

**INFORMATION FOR THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING
INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION
ON CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS
(Geneva, 14-18 July 2003)**

***Progress Since INC-6 Regarding Relevant Activities of the
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)***

Introduction/Context

1. UNITAR, as a Participating Organisation of the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), has been actively assisting developing countries and countries in economic transition in a number of areas directly related to implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.
2. This paper reports on progress in these key areas, particularly in the period since INC-6¹.
3. In addition, UNITAR has been actively involved with, and acted as Chair for the first formal meeting of the new IOMC Coordinating Group on POPs, which was held in Washington, DC, USA, on 13 May 2002. The Summary Record from this meeting is available on the IOMC Internet homepage at: <http://www.who.int/iomc/groups/pop/en/>. UNITAR has also been asked to Chair the next meeting of the Coordinating Group, scheduled for November 2003.
4. The areas related to the development of National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention where UNITAR has been active include: the development of National Chemicals Management Profiles; training/skills-building on Action Plan Development to assist with the development of both NIPs and individual Action Plans on specific POPs; the development of guidance and training materials on Risk Management Decision-Making; and the commencement of a new phase of a UNITAR/IOMC programme on Integrated Chemicals Management.
5. 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.
6. 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).

National Chemicals Management Profiles

7. National Chemicals Management Profiles provide a comprehensive picture and analysis of chemicals-related activities and infrastructure at the national level. All ministries concerned

¹ UNITAR's June, 2002 report to INC-6, is listed as document UNEP/POPs/INC.6/INF.27

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. To-date, over 100 countries, including several OECD Member States, have completed or are preparing a National Profile following the IFCS-endorsed UNITAR/IOMC *National Profile Guidance Document*². 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.

8. In cooperation with UNEP, and as part of the ongoing GEF-UNEP 12-country project on National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention, UNITAR has prepared companion guidance entitled *Preparing/ Updating a National Profile as Part of a Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plan*. This guidance, which is in working draft form, is available in English, French and Spanish³ for use by all interested countries. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the primary National Profile Guidance Document. This document is also available as UNEP/POPs/INC.7/INF.26. Countries are welcome to submit any comments they may have on this guidance to UNITAR by 31 December 2003.
9. To-date, in cooperation with UNEP in its role as a GEF Implementing Agency, UNITAR is providing direct technical assistance to some 16 countries as they develop or update their National Chemicals Management Profiles for the purposes of the Stockholm Convention. These countries include: Armenia, Barbados, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Guinea, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Tunisia, Yemen and Zambia. UNITAR has also received additional requests for assistance from five countries, including countries developing their NIP with the assistance of UNDP and UNIDO.
10. Section 6.5 of the draft UNEP-World Bank document entitled *Guidance for Developing a National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention* (UNEP/POPs/INC.7/INF.20) refers to the undertaking/updating of a National Chemicals Management Profile as a task under Phase II of NIP preparation.
11. The GEF document, circulated at INC-6, entitled *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.

Skills-Building/Training on Action Plan Development for Sound Chemicals Management

12. The development of sound and well co-ordinated Action Plans - which outline precise goals, planned activities, indicators of success, implementation mechanisms, and financial and human resource needs – is an important tool 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.
13. 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.

² This document, which is available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and German, can be downloaded from UNITAR's Internet website at

³ A Russian translation of this document is in preparation.

14. After formal requests from some 30 countries for assistance in this area, a training/skills-building project is under development for Least Developed Countries developing Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans.

Risk Management Decision Making for Priority Chemicals

15. 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.
16. Taking into account European Commission-funded pilot projects in Cameroon, Chile, The Gambia and, Tanzania, and an ongoing project under way in Ghana with the support of the Government of the Netherlands, a “working draft” guidance document, entitled *Developing a Risk Management Plan for a Priority Chemical* is now available from UNITAR (in English only).

Integrated National Programmes for the Sound Management of Chemicals

17. 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 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. A new phase of this programme, designed to respond to requests from countries for assistance both in the chemicals and waste-related fields, commences in 2003 with a call for proposals and project country selection.

Concrete Example of UNITAR Services to Support Countries Addressing the Stockholm Convention

18. UNITAR, through UNDP, has worked with the government of the Union of Comoros to develop a proposal to the GEF for undertaking a National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention.

How Can Countries Access UNITAR Services Through National Implementation Plan Development?

19. 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

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