

Protecting People and the Environment through
Chemical Hazard Communication

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

Annual Report 2003



About WSSD Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Partnerships for 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

2003 marked an important year for the *WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS*. Significant progress was made in achieving specific Partnership targets. Zambia, Senegal, Sri Lanka and South Africa finalised their National GHS Action Plans and a first regional GHS workshop was held for the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Other 2003 Partnership highlights included the first Meeting of the Partners held in Geneva and the development of an interactive Partnership website. Lastly, a number of the countries whose systems were the basis for development of the GHS, such as Canada, the EU and the US, began initial assessments and consultations regarding GHS implementation in their countries.

The importance of the GHS and capacity development was also highlighted at IFCS Forum IV, held in November 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. At a GHS Partnership side-event, over 250 participants learned about the new system and discussed key issues regarding GHS implementation and capacity assistance needs. Based on discussions at the side event, and subsequent deliberations during Forum IV, the IFCS adopted a GHS Action Plan which focuses on capacity building activities and the need to provide sufficient technical and financial resources to support these efforts. The significant interest in the GHS at Forum IV is consistent with the findings of a UNITAR/ILO Survey on GHS Capacity Building published in 2003, that capacity development for GHS implementation has become one of the top priorities for chemicals management capacity building in developing and transition countries. Some 69% of responding countries reported that the GHS was a high to extremely high priority.

UNITAR, ILO and OECD appreciate the ongoing commitment of Partners to undertake and support concrete activities to strengthen capacities in developing countries and countries in transition towards effective implementation of the GHS. Specific appreciation is extended to the core contributions of the Government of Switzerland and Government of The Netherlands in support of GHS capacity building projects, as well as contributions from the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, ICCA and the SCHC for supporting activities in 2003. Other governments and major groups are invited to join the Partnership and support its core activities in 2004 and beyond in order to initiate expeditious action towards building capacity to reach the WSSD 2008 target and, more importantly, to protect people and environment from potentially dangerous chemicals.

Signed,

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Principal Coordinator
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Jukka Takala
Director, SafeWork Programme
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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 (SDS), as well as related support measures such as legislation, comprehensibility testing, awareness raising workshops, etc.¹ Details regarding 2003 progress in pilot countries and other programme activities are found throughout this Annual Report.

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

The WSSD Plan of Implementation and the GHS

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

Chemical safety, including hazard communication and GHS 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.

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,*

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>.

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

First Meeting of Partners, July 2003

The First Meeting of Partners was held in July 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. Representatives from 16 governments, 8 intergovernmental organizations and 12 NGOs discussed and agreed a number of important elements, including:

Partners highlighted the need to ensure sustainable core funding for the Partnership and the importance of linking GHS capacity needs to broader sustainable development goals.

- the framework workplan and four Partnership programme areas;
- that Meetings of Partners would take place about every two years, if possible prior to submission of bi-annual progress reports for the Partnership to the CSD Secretariat;
- that the UNITAR/ILO Programme Advisory Group (PAG) will continue to provide technical and coordinating support for Partnership Activities;
- that UNITAR will provide the Secretariat for the Partnership (dependent on mobilization of adequate resources), working closely with ILO and OECD;
- highlighting the importance of ensuring sustainable core funding both to support Partnership activities and to provide the functions of the Partnership Secretariat; and
- linking GHS capacity development needs and implementation activities with other international priorities for sustainable development (such as poverty eradication, protection of water supplies and protection of marginalised groups such as women and children).

A full report of the meeting is available from UNITAR.

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 is provided by UNITAR, working together with ILO and OECD.

2. Partnership Objectives and Framework Workplan

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

Partnership 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) GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level
- (2) 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. See text box below.

What Constitutes a Core GHS Partnership Activity?

