSD-endorsed framework which brings together countries and organizations committed to supporting specific GHS capacity building activities in developing and transition countries. It was initiated by UNITAR and ILO, in collaboration with the OECD. The Partnership pursues concrete objectives and targets for GHS capacity building activities at the global, regional and national levels and Partners work together to mobilize resources to reach these targets. Technical aspects of Partnership activities are reviewed by the PAG of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme. However, not all core Partnership activities are necessarily executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may execute core Partnership activities independently, as long as the activity contributes to one of the Partnership targets and is coordinated through the PAG. The secretariat function for the Partnership will be provided by UNITAR, working together with ILO and OECD.

2. Partnership Objectives, Programme Areas and Indicators

Goal and Objectives

The WSSD GHS Partnership strives to mobilize support and catalyze partnerships for capacity building activities at the global, regional and national levels.

The goal of the WSSD GHS Partnership is to mobilize support and catalyze partnerships for coordinated activities at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen capacities in developing countries and countries in transition towards effective implementation of the GHS. In the medium and long-term, the Partnership is expected to lead to a decrease in environmental and human health related effects attributable to the use of hazardous chemicals. It thus makes a direct contribution to important objectives of sustainable development including protection of marginalized groups, protection of water supplies and drinking water, and poverty eradication.

Specific objectives of the Partnership include mobilization of resources for:

- awareness raising, capacity assessment and GHS implementation at the regional level;
- awareness raising, capacity assessment and GHS implementation at the national level; and
- development of GHS guidance, training and resource material.

Programme Areas and Activities

To be recognized as a contribution to the Partnership, an activity should fall within any of the following four Programme Areas and make a significant contribution towards achieving Partnership indicators.

- (1) Support of GHS Capacity Development at the Regional and Sub-regional Levels
- (2) Support of GHS Capacity Development at the National Level
- (3) Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials
- (4) Supporting Activities and Services for GHS Capacity Development

Projects and activities executed through the UNITAR/ILO GHS

Capacity Building Programme are directly linked to the above Programme Areas and constitute a core contribution to the Partnership. Other Partnership activities can be implemented directly by Partners, working in close collaboration with the UNITAR/ILO Programme and its Programme Advisory Group.

What Constitutes a Core GHS Partnership Activity?

Although the GHS Partnership has a degree of flexibility and is resource dependent, it is an initiative which attempts to mobilize support for a number of agreed activities. For an activity to be recognized as a core Partnership activity, it should directly contribute towards achieving indicators in one of the four Partnership Programme Areas. Core partnership activities are technically reviewed by the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme. However, not all core Partnership activities need necessarily to be executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may also execute core Partnership activities independently, if the activity contributes to one of the Partnership indicators and is coordinated through the PAG. It is also recognized that many other valuable GHS capacity development activities are organized independently of the WSSD GHS Partnership. These activities will be presented in a special section of the annual progress reports for the Partnership.

Partnership Indicators

The indicators for the Partnership, set at the WSSD and to be reviewed at the first Meeting of the Partners in July 2003, are the following:

- Regional and sub-regional GHS capacity needs assessments and GHS implementation scenarios prepared.
- Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Regional partner organizations identified and train-the-trainer workshops completed.
- Pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in four countries.
- Two pilot projects for GHS Action Plan Development per UN region completed and evaluated.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries, subject to the availability of resources.
- GHS and hazard communication awareness raising materials prepared, peer-reviewed and widely disseminated.
- GHS capacity building guidance and training package prepared, pilot tested, and adopted.

***Senegal Assesses their National Infrastructure
for Chemical Hazard Communication***

As part a 2-year project supported by UNITAR with financial assistance of the Swiss government, Senegal assessed its national infrastructure for chemical hazard communication for technical, legal, administrative and human resource and other capacity issues. The analysis – which was based on draft guidance made available by UNITAR/ILO – covered the agriculture, consumer, transport and industrial sectors. Key findings included: the general public were for the most part unaware of chemical labelling; customs officials had a higher level of understanding of labels than in most sectors; and agricultural workers were often aware of labels, but failed to apply protection measures when applying pesticides. This important activity provided a baseline report and functioned as a key input into the development of Senegal's national GHS action plan.

