



SAICM Secretariat  
Chemicals Branch, Division of Economics, Technology and Industry  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

# Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

Newsletter 1

June 2006



Photo/ Zayed Prize, UAE

## SAICM Secretariat

Based on the request of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is currently establishing the SAICM Secretariat. The World Health Organization (WHO) will also take a lead role in the Secretariat. The Secretariat is pleased to advise that the ICCM report and texts are now available on the SAICM website. Please visit: [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/)

## Final agreement at the ICCM brings SAICM to life

Monday 6 February 2006 will be remembered by all participants to the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) as the decisive day in the development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). After three years of meetings and consultation, three sessions of the Preparatory Committee and three days of final negotiations, SAICM was finally adopted in Dubai. Agreements were reached on the three main documents of SAICM, the Dubai Declaration, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action, and on four Conference resolutions. The last minute consensus on financial considerations and principles and approaches was reached after the ICCM President facilitated final negotiations. Tired but relieved, ICCM participants could now look to the implementation of SAICM as a key tool in pursuit of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goal of sound management of chemicals by 2020.



ICCM President, Mr. Mariano Arana, Minister of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay. Photo/ IISD: Leila



Committee of the Whole Chair, Amb. Viveka Bohn of Sweden. Photo/ IISD: Leila



ICCM Delegates worked in a spirit of compromise to finalise and adopt SAICM. Photo/ IISD: Leila Mead



## SAICM Focal Points nomination

Among the first steps for the implementation of SAICM is the designation of official national focal points. Paragraph 23 of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy provides that: "to facilitate communication, nationally and internationally, each Government should designate a Strategic Approach national focal point to act as an effective conduit for communication on Strategic Approach matters, including invitations to participate in meetings and information dissemination. The Strategic Approach national focal point should be a representative of the country's inter-ministerial or inter-institutional arrangements, where such arrangements exist." In addition, SAICM Focal Points will be the conduct for applications to the Quick Start Programme trust fund. The SAICM Secretariat has sent letters to Governments inviting them to nominate an official national

SAICM focal point through their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is recommended that nominations be decided following a process of consultation with relevant Ministries such as agriculture, environment, health, industry and labour, existing focal points such as those for the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and pertinent multilateral agreements (for example the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Montreal Protocol) and other stakeholders. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) focal points as well as regional focal points have also been sought. As of June 2006, 60 Focal Points have already been nominated. Governments which have not yet done so are encouraged to nominate their Focal Point as soon as possible. For additional information, please visit: [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm)

## SAICM's immediate future: the Quick Start Programme



Photos/ Chemicals Branch, UNEP/DTIE

The ICCM established the Quick Start Programme (QSP) with the objective of supporting initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition. The Programme will mobilize resources for national priority initial enabling activities in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the Overarching Policy Strategy. The QSP comprises a UNEP trust fund (see below) and multilateral, bilateral and other forms of cooperation. The ICCM invited Governments in a position to do so, regional economic integration organizations, inter-governmental organizations, the private

sector, including industry, foundations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, to contribute to the Programme. The ICCM established an Executive Board, which will provide operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the QSP. The first meeting of the Executive Board took place in Geneva on April 26 and 27 and gathered government representatives of each of the United Nations regions, bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the Programme. It considered the report of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee and endorsed initial arrangements for applications to the trust fund (see below).

The ICCM, through resolution 4, established a voluntary, time-limited trust fund administered by UNEP. This trust fund will provide seed money to support QSP objectives. Applications for funding will be reviewed twice a year for review by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee comprising representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Approved project proposals will receive \$50,000–\$250,000 per project, including administration fees. The first meeting of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee took place on 19 April 2006 in Geneva and prepared the application procedures and project management arrangements for the trust fund. Applications for the first round will close on 18 August 2006. Guidance and application forms to the QSP trust fund are now available on the SAICM website. For additional information, please visit: [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/)