The GHS Partnership attempts to mobilize support for a number of agreed activities. Activities constitute a contribution to the GHS Partnership if they fall within the programme areas, as agreed at the first Meeting of the Partners. Activities are either implemented through the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme or directly by Partners. In all cases, activities are co-ordinated through, and technically reviewed by, the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Programme. Not all core Partnership activities are therefore executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may also execute 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. Those activities do not belong to the core program of the Partnership, but are presented in a special section of the annual progress reports for the Partnership.

Partnership Indicators

At the first Meeting of the Partners in July 2003, Partners discussed proposed time-bound targets for the Partnership. However, in light of the uncertainty for funding beyond 2003, it was agreed that targets should be replaced by more general indicators against which progress could be evaluated.

The recommended indicators are the following:

- Number of Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Number of Regional GHS capacity assessments and implementation strategies prepared.
- Number of Regional partner organizations identified.
- Number of Country-based pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in each UN region, including: awareness raising workshop, situation analysis, action plan development and implementing legislation.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries.
- GHS and hazard communication awareness raising materials prepared, peer-reviewed and widely disseminated.
- GHS capacity building guidance and training materials prepared, peer-reviewed and pilot tested.

3. GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level – Programme Area 1

Regional free trade initiatives increasingly deal with environmental issues.

Countries within 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 GHS awareness raising workshops, regional capacity assessments and the facilitation of regional GHS implementation strategies.

Initial indicators for this Programme Area include the following:

- Number of Regional GHS Awareness Raising Workshops organized in major regions.
- Number of Regional GHS capacity assessments and implementation strategies prepared.
- Number of Regional partner organizations identified and train-the-trainer workshops completed.

2003 Activities and Progress Made

First Regional Workshop held in Southern Africa

The first regional GHS workshop was held in September 2003 for the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community.

A regional GHS awareness raising workshop was held for countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region in Livingstone, Zambia, from 1 to 4 September 2003.⁴ The event brought together over forty representatives from SADC governments, industry and labour organizations, international organizations and GHS resource persons. The workshop was supported by GTZ, UNITAR (with resources provided by the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands), IFCS and the ICCA. One of the key outcomes was a commitment to initiate the development of a regional strategy with the goal to ensure SADC-wide harmonization of GHS implementation by 2007 for industrial chemicals, agricultural chemicals, chemicals in transport, and consumer product chemicals. A report of the workshop is available from UNITAR.

Survey on SADC National Capacity Needs Completed

As an important preparatory activity and input for the SADC regional workshop, a survey on GHS capacity needs was

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.

completed by the 14 SADC countries, in consultation with relevant government agencies, industry bodies and NGOs (e.g. labour and/or environment groups). Preliminary survey results were discussed at the workshop and provided background information for the development of the SADC Regional GHS Assessment and Implementation Report (see below).

Preparation of a Regional Assessment and Implementation Report

Complimentary to the SADC workshop, a regional GHS needs assessment and implementation report was initiated with support of the Swiss Government to serve as a basis for further informing the development of the regional strategy. The report will be finalized in 2004, developed through collaboration of UNITAR with governments and stakeholders. 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 and the responses to the country surveys.

Plans for 2004-2005

During 2003, Brazil indicated interest to host a regional workshop for South American countries in the UNITAR/ILO-coordinated series of regional GHS workshops. GTZ indicated their intention to financially support this regional workshop, to be held in 2004.

Other possibilities in 2004 for activities at the regional level include: projects to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and labour unions to participate in GHS-related activities in SADC; and planning for regional workshops and implementation strategies in other regions, such as ASEAN. Countries and organizations that are interested in sponsoring such activities, or that may be in a position to support the organization of additional regional workshops through the UNITAR/ILO programme, are encouraged to contact UNITAR.

4. 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 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:

- Number of Country-based pilot projects on GHS Action Plan Development completed in each UN region, including: awareness raising workshop, situation analysis, action plan development and implementing legislation.
- National GHS Action Plan projects initiated in the greatest possible number of countries.