3. Support of GHS Capacity Development at the Regional and Sub-regional Levels – Programme Area 1

Regional free trade initiatives increasingly deal with environmental issues.

Countries within regions or sub-regions often share similar needs and approaches towards chemical hazard communication. Also, regional economic cooperation or free trade initiatives increasingly take on board environmentally related issues. This programme area includes activities such as regional and sub-regional GHS awareness raising workshops, regional and sub-regional capacity needs assessments and the facilitation of regional and sub-regional GHS implementation strategies.

Initial indicators for this Programme Area include the following:

- Regional and sub-regional GHS capacity needs assessments and GHS implementation reports prepared.
- Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Regional partner organizations identified and train-the-trainer workshops completed.

2002 Activities and Progress Made

Funds were mobilized for a first regional GHS workshop for the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community.

In 2002 agreement was reached and funds were mobilized for a first regional GHS workshop for the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).⁴ The four-day workshop will be held in Livingstone, Zambia in September 2003, as part of the series of regional and sub-regional GHS workshops which are co-ordinated and supported through the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme with financial support from GTZ, IFCS, the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands, and ICCA.

During the four days, participants will exchange GHS-related country experiences, examine existing regional structures relevant to GHS implementation (e.g. SADC Chemicals Code, NEPAD GHS initiative), discuss challenges and opportunities regarding GHS implementation at the regional and national levels, and develop practical recommendations for GHS implementation at the national and regional levels for industrial chemicals, agricultural chemicals, chemicals in transport, and consumer product chemicals.

⁴ SADC is a regional cooperation and development organization involving Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Plans for 2003-2004

As a follow-up to the SADC workshop, a regional GHS needs assessment and implementation report will be prepared in 2003, developed through collaboration of UNITAR with governments and stakeholders and with technical support of two external consultants. The report will examine existing regional institutions and structures, assess national GHS-related needs and capacities, and propose elements of a regional GHS implementation strategy building upon the results of the Livingstone workshop.

During 2002, no pledges were received to contribute financial resources for additional regional workshops in 2003-2004. Countries and organizations that are sponsoring such events, or may be in a position to support the organization of additional regional workshops through the UNITAR/ILO programme, are encouraged to contact UNITAR.

4. Support of GHS Capacity Development at the Country Level - Programme Area 2

GHS pilot projects provide important feedback to the international community regarding opportunities and challenges to implement the GHS in developing and transition countries

Country-based GHS pilot projects can serve to catalyse national action through multi-stakeholder collaboration and provide a testing ground to review drafts of GHS-related guidance and training material. They also provide important feedback to the international community regarding opportunities and challenges associated with GHS implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Activities in this programme area include support of national GHS awareness raising workshops, GHS capacity self-needs assessments and national GHS action plan development involving all interested and affected parties.

Initial indicators for this Programme Area include the following:

- Pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in four countries.
- Two pilot projects for GHS Action Plan Development per UN region completed and evaluated.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries, subject to the availability of resources.

2002 Activities and Progress Made

A number of countries have been engaged in developing national GHS action plans in the context of the UNITAR/ILO GHS capacity assistance (or affiliated) programmes.

Zambia

Comprehensibility Testing Report revealed low levels of comprehension of most label elements and a poor understanding of Safety Data Sheets.

The Environmental Council of Zambia (ECZ), in cooperation with interested parties within and outside of government, executes a two year (2001-03) project entitled: “Developing and Implementing a National Action Plan for Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation”. At the international level the project is supported by UNITAR/ILO with financial resources provided by the Government of the Netherlands.

Completed activities and progress achieved in 2002 include:

- a detailed situation analysis/self-needs assessment that identified existing activities and gaps in the chemical hazard communication infrastructure;

- organization of a national Chemical Hazard Communication Workshop, including UNITAR and GHS-expert participation;
- a high-level GHS briefing session for key decision-makers; and
- initiation of rapid comprehensibility testing in order to help determine the level of comprehension of various hazard pictograms and warning phrases in Zambia (the work was undertaken with technical support of the University of Zambia and University of Cape Town).

