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Item 4 (a), 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda\*

**Policy issues: state of the environment**

**Follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development:  
contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme  
to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment  
Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council**

**Regional meetings on implementation of the Strategic Approach to  
International Chemicals Management**

**Note by the Executive Director**

*Summary*

The Executive has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, information on regional meetings held in 2006 and to be held in 2007 with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in its decision SS.IX/1. The annex has been issued without formal editing.

\* UNEP/GC/24/1.

## Annex

### Introduction

1. As provided for in the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and resolution I/1 of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), regional meetings are being held to facilitate implementation of the Strategic Approach. In 2006, meetings were held for the African and Central and Eastern European regions and for stakeholders from the European Union and the “JUSSCANNZ” group of countries (Japan, United States, Switzerland, Canada, Norway and New Zealand, as well as Mexico and the Republic of Korea). The agendas for the meetings included regional coordination arrangements and initial implementation activities, preparations for the second session of ICCM, the Quick Start Programme (QSP) and financial considerations. Meetings for the Asia-Pacific and Latin American and Caribbean regions and the Arab countries are planned for 2007.

### I. Background

2. At its first session, which took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006, ICCM adopted the Strategic Approach, comprising the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action (GPA).<sup>1</sup> The Conference also adopted a number of resolutions, including resolution I/1 on arrangements for the implementation of SAICM.<sup>2</sup> In the OPS and resolution I/1 it was recommended that work on implementation of SAICM between sessions of the Conference be undertaken through regional meetings.

3. The Overarching Policy Strategy noted that regional consultations had already played a significant role in the development of the Strategic Approach and it would be important to build on this commitment and expertise, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, countries with economies in transition and developed countries. Regional meetings between sessions of ICCM would be intended to facilitate input on Strategic Approach activities; prepare for future meetings of the Conference; allow for the exchange of regional expertise; provide guidance and review progress on implementation of the Strategic Approach; and enable technical and strategic discussions and exchange of information to take place.

### II. Regional meetings held in 2006

4. An African regional meeting on the Strategic Approach was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 11 to 14 September 2006. The meeting was hosted by the Egyptian Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs under the auspices of the Minister, Mr Maged George. It was attended by 43 Governments, 9 intergovernmental organizations and 17 non-governmental organizations. The agenda and other meeting documents were prepared by an informal African Core Group at a meeting held in Cairo from 13 to 15 June 2006. Outcomes of the African regional meeting included the adoption of an African regional action plan for Strategic Approach implementation; identification of priority topics for possible regional QSP projects; elaboration terms of reference for the African regional focal point, the African representatives serving on the QSP Executive Board and the Africa Core Group; adoption of a regional position on financial considerations; agreement on follow-up actions in relation to the 11th regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Brazzaville, Congo, on 26 and 27 May 2006; and adoption of an African regional position on financial considerations, including a call for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to establish a new focal area for sound chemicals management. The African meeting also took a regional position on the dumping of hazardous waste in Côte d'Ivoire and stressed the need to prevent such tragedies in the future.

5. Strategic Approach stakeholders from the European Union and the “JUSSCANNZ” group of countries met in Barcelona, Spain from 20 to 22 November 2006. The meeting was hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Environment and was attended by 27 Governments, 11 intergovernmental organizations and 13 non-governmental organizations. The meeting discussed initial national and

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the work of its first session (SAICM/ICCM.1/7), annexes I–III. The Conference adopted the Dubai Declaration and the Overarching Policy Strategy and recommended the use and further development of the Global Plan of Action as a working tool and guidance document.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, annex IV.

regional activities in support of Strategic Approach implementation; regional coordination arrangements; financial arrangements, including the development of a QSP business plan; preparations for the second session of ICCM; and the establishment of the SAICM secretariat and its budget outlook.

6. A Central and Eastern European regional meeting was held in Riga, Latvia, from 4 to 6 December 2006. The meeting was hosted by the Latvian Ministry of the Environment and was attended by 16 Governments, seven intergovernmental organizations and eight non-governmental organizations. Outcomes of the meeting included the establishment of a "bridging group" for regional coordination, development of terms of reference for the SAICM regional focal point and regional representatives on the QSP Executive Board, a regional position on financial considerations for SAICM and support for the development of a QSP business plan.

7. The reports of the above meetings are available at [www.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.unep.ch/saicm).

### **III. Future regional meetings**

8. Subject to confirmation of funding, a Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting will be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in March 2007 and an Asia-Pacific regional meeting will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2007. A meeting for Arab countries is scheduled for 1-2 April 2007 in Cairo, Egypt. African countries have also expressed interest in meeting at the sub-regional level, if possible. European Union and "JUSSCANNZ" countries have agreed to meet informally in the margins of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Joint Meetings of the Chemicals Committee and Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology in June 2007, February 2008 and November 2008. The African and Central and Eastern European regions have agreed, in principle, to meet again in 2008 in order to prepare for the second session of ICCM which is expected to take place in May 2009.

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