2003 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

Zambia commenced an executive regulatory process designed to identify and adopt provisions to ensure GHS implementation across all sectors.

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 has been supported by UNITAR/ILO with financial resources provided by the Government of the Netherlands.

Completed activities and progress achieved in 2003 include:

- an executive regulatory process designed to identify and adopt provisions to ensure GHS implementation across all sectors;
- finalization of the national GHS action plan;
- initial implementation of a number of priority activities,

including introduction of a national chemical safety day, printing and distribution of a brochure regarding national activities for GHS implementation, and development of a certificate-based training program and additional training of customs officers at border points.

South Africa

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 South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry and UNITAR/ILO with financial resources provided by the Government of the Netherlands.

The South African Strategy outlines the purpose, scope and aims for GHS implementation.

A national GHS implementation strategy was completed in late 2003, outlining the purpose, scope and aims for GHS implementation in South Africa. It also proposed legislative, institutional, training, awareness raising and technical infrastructure goals, as well as resource requirements. It is expected that the report will be forwarded to Government for implementation and that the development of the technical standard (the basis for implementing a legally binding approach to GHS implementation) will begin in the first half of 2004.

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 Agency for 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. The action plan was adopted by a national review workshop in 2003 and one direct early result has been ECOSOC's official approval of Senegal's full membership on the SCEGHS.

Sri Lanka

The Central Environment Authority (CEA) of Sri Lanka, with the support of the Minister for Development Cooperation of The Netherlands, continued to engage all relevant sectors on a

national basis for their project. In 2003, training activities were undertaken and awareness-raising tools identified to assist with increasing understanding and effectiveness of the use of labels, SDS and other hazard communication tools. Sri Lanka completed its national GHS action plan in April 2003 and has begun distributing identified training and awareness-raising tools, including a pesticides hazard communication video and awareness training programme for school children.

Plans for 2004-2005

During the course of 2004, UNITAR plans to initiate a second round of country pilot projects in the context of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Training and Capacity Building Programme. Following the positive experience gained with national multi-stakeholder GHS pilot projects in Zambia, Sri Lanka, Senegal and South Africa, three or more new country-based projects will be initiated. These countries could come from regions that have not yet undergone pilot testing – such as South East Asia, Latin America, and northern Africa – and would be able to test new training and guidance materials.

Selected Partnership Highlights 2003

- First Meeting of the Partners held on 10 July 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Zambia, Senegal, Sri Lanka and South Africa finalise National GHS Action Plans with support of UNITAR/ILO.
- First regional GHS workshop held in September 2003 for countries in the SADC region. Funds mobilized for a second regional workshop in South America for 2004.
- Side-event on the GHS held at IFCS Forum IV in November 2003, attended by over 250 participants.
- UNITAR launch GHS Partnership website and produce 1000 CD-Rom copies of the GHS Capacity Building Library, many of which were widely distributed at Forum IV and SAICM PrepCom-1.
- GHS awareness raising events and workshops take place in a number of countries and regions, including Canada, 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:

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

2003 Activities and Progress Made

Initial Comments on Guidance Documents for National Action Plan Development

UNITAR/ILO draft guidance for GHS action plan development will be reviewed based on the experience in the first round of pilot countries.

In order to facilitate the step-by-step process of developing national GHS action plans, draft guidance materials were developed by UNITAR/ILO and have been pilot-tested in 2002-2003 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 assist countries to undertake key decisions relevant for GHS implementation in a systematic way. The pilot countries have been asked to contribute to the further development of these materials based on their experience and to provide UNITAR with specific comments and suggestions during 2003. The comments will provide the basis for a full review of the documents, expected to take place at a planned global thematic workshop on the GHS in 2005.