The Comprehensibility Testing Report revealed low levels of comprehension of most label elements and a poor understanding of Safety Data Sheet words and phrases. Based on the outcomes of the comprehensibility testing exercise, a regulatory review has commenced, which has been designed to identify provisions to ensure the mandatory availability and use of SDS in the workplace. Zambia is currently finalizing its action plan and preparing to begin implementation of a number of priority activities in early 2003.

South Africa

Comprehensibility testing will be implemented involving some 400 industrial and agricultural workers and consumers.

In South Africa, the development of an implementation strategy for the GHS – including on-the-ground training – is coordinated by the National Economic and Labour Council (NEDLAC), a tripartite statutory body established to address key issues of economic and social development in South Africa involving government, labour and business. The project is financially and technically supported by UNITAR/ILO with financial resources provided by the Government of the Netherlands. In 2002, a situation analysis was initiated and a gap analysis and the GHS implementation strategy will be completed in 2003.

Complementary to these activities, a comprehensibility testing project will be implemented involving some 400 industrial and agricultural workers and consumers. Based on the ILO comprehensibility methodology and with input from the University of Cape Town, the project will review and test the comprehensibility of the hazard information provided and examine what additional measures are required to undertake effective chemical hazard communication. The results of this project activity will be the basis for developing labelling and hazard communication requirements and complementary training material in order to ensure that GHS information will be comprehensible to the concerned target audience.

Senegal

Activities on chemical hazard communication and the GHS in Senegal, as well as Sri Lanka, have been on-going as part of Senegal's participation in the UNITAR/IOMC programme "Developing and Sustaining and Integrated Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals" (2001-2003) supported by the Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC). The Ministry of Environment, supported by a multi-stakeholder committee, completed a situation analysis, held a national workshop on the GHS and developed a draft action plan for strengthening chemical hazard communication in the country. It is expected that a national review workshop will adopt the plan in early 2003 and that Senegal will formally join the SCEGHS.

Sri Lanka

The Central Environment Authority (CEA) of Sri Lanka, with the support of the Minister for Development Cooperation of The Netherlands, completed a situation analysis and held a workshop on the GHS (including participation from the Chair of the UN SCEGHS and UNITAR) in 2002. All relevant sectors have been engaged on a national basis for the project, training activities have been undertaken and awareness-raising tools identified that can assist with increasing understanding and effectiveness of the use of labels, SDS and other hazard communication tools. Sri Lanka will complete its national GHS action plan and distribute identified training and awareness-raising tools, as priority activities, in early 2003.

Plans for 2003-2004

Selection of additional project countries for GHS Action Plan development and implementation is planned for 2003-2004, resources permitting.

Selection of additional project countries for GHS Action Plan development and implementation is planned for 2003-2004, resources permitting. A Programme Brochure outlining the project in brief is available and has been distributed to potentially interested countries for their consideration. As funds become available, countries will be invited to submit formal applications through a formal announcement. Selections will take place through a competitive process designed by the chemical hazard communication Programme Advisory Group (or a smaller subcommittee), using agreed-upon criteria. Examples of such criteria include: commitment to multi-stakeholder co-operation; regional balance; degree of country development (e.g. a least developed country, economy in transition, etc); level of interest in the GHS, etc.

Selected Partnership Highlights 2002

- Official launch of Partnership at WSSD on Friday, 30 August 2002.
- Zambia, Senegal, Sri Lanka and South Africa develop National GHS Action Plans with support of UNITAR/ILO.
- UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS (SCEGHS) designate UNITAR/ILO as focal point for GHS capacity building.
- Resources mobilized for a regional UNITAR/ILO/ECZ GHS workshop in 2003 for countries in the SADC region with core support from the German Technical Assistance Agency (GTZ) and additional resources from the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands, IFCS and ICCA.
- UNITAR/ILO initiate a Global Survey on Capacity Building Needs for Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation.
- GHS awareness raising events and workshops take place in a number of countries and regions, including Brazil, the United States, Asia and Europe.

5. Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials – Programme Area 3

Activities in this programme area include the development of GHS information brochures, a GHS capacity building guidance and training package, e.g. for action plan development, comprehensibility testing guidance, and training modules on various GHS-related topics (such as classification, labelling and development of SDS).

The initial two indicators for this Programme Area are the following:

- GHS and hazard communication awareness raising materials prepared, peer-reviewed and widely disseminated.
- GHS capacity building guidance and training package prepared, pilot tested, and adopted.

2002 Activities and Progress Made

Testing of Guidance Documents for National Action Plan Development

UNITAR/ILO draft guidance for GHS action plan development is designed to assist countries to undertake key decisions relevant for GHS implementation in a systematic way.

In order to facilitate the step-by-step process of developing national GHS action plans, draft guidance materials have been developed by UNITAR/ILO and have been pilot-tested in 2002 by Zambia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Senegal in the context of their participation in the UNITAR/ILO GHS capacity building programme. This guidance is designed to assisting countries to undertake key decision relevant for GHS implementation in a systematic way. The guidance address issues such as: the chemical hazard communication concept and the potential benefits of the GHS; suggestions on how countries might organise the process of developing a national GHS action plan (*who* needs to do *what?*); guidance on how to undertake a national situation analysis and self-needs assessment; an overview of key questions and decisions that will need to be addressed both for sectoral and cross-sectoral chemical hazard communication issues; and a checklist of suggested steps and activities. It is expected that these documents will be revised based on the country experiences and finalized in early 2004.

Rapid Comprehensibility Testing Package Developed by University of Zambia

With the support of UNITAR/ILO the University of Zambia has

completed a streamlined version of a comprehensibility testing methodology developed by the University of Cape Town for the ILO. This methodology, which has been adapted for all four sectors – transport, industrial, consumers and agriculture – was refined based on lessons learned through extensive testing on hundreds of individuals. The rapid testing methodology will be further developed through additional testing in South Africa undertaken by the University of Cape Town.

Plans for 2003-2004

The widespread and effective implementation of the GHS will require the development, revision and use of guidance and training materials across a number of GHS-related subjects and building upon the 2002 pilot testing activities. Subject to availability of resources UNITAR/ILO, working together with interested Partners, suggest a number of activities for 2003-2004, including:

- development of a “package” of awareness raising materials comprising a number of components, such as brochures, posters, sample labels, and a video;
- targeted training modules on various GHS topics (classification, labelling, developing a SDS, legal implications, etc.) and for various target groups (e.g. politicians, public servants, chemical producers, workers, etc)
- development of a guidance package for undertaking rapid comprehensibility testing and include testing modules, a user’s manual, etc.

6. Supporting Activities and Services for GHS Capacity Development – Programme Area 4

Activities in this programme area include the provision of supporting services for GHS capacity building which do not easily fall in any of the previous Programme Areas. They include, for example, activities such as organization of a global thematic workshop on GHS capacity building, a GHS capacity needs assessment survey, or development of a GHS capacity building website.

2002 Activities and Progress Made

GHS Capacity Building and Needs Assessment Survey

In December 2002, UNITAR/ILO initiated a “Survey on Capacity Building Needs for Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation”. The survey was prepared in three languages (English, French and Spanish) and was sent to all the IFCS Focal Points of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The questionnaire focused specifically on issues of capacity building needs in the area of chemical hazard communication and GHS implementation (such as labels, safety data sheets or other tools such as posters and awareness raising campaigns). Results of this survey will be made available in mid 2003.

Plans for 2003-2004

CD-ROM with GHS Resource Documents

The CD-ROM is meant to serve as a practical GHS capacity-building library.

In order to facilitate access to existing guidance, training and resource documents concerned with GHS implementation and chemical hazard communication, UNITAR will prepare a CD ROM that includes all relevant materials presently available in the public domain. The CD ROM is meant to serve as a practical GHS capacity-building library featuring, *inter alia*: the final GHS Document; UNITAR/ILO guidance and training materials on national action plan development; national-level, public interest and private sector training materials; the ILO/UCT comprehensibility testing methodology; and key Internet links. Documents will be provided in available languages. An initial production run of 1000 copies will be targeted for wide distribution among government officials, practitioners and other users in all sectors. It is planned that the CD will be made available at IFCS Forum IV in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2003 and will also be online at the Partnership website.