## The ICCM high-level segment

On the last day of the ICCM, over 40 ministers and other senior representatives of governments, civil society and intergovernmental organizations addressed the Conference. Speakers showed a great commitment to the SAICM process and conclusion. Many highlighted SAICM as a relevant initiative that would help countries reach the target set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and

the environment. A wide range of issues, including the SAICM negotiations, the needs of developing countries, cooperation for capacity building, financial considerations, ties between SAICM, poverty and development, and the Quick Start Programme were also addressed. The Dubai Declaration, presented on page 3 further expressed the commitment to SAICM of these senior stakeholders and was adopted by consensus at the end of the Conference.



High-level segment speakers included (top) Dr. Klaus Toepfer - *UNEP Executive Director*, (middle from left to right) Mr. Hamad A. Al Midfaa - *United Arab Emirates Minister of Health and Chairman of the Federal Environmental Agency*, Mr. Josef Pröll - *Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria*, Ms. Susanne Weber-Mosdorf - *WHO Assistant Director General Sustainable Development and Healthy Environments*, Mr. Peter Elverding - *President of the International Council of Chemical Associations*, Ms. Christine Churcher - *Minister of Environment and Science of Ghana*, Ms. Claudia McMurray - *United States Assistant Secretary of State Designate for Environment* and (right) Ms. Mariann Lloyd-Smith - *IPEN representative*. Photos / IISD: Leila Mead



## The Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management

We, the ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of civil society and the private sector, assembled at the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai from 4 to 6 February 2006, declare the following:

1. The sound management of chemicals is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty and disease, the improvement of human health and the environment and the elevation and maintenance of the standard of living in countries at all levels of development;

2. Significant, but insufficient, progress has been made in international chemicals management through the implementation of chapter 19 of Agenda 21<sup>1</sup> and International Labour Organization Conventions No. 170 on Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work and No. 174 on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, as well as in addressing particularly hazardous chemicals through the recent entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the adoption of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;

3. The private sector has made considerable efforts to promote chemical safety through voluntary programmes and initiatives such as product stewardship and the chemicals industry's Responsible Care programme;

4. Non-governmental public health and environmental organizations, trade unions and other civil society organizations have made important contributions to the promotion of chemical safety;

5. Progress in chemicals management has not, however, been sufficient globally and the environment worldwide continues to suffer from air, water and land contamination, impairing the health and welfare of millions;

6. The need to take concerted action is accentuated by a wide range of chemical safety concerns at the international level, including a lack of capacity for managing chemicals in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, dependency on pesticides in agriculture, exposure of workers to harmful chemicals and concern about the long-term effects of chemicals on both human health and the environment;

7. The global production, trade and use of chemicals are increasing, with growth patterns placing an increasing chemicals management burden on developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular the least developed among them and small island developing States, and presenting them with special difficulties in meeting this challenge. As a result, fundamental changes are needed in the way that societies manage chemicals;

8. We are determined to implement the applicable chemicals management agreements to which we are Party, strengthen the coherence and synergies that exist between them and work to address, as appropriate, existing gaps in the framework of international chemicals policy;

9. We commit ourselves in a spirit of solidarity and partnership to achieving chemical safety and thereby assisting in fighting po-



Photo/ Buj El Arab, Jumeirah

verty, protecting vulnerable groups and advancing public health and human security;

10. We commit ourselves to respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, understanding and respecting ecosystem integrity and addressing the gap between the current reality and our ambition to elevate global efforts to achieve the sound management of chemicals;

11. We are unwavering in our commitment to promoting the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes throughout their life-cycle, in accordance with Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,<sup>2</sup> in particular paragraph 23. We are convinced that the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management constitutes a significant contribution towards the internationally agreed development goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. It builds upon previous international initiatives on chemical safety and promotes the development of a multi- and cross-sectoral and participatory strategic approach;

12. We therefore adopt the Overarching Policy Strategy, which, together with the present declaration, constitutes our firm commitment to the Strategic Approach and its implementation;