Development of Draft Comprehensibility Training Package for Workers and the Public in South Africa

Based on their experience conducting comprehensibility testing in the context of the UNITAR pilot project in Zambia and South Africa, the Occupational and Environmental Health Research Unit (OEHRU) at the University of Cape Town developed a proposal to pilot a draft GHS “comprehensibility training

package” to support implementation of the GHS. The proposal outlined a model training package for workers and consumers, including mechanisms to evaluate its effectiveness and identify training needs for all sectors based on the results of the comprehensibility testing. UNITAR has supported initial implementation activities. The project will also create training methodologies and materials that have relevance to countries outside of South Africa, such as in the SADC region and internationally. It is expected that the project would be completed during 2004.

Initiation of GHS E-learning Course

During 2003, UNITAR began consideration of development of a GHS E-learning training package, targeted at developing and transition countries and taking a modular approach to key topics related to capacity building for GHS implementation. The package may include an introduction to the GHS and guidance on how to classify and label chemicals according to the GHS (including examples using actual chemicals for each hazard class and category) and how to develop a national GHS implementation strategy. Subject to the availability of resources, pilot testing is planned to take place in 2004.

Plans for 2004-2005

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 2001-2003 pilot testing activities. In addition to the completion of the activities listed above and subject to availability of resources, UNITAR/ILO, working together with interested Partners, will pursue in 2004-2005 other opportunities for development of awareness raising and guidance materials, for example:

- an information brochure/booklet for the public to highlight the use of GHS symbols and their meanings in an easily understandable format;
- a “GHS media briefing package”, including a sample press release and other tools that countries would be able to adapt for use in their national situation to publicise the importance of the GHS and proper use and understanding of labels;
- a guidance document to assist countries in assessing their existing GHS-related legislative framework and choosing options for GHS implementing legislation; and
- sample guidelines for industry regarding key steps and issues related to GHS implementation at the company level.

Countries and organizations that are interested in sponsoring such activities are encouraged to contact UNITAR.

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 development which do not easily fall in any of the previous Programme Areas. They include, for example, activities such as a GHS capacity needs assessment survey, or development of a GHS capacity building website.

2003 Activities and Progress Made

Results of GHS Capacity Building and Needs Assessment Survey

Some 65 countries have indicated to UNITAR their interest to participate in national GHS capacity development activities.

Results of the December 2002 UNITAR/ILO-initiated “Survey on Capacity Building Needs for Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation” were published in July 2003. The survey was conducted 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 indicated that capacity development for GHS implementation has become one of the top priorities for chemicals management capacity building in developing and transition countries, with some 69% of responding countries reporting that GHS was a high to extremely high priority. Consistent with the survey results, some 67 developing and transition countries have now indicated to UNITAR their interest participating in a national GHS capacity development project. The report is available from UNITAR.

Website for the GHS Partnership

The GHS Partnership website serves as an interactive node.

With resources provided by the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape and the ICCA, UNITAR has developed a Partnership Internet website to act as an interactive node, providing a portal to electronic versions of key GHS documents, 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 is: www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership.

Entry Page for the GHS Partnership Website

http://www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership/index.htm

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WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS

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About the Partnership

The goal of the WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS is to strengthen capacities at all levels and sectors -- in particular in developing countries -- to ensure a higher degree of chemical labelling and related precautionary measures for industrial chemicals, agricultural chemicals, chemicals in transport and consumer chemicals. Dangerous chemicals traded internationally and produced locally are to be appropriately classified and labelled in accordance with the GHS by the year 2008. 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.

The recently adopted [Globally Harmonized 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 understandable format in countries around the world. The preparations for and convening of the [World Summit on Sustainable Development](#) catalyzed the development of "Type 2 Partnerships", which were intended to enable all stakeholders to make a concrete contribution to the outcomes of the WSSD. The Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS was launched by UNITAR, ILO, and OECD in 2002.

This website is maintained by UNITAR with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) and the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA).