Website for the GHS Partnership

The GHS capacity building website will serve as an interactive node in the long term.

A GHS capacity building Internet website will be developed to act as an interactive node, providing a portal to electronic versions of key GHS documents (including those on the CD-Rom), an up-to-date, global listing of capacity building activities completed and planned; links to other relevant websites (including the GHS subcommittee secretariat website; country, IGO and NGO websites where available), and a list of contact points. The URL for the website will be: <www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership>.

Comprehensibility Testing in Zambia

As part of a two-year capacity building project funded by the government of The Netherlands and with the assistance of UNITAR and the University of Cape Town (UCT), the project team in Zambia developed a rapid comprehensibility testing methodology for chemical labels and safety data sheets. The methodology was designed to reveal how target audiences, including workers and the public, perceive the information provided with chemicals, including label components such as pictograms, colours, signal words and hazard statements. The information generated by the testing can help to indicate where emphasis can be placed on training to understand and recognise chemical labels and safety data sheets. The testing, which covered chemicals used in the agriculture, consumer, transport and industrial sectors, indicated that:

- the comprehension of different colours (other than red) was poor;
- certain symbols such as a flame and the exclamation mark were poorly understood;
- quality of responses was not influenced by the level of education of those tested; and
- safety data sheets were totally unfamiliar to respondents.

The methodology was adapted from a tool produced by the UCT for ILO, and a dedicated training workshop took place in advance of the testing to familiarize the Zambians with the procedure, adapt the modules to Zambian needs, and determine testing sites.

7. Related Initiatives and Activities in 2002

A number of GHS activities were implemented in 2002 or were in the planning stage which are not directly co-ordinated through the UNITAR/ILO Programme and its Programme Advisory Group, but nevertheless are important activities contributing to the WSSD goal of GHS implementation by the year 2008.

National Activities

Australia

A number of international experts participated in a June 2002 workshop entitled “The GHS and its implications for Australia and Overseas” held by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission. The workshop, which attracted a wide variety of professionals from the industry and labour sectors, served as a key awareness-raising event regarding the new system.

Brazil

The purpose of the Brazilian workshop was to debate the development of strategies and propose actions to implement the GHS.

The Brazilian Commission for Chemical Safety (COPASQ) organized a two-day workshop on the GHS in November 2002, involving over 80 representatives from industry, government, workers, and consumers. The purpose of the workshop was to debate the development of strategies and propose actions to implement the GHS in Brazil.

Guyana

ILO sponsored the mission of a Finnish GHS expert to Guyana in November 2002 to assist the Guyana government to develop regulation(s) for the safe use of chemicals at work. Presently existing laws of Guyana and the ILO Convention No 170 were used as the basis for the work undertaken. As a result of the mission three draft proposals for regulations were submitted to ILO and Guyana government representatives: a draft regulation on the safe use of chemicals at work; a draft regulation on the classification and labelling of hazardous chemicals (based on the GHS) and draft regulation on Safety Data Sheets (based on the GHS). The draft regulations establish a link between the obligations of suppliers of chemicals and the obligations of employers to ensure worker safety.

New Zealand

New Zealand's Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act (1996) has regulations which in 2001 adopted the classification criteria agreed by the IOMC coordinating group that

initially developed the GHS. For further information, see < www.hsno.govt.nz/hs.shtm >.

United States

The US Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC) included a full day of presentations on the GHS at its October 2002 meeting. The two hundred-fifty (250) attendees were given comprehensive presentations on the GHS from the chairs of the various international work groups who developed the system. For more information on the program, including copies of the presentations that can be downloaded, see <www.schc.org/schcnewsite/events.php?page=2002fall/2002fall.htm#presentation>.

International Activities

APEC Chemical Dialogue and the GHS

The APEC Chemical Dialogue has initiated discussions on possible GHS awareness raising and capacity building needs.

