

**INFORMATION FOR THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION
ON CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS
(Geneva, 17-21 June 2002)**

Relevant Activities of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

Introduction/Context

1. UNITAR's training and capacity building programmes in chemicals and waste management support developing countries and countries in economic transition in their efforts to address the sound management of chemicals. In the design and implementation of its programmes, UNITAR emphasises the following guiding principles in order to promote a sustainable and country-owned process:
 - a **country-driven process** through which partner countries assess and identify their needs and link related activities to national environmental and development objectives;
 - a **multi-stakeholder approach**, involving representatives from various government ministries as well as concerned parties outside of government; and
 - an **integrated approach** which addresses all stages of the chemical life cycle and emphasises the multi-disciplinary nature of chemicals and waste management.
2. The programmes are closely linked to Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 and related recommendations of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) and are implemented through partnerships with Participating Organisations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).
3. This note presents a brief overview of UNITAR activities that countries may find to be relevant and of value as they implement the Stockholm Convention. These include, *inter alia*: a programme to assist countries with the development of National Chemicals Management Profiles; a skills-building training package on Action Plan development for sound chemicals management; a programme on Integrated Chemicals Management; and a programme on Risk Management Decision Making.
4. Several of the above programmes are referenced in the GEF document entitled *Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/ INF/2)*.¹

National Chemicals Management Profiles

5. National Chemicals Management Profiles provide a comprehensive picture and analysis of chemicals-related activities and infrastructure at the national level. All ministries concerned with chemicals management, as well as relevant industry and public interest groups, are involved in National Profile preparation. The National Profile preparation process usually catalyses the initiation of a national co-ordinating mechanism involving both ministries and interested and affected parties. Some 92 countries, including several OECD Member States, have completed or are preparing a National Profile following the IFCS-endorsed UNITAR/IOMC **National Profile Guidance Document**. Information gathered for the National Profile constitutes a critical first step by providing a baseline of infrastructure-related information that can serve as the basis for the planning required for actions under the Stockholm Convention.

¹ GEF/C.17/4, Annex B

6. The GEF document *Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/2)* recognises the importance of *National Chemicals Management Profiles* with regard to the successful implementation of POPs-related activities and encourages their development.
7. The document “*Preparation of a national implementation plan for persistent organic pollutants: guidance document*” (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/8) addresses the collection of baseline information for the development of a National Implementation Plan (NIP) under the Stockholm Convention, consistent with and building upon the UNITAR/IOMC National Chemicals Management Profile methodology.²

Skills-building Training on Action Plan Development for Sound Chemicals Management

8. The development of sound and well co-ordinated Action Plans - which outlines precise goals, planned activities, indicators of success, suggested implementation mechanisms, and financial and human resource needs - are important tools for making systematic progress in specific areas of chemicals management at the national level. UNITAR has developed a skills-building training package to strengthen human resource capacity in countries in the area of strategic and project planning for specific priority topics of chemicals management. The methodology is currently being pilot tested in Ecuador, Ghana, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Zambia.
9. This generic approach to planning can be applied to any priority topic of sound chemicals management, including, *inter alia*, action on individual chemicals; infrastructure development; development of legislation; and implementation of international agreements, including the Stockholm Convention. Sections that address the development of Action Plans in the document “*Preparation of a national implementation plan for persistent organic pollutants: guidance document*” (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/8) closely follows the Action Plan development approach developed through UNITAR with its IOMC partner organizations.
10. The generic Action Plan development methodology has been further developed in UNITAR/IOMC guidance for countries that wish to plan and implement Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs); in the field of chemical hazard communication/the Globally Harmonised System for Chemical Classification and Labelling (the GHS); and for countries that wish to develop a risk management plan for a priority chemical.

Risk Management Decision Making for Priority Chemicals

11. Activities conducted under this programme promote the development of skills and procedures at the country level relevant to action plan development and implementing risk management decision-making processes for priority chemicals. The programme is implemented through country-based projects during which partner countries choose a priority chemical and develop a risk reduction/elimination strategy for the identified chemical through a process involving all affected and interested parties.
12. Taking into account European Commission-funded pilot projects in Chile, Cameroon, Tanzania, and The Gambia, and an ongoing project under way in Ghana with the support of the Government of the Netherlands, a guidance document is currently under development by UNITAR in cooperation with UNEP and the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS). The document should be available for country use by late-2002.

Integrated National Programmes for the Sound Management of Chemicals

13. Through collaboration with all participating organisations of the IOMC, UNITAR has developed a guidance document and support programme to encourage countries to develop integrated national programmes for the sound management of chemicals, as called for by the

² See UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/8: Part A, Indicative Table of Contents, Section 2.

IFCS. Co-ordinating platforms established through such a programme have the potential to make a valuable contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of POPs-relevant activities and the effective use of external assistance. Specific guidance and training material has been developed for creating/strengthening mechanisms for inter-ministerial co-ordination and communication, information exchange, financial resource mobilisation, and priority-setting through collaboration of relevant ministries and stakeholders.

14. With the support of the Government of Switzerland, three countries (Ecuador, Senegal and Sri Lanka) are completing two-year projects under this programme in 2003.

Actively Delivering UNITAR Services in Support of Countries Addressing the Stockholm Convention

15. UNITAR, through UNDP, is working with the government of the Islamic Republic of Comoros to develop a proposal to the GEF for undertaking a National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention.
16. With regard to an ongoing UNITAR/IOMC project in Ecuador, specific emphasis is placed on sound planning for National Implementation Plan development under the Stockholm Convention, through joint UNEP/UNITAR collaboration. Extension of this UNEP/UNITAR partnership to 11 other countries under a GEF project on National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention is under discussion.

How Countries Can Access UNITAR Services Through National Implementation Plan Development

17. Countries undertaking National Implementation Plan development through a GEF-designated Implementing Agency or Executing Agency with Expanded Opportunities can formally request technical assistance from UNITAR for any of the above services as part of their NIP development.

For Further Information

18. Further information on UNITAR activities, programmes and services in the field of sound chemicals management can be found at www.unitar.org/cwm