NEW [Take the GHS Quiz!](#) **NEW** [Partnership Update \(Nov 2003\)](#)

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Virtual 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 prepared a virtual GHS Capacity Building Library (accessible online via the Partnership homepage and as a CD-ROM)⁵ that includes all relevant materials presently available in the public domain. The website and CD-ROM 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; and key Internet links. Documents are provided in available languages. An initial production run of 1000 copies of the CD-ROM version were widely distributed among government officials, practitioners and other users in all sectors, including at IFCS Forum IV and SAICM PrepCom-1 in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2003. UNITAR gratefully acknowledges the financial contributions of the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands toward production of this CD-ROM. For a copy of the CD-ROM, please contact UNITAR.

GHS Partnership Presentation at 11th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-11): Partnerships Fair

UNITAR, along with the Governments of Switzerland and Zambia, and ICCA, presented the Global GHS Partnership at CSD-11 in New York during May 2003. ICCA announced its initial financial contribution to the Partnership and the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) announced a second financial contribution to the Partnership.

GHS Side Event at IFCS Forum IV

A side event entitled “The Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: Opportunities and Challenges”, was held on the evening of Sunday, 2 November 2003, at Forum IV. The workshop was co-sponsored by UNECE, UNITAR, IFCS, GTZ, Health Canada, US OSHA, the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, ICCA and the Society for Chemical Hazard Communication. Over 250 participants learned about the new system and discussed key issues regarding GHS implementation and capacity assistance needs. Presentations and discussions included the perspectives of governments, industry, labour and international organizations.

⁵ <www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_library/index.htm>

GHS Action Plan Adopted by Forum IV

Based on initial discussions at the side event, and subsequent deliberations during Forum IV, the IFCS adopted a GHS Action Plan which recognised the importance of GHS implementation and focuses on capacity building activities and the need to provide sufficient technical and financial resources to support such efforts. The Action Plan is reproduced in Annex 2.

Plans for 2004-2005

Subject to the availability of resources, the Partnership website and capacity building library will be further developed and expanded during 2004 and 2005.

The GHS Action Plan adopted by IFCS Forum IV in 2003 invited UNITAR/ILO as the focal point for capacity building within the UN SCEGHS, and in collaboration with that Sub-committee, to develop a roster of GHS experts by the end of 2004. These experts would be available to provide support on training and capacity building activities on the application of GHS classification, labelling and safety data sheets.

7. Related Initiatives and Activities in 2003

A number of GHS activities were implemented in 2003 or were in the planning stage which are not directly co-ordinated through the UNITAR/ILO Programme Advisory Group, but nevertheless are important activities contributing to the WSSD goal of GHS implementation by the year 2008.

National Activities

Canada

In August 2003, Canada released its Situation Analysis which compares the systems in Canada with existing hazard communication requirements to the GHS. In October 2003, Canada held its first workshop to launch GHS implementation. The purpose was to build a common understanding of the GHS and to identify issues and options associated with implementation of GHS in Canada. The workshop was well attended with 117 participants from across Canada and the US. Technical consultations among the sectors (*i.e.* pest control products, controlled products in the workplace, consumer chemical products and the transportation of dangerous goods) have now started. Updates on Canadian activity will be posted on the website <www.healthcanada.ca/ghs>.

European Community

The European Commission is currently conducting an assessment into the likely impact of GHS implementation in the EU. This includes analysing the impacts of the various options available in the GHS as well as looking at the effect GHS implementation may have on downstream EU legislation that depends on classification and/or labelling of chemicals. The Commission is also undertaking a study looking at the differences between the GHS and the current EU system. The two studies are due to be completed in summer 2004, the results of which will inform the Commission's position and proposals for GHS implementation. The current thinking within the Commission is that the GHS will be implemented in the EU at the same time as the new EU chemicals strategy (REACH); it is anticipated that this will be in 2006.

Germany

In March 2003, the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Verband der Chemischen Industrie e. V. (the German chemical industry association) held a one-day

information session for affected parties on adjustments expected as a result of the GHS. The workshop, “Classifying and labelling chemicals in a globally harmonized way: the GHS”, included over 300 participants and had two main sessions on (1) the structure of GHS and consequences on classification and labelling and (2) implementation of the GHS into existing regulations.