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Chemical Dialogue is a forum for the exchange of views and development of recommendations between private sector chemical industry representatives and appropriate government officials. The Dialogue discusses trade and trade-related regulatory issues affecting the competitiveness and sustainable development of the industry in the Asia-Pacific region, and has also initiated discussions on possible GHS awareness raising and capacity building needs. The first meeting of the Chemical Dialogue was held in Merida, Mexico, in May 2002. UNITAR and the Chair of the SCEGHS attended the meeting. A workshop – planned for Chinese Taipei in September 2003 – is expected to raise awareness and build capacity in APEC economies for bringing their standards for the classification and labelling of chemicals into line with the GHS.

ASEAN Activities, Japan

In 2002, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) held two training programs on chemical management, including the GHS, for government officials and business people from ASEAN countries, under a cooperative framework between ASEAN Economic Ministers and METI. And in October 2002, a Japanese GHS expert presented an overview of the GHS and its time frame for implementation to the 18th meeting of APOSHO (the Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization) held in Vietnam.⁵ This presentation provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the GHS among an audience of

⁵ APOSHO is an international body composed of non-profit professional organizations devoted to the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases.

largely non-governmental organization representatives from the Asia-Pacific region.

ICCA WSSD Side Event

The purpose of this event was to outline an approach to the development of a global capacity building action plan and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment.

The International Council of Chemical Associations held a WSSD side event on 30 August 2002 entitled “The Role of the Chemical Industry in Capacity Building in the Safe Management of Chemicals: Working Towards Stronger Partnerships.” The purpose of this event was to outline an approach to the development of a global capacity building action plan and provide stakeholders with an opportunity for comment. Case studies were prepared and presented that analyse the problems encountered in setting up national safe chemicals management policies, and offered solutions tailored to the country and population's needs. This event was planned in partnership with the South African government and the Brazilian Coordinating Commission for the Implementation of the Chemical Safety Action Plan (COPASQ). Speakers included UNITAR and IFCS. Dr. Marcel Boisard, Executive Director and UN Assistant Secretary General, spoke on the *Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS*. Mr. Henrique Cavalcanti, President of the IFCS, in his remarks explained that the GHS is a high priority for IFCS. Dr. Laurraine Lotter of the South African chemical industry also gave similar views.

CEFIC Activities

The European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) made presentations on the GHS at a variety of events: in June at ChemCon 2002 in Basel, Switzerland; in October in Budapest, Hungary and Warsaw, Poland under the EU PHARE programme; and in November to officials of the Chinese Government Agency SAWS (Workplace Safety).

UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS

Two meetings (July and December) of the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS (SCEGHS) were held in Geneva, Switzerland to finalize the GHS document. UNITAR/ILO was designated the focal point for training and capacity building issues for this Subcommittee. The parent UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the GHS also met for the first time in December 2002 and formally adopted the System. For more information, go to www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs.html. The SCEGHS will also meet twice in 2003.

Preparations for GHS Workshop at IFCS Forum IV

Beginning in 2002, a group of government, IGO and NGO representatives began preparations for a workshop dinner to be held on the GHS in preparation for a plenary discussion on the GHS at Forum IV. The workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the new system and discuss key issues regarding GHS implementation. Presentations and discussions will include the perspectives of governments, industry, labour and international organizations. The workshop will take place on Sunday, 2 November 2003 (see <www.ghsworkshop.com>).

8. Further Development of the Partnership in 2003

It is anticipated that the Partnership will be further developed and strengthened in 2003 taking into consideration progress regarding the overall direction of all WSSD Partnerships. The 2003 meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, will discuss how to integrate the actions emanating from partnerships with the work of the Commission. This final section of the Annual Report outlines plans to strengthen the Partnership in 2003.

Development of a Framework Proposal for the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme

Potential donors can choose to support activities in any number of countries, or for specific stand-alone activities.