United States

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has completed a situation analysis comparing the requirements of its Hazard Communication Standard to the GHS, and made it available on their web page at:

www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/GHSOSHAComparison.html.

The US, along with Canada, conducted a workshop on the GHS for colleagues in the Mexican government and a report is available at: www.naalcosh.org/report-out.html.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency formed a working group with representatives of key EPA offices, pesticide safety educators, and state governments to refine comparative analyses of current U.S. requirements with GHS criteria and label elements, and to develop recommendations for applying the GHS to pesticide labels.

International Activities

APEC Chemical Dialogue and the GHS

In September 2003, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Chemical Dialogue conducted a workshop on the GHS and implementation issues for member countries. This group is also encouraging authorities in Asia/Pacific rim countries to strive for expedited implementation of the system by 2006 to the extent possible.

Expert Dispatch Program on GHS to ASEAN, Japan

In 2003, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) started the “Expert Dispatch Programme” to ASEAN countries. The purpose is to dispatch experts to each country for about one week for workshops centering on practical training, and to exchange information and views with GHS-related ministries. These activities have been implemented in Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam with plans to include Indonesia and the Philippines in 2004. In addition, METI has so far implemented training programmes and accepted trainees related to chemical industries from 8 ASEAN countries. During this course involving around 20

people, the GHS is also dealt with in. This course is implemented twice a year for one week.

Baltic Environmental Forum

The Baltic Environmental Forum hosted a two-day workshop in December 2003 with participation of over 80 people from Ministries of Environment, Health/Social Affairs/Welfare and their subordinated institutions (agencies and inspectorates), State Plant Protection Services, Baltic importers/producers of chemicals, associations of chemicals producers as well as European Commission, UNEP, CEFIC and Member States. The main purpose of the workshop was to introduce the GHS and discuss its future impacts for the Baltic States.

NAFTA

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs, the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency and pesticide regulatory authorities in Mexico have included coordinated implementation of the GHS in the 5 Year Strategy of the Technical Working Group on Pesticides (TWG), a group formed to improve and harmonize pesticide regulations among the three countries under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In December 2003, the TWG Executive Board approved the GHS implementation coordination project.

United States/European Union

The 3rd Joint US/EU Conference on Occupational Safety and Health was held in October 2003. At the meeting, a proposal was developed for a joint US/EU project to demonstrate, *inter alia*, how data can be used to classify hazards under the GHS and illustrate the use of GHS classifications to lead an employer to appropriate controls. For more information, please visit: www.useuosh.org/conference2003/proceedings/topic01.html.

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 consider further development of the GHS document. ECOSOC also adopted Resolution 2003/64 on the work of the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the GHS. The resolution, *inter alia*, recognised “the significance of the UNITAR/ILO/OECD Global Partnership for Capacity-Building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System for building capacities at all levels to achieve the 2008 target”, and encouraged “governments, regional commissions, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies

and other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, in particular industry, to support implementation of the Globally Harmonized System and capacity-building activities in developing countries and countries in transition by providing financial contributions and/or technical assistance”. For more information, please visit:

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

8. Further Development of the Partnership in 2004

It is anticipated that the Partnership will be further developed and strengthened in 2004 taking into consideration progress regarding the overall direction of all WSSD Partnerships. The 2004 meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, will include a “Partnerships Fair” as an official activity of CSD and a summary of its activities will be included in the report of CSD-12. This final section of the Annual Report outlines plans to strengthen the Partnership in 2004.

Exploring Public-Private Partnerships

UNITAR intends to further explore resource mobilisation for GHS capacity building activities from the private sector and will initiate a dialogue with ICCA to enter into a public-private partnership for chemical management capacity building and GHS implementation in developing countries involving funding from both public and private sources. Funding for these activities would be provided on a shared basis, and the Government of Switzerland has indicated an interest and commitment to provide a component of the public funds for country-based activities.

Capacity Building for Stakeholders

Based upon past experience, a key to the success of national and regional-level GHS capacity development activities is engagement and capacity enhancement of civil society groups and industry. Civil society groups, in particular labour, consumers, and women and youth organizations may be not be aware of or have resources to participate in GHS-implementation activities; yet the individuals represented by these target groups are often the ones most at risk from poorly labeled or misunderstood chemicals. Equally important is the involvement of industry groups in the regional and national implementation processes as a key to GHS implementation. UNITAR intends to develop specific capacity development activities for these target groups.

List of Acronyms

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
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 (UN)
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
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	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
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

Forum IV GHS Action Plan
adopted at the Fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on
Chemical Safety (IFCS)
1-7 November 2003, Bangkok, Thailand

Emphasizing the important contribution of the GHS to promote sustainable development, such as reducing barriers to trade, and to protect human health and the environment from dangerous chemicals in all countries;

Appreciating the work of the IOMC and the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the GHS (UN SCEGHS) in developing and adopting the GHS as an international instrument;

Reaffirming the WSSD recommendation that all countries are encouraged to implement the GHS as soon as possible with a view to have the system fully operational by 2008;

Noting the importance of minimizing the transition period to global GHS implementation;

Emphasizing the importance of developed countries with existing systems to modify these systems to adopt the GHS;

Noting Resolution 2003/64 of July 2003 of the UN Economic and Social Council;

Appreciating the activities of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Training and Capacity Building Programme for developing and transition countries, such as implementation of collaborative pilot projects in Zambia, South Africa, Senegal and Sri Lanka;

Aware of and supporting the UNITAR/ILO/OECD initiated WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS launched in 2002;

Welcoming the framework workplan of the WSSD GHS Partnership, adopted at the first meeting of Partners on 10 July 2003;

Emphazing that GHS implementation has become one of the top priorities for capacity building for the sound management of chemicals in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

Encouraging developing countries to seek within their national development priorities to integrate chemical management, and in particular the GHS, into national poverty reduction strategies and/or their national sustainable development policies; and

Noting with concern that current financial and technical resources to support GHS capacity building are not adequate.

Forum IV:

Invites UNITAR/ILO, as the focal point for capacity building in the UN SCEGHS, in collaboration with the Sub-committee to develop a roster of GHS experts who could provide support on training and capacity building activities on the application of GHS classification, labelling, and safety data sheets by the end of 2004.

Encourages the WSSD GHS Partnership to aim for the following specific targets for capacity building activities of their framework workplan of the Partnership:

Development of GHS Awareness Raising, Capacity Building Guidance and Training Materials

- GHS awareness raising, capacity building guidance and training materials (including GHS action plan development guidance, national situation analysis guidance and other training tools) prepared and pilot tested, and these outcomes endorsed by the UN SCEGHS, by the end of 2004.

GHS Capacity Development at the Regional Level

- At least two regional GHS workshops held and implementation strategies prepared by the end of 2005, taking into consideration regional economic integration arrangements.

GHS Capacity Development at the National Level

- At least two pilot projects for National GHS Situation Analysis, Action Plan Development and Implementation per IFCS region completed and evaluated by the end of 2006 (with a view to having the GHS operational by 2008).

Calls upon countries, regional economic integration organizations, donor organizations, multilateral financial institutions and stakeholder groups, in particular industry, to make available sufficient financial and technical resources to support national and regional GHS capacity building projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.⁶

Invites the Forum Standing Committee of the IFCS to bring the FORUM IV GHS Action Plan to the attention of the UN SCEGHS, and to submit a progress report to FORUM V.

⁶ The Governments of Switzerland and Germany have indicated their intention to support various capacity building activities for GHS implementation.



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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.