In early 2003, UNITAR/ILO will prepare a Framework Proposal for activities to be undertaken through the UNITAR/ILO GHS Training and Capacity Building Programme. The proposal will be modular in nature and donors can choose to support activities in any number of countries, or for specific stand-alone activities, in accordance with their own identified priorities and resources. The proposal will be developed through the joint collaboration of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) working with Participating Organizations of the IOMC such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as other interested partners, including governments, industry and public interest groups. The activities proposed in the framework proposal will provide the core of the Global GHS Partnership, supplemented by other activities implemented by Partners.

Partnership Update at CSD-11

UNITAR, in cooperation with ILO and OECD, will provide an update on Partnership activities to the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-11), scheduled for 28 April to 9 May 2003 in New York. The update, which will be given in the context of a “Partnerships Fair” that will be held in parallel with the plenary sessions, is scheduled to take place on 8 May 2003. In addition, promotional and informational materials for the Partnership will be distributed. UNITAR also plans to take part in a Round Table on priority actions and commitments to implement WSSD outcomes. The GHS Partnership will be a featured component of UNITAR’s intervention in plenary at CSD-11.

First Meeting of the Partners

The first meeting of the Partners is scheduled to take place in Geneva from 10-11 July 2003. This meeting will bring together governments, intergovernmental organisations, and stakeholders, including industry, public interest, consumer and labour organizations that may be in a position to support the Partnership. UNITAR will provide the secretariat for the meeting.

Each participant is invited to submit a brief written contribution and make an oral statement about possible ways and means to support the Partnership.

The meeting, which will take place immediately following the semi-annual meeting of the UN ECOSOC GHS Subcommittee of Experts, will review activities to-date, address issues of governance, future activities, and provide detailed input into the development of a business plan for the partnership. Each participant is invited to submit a brief written contribution and make an oral statement about possible ways and means to support the Partnership. The 2002 Annual Report and the Framework Proposal for the UNITAR/ILO Programme will be circulated in advance of the meeting. Invitations will be sent through formal channels to countries participation in the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD and to organizations and bodies that responded to the initial call in 2002.

Annex 1: Countries and Organizations Expressing Interest in the WSSD Global GHS Partnership

Argentina	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
Australia	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Brazil	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Canada	German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
Finland	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)
France	International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA)
Germany	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM)
Japan	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
Senegal	University of Cape Town (UCT)
South Africa	Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC)
Sri Lanka	
Switzerland	
The Netherlands	
Thailand	
USA	
Zambia	

Annex 2: List of Acronyms

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APOSHO	Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization
BUWAL	Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape
CEA	Central Environment Authority (Sri Lanka)
CEFIC	European Chemical Industry Council
COPASQ	Commission for Chemical Safety (Brazil)
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Switzerland)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
ECZ	Environmental Council of Zambia
FRIDGE	Fund for Research into Development, Growth and Equity (NEDLAC)
GHS	Globally Harmonized System for Chemical Classification and Labelling
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HSNO	Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (New Zealand)
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
IFCS	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOMC	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
NEDLAC	National Economic and Labour Council (South Africa)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAWS	State Administration of Work Safety (China)
SCEGHS	Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS
SCHC	Society for Chemical Hazard Communication
SDS	safety data sheets
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature



The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established in 1965 as an autonomous body within the United Nations with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations through appropriate training and research. UNITAR is governed by a Board of Trustees and is headed by an Executive Director. The Institute is supported by voluntary contributions from governments, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and other non-governmental sources.



The International Labour Organization is the UN specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. It was founded in 1919 and is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles which brought the League of Nations into being and it became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. The ILO formulates international labour standards, provides technical assistance and promotes the development of independent employers' and workers' organizations and provides training and advisory services to those organizations. Within the UN system, the ILO has a unique tripartite structure with workers and employers participating as equal partners with governments in the work of its governing organs.



The OECD is a unique forum where governments can pool ideas and expertise to tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of the 21st century globalised economy. It groups 30 market democracies producing 60% of the world's goods and services, but in this era of globalization the OECD does not and cannot work alone. It shares expertise and exchanges views with more than 70 countries worldwide, as well as a vast array of stakeholders and interest groups, on topics of mutual concern from measuring climate change to ensuring transparency and accountability of governments to their citizens.