13. We recommend the use and further development of the Global Plan of Action, to address current and ever-changing societal needs, as a working tool and guidance document for meeting the commitments to chemicals management expressed in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>3</sup> Agenda 21, the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety,<sup>4</sup> the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the 2005 World Summit Outcome<sup>5</sup> and this Strategic Approach;

14. We are determined to realize the benefits of chemistry, including green chemistry, for improved standards of living, public health and protection of the environment, and are resolved to continue working together to promote the safe production and use of chemicals;

15. We are committed to strengthening the capacities of all concerned to achieve the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes at all levels;

16. We will continue to mobilize national and international financing from public and private sources for the life-cycle management of chemicals;

17. We will work towards closing the gaps and addressing the discrepancies in the capacity to achieve sustainable chemicals management between developed countries on the one hand and developing countries and countries with economies in transition on the other by addressing the special needs of the latter and strengthening their capacities for the sound management of chemicals and the development of safer alternative products and processes, including non-chemical alternatives, through partnerships, technical support and financial assistance;

18. We will work towards effective and efficient governance of chemicals management by means of transparency, public participation and accountability involving all sectors of society, in particular striving for the equal participation of women in chemicals management;

19. We will engage actively in partnerships between Governments, the private sector and civil society, including strengthening participation in the implementation of the Strategic Approach by small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector;

20. We stress the responsibility of industry to make available to stakeholders such data and information on health and environmental effects of chemicals as are needed safely to use chemicals and the products made from them;

21. We will facilitate public access to appropriate information and knowledge on chemicals throughout their life cycle, including the risks that they pose to human health and the environment;

22. We will ensure that, when information is made available, confidential commercial and industrial information and knowledge are protected in accordance with national laws or regulations or, in the absence of such laws and regulations, are protected in accordance with international provisions. In making information available, information on chemicals relating to the health and safety of humans and the environment should not be regarded as confidential;

23. We recognize the need to make special efforts to protect

those groups in society that are particularly vulnerable to risks from hazardous chemicals or are highly exposed to them;

24. We are determined to protect children and the unborn child from chemical exposures that impair their future lives;

25. We will endeavour to prevent illegal traffic in toxic, hazardous, banned and severely restricted chemicals and chemical products and wastes;

26. We will promote the sound management of chemicals and hazardous waste as a priority in national, regional and international policy frameworks, including strategies for sustainable development, development assistance and poverty reduction;

27. We will strive to integrate the Strategic Approach into the work programmes of all relevant United Nations organizations, specialized agencies, funds and programmes consistent with their mandates as accorded by their respective governing bodies;

28. We acknowledge that as a new voluntary initiative in the field of international management of chemicals, the Strategic Approach is not a legally binding instrument;

29. We collectively share the view that implementation and taking stock of progress are critical to ensuring success and that, in this regard, a stable and long-term fully participatory and multi-sectoral structure for guidance, review and operational support is essential;

30. We are determined to cooperate fully in an open, inclusive, participatory and transparent manner in the implementation of the Strategic Approach.

1 Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, resolution 1, annex II.

2 Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August -4 September 2002, chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

3 Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, resolution 1, annex I.

4 Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, third session, Forum III final report (IFCS/Forum III/23w), annex 6.

5 General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 6 September 2005.

## ICCM Side Events

The ICCM hosted several side events alongside plenary sessions, regional meetings and contact group negotiations. Stakeholders from different sectors exchanged views, presented programmes and debated issues associated with the sound management of chemicals.



Photo/ICCA



Photo/ IISD: Leila Mead



Photo/ IISD: Leila Mead

### List of side events:

UNITAR and IOMC: *Developing Integrated National Programme for Chemicals Management and SAICM Implementation: Country Experiences and Future Plans*; WWF: *Africa Stockpiles Programme Launch/Update*; Nordic Council of Ministers: *Results of Nordic cooperation on chemicals*; UNITAR and ILO: *The GHS: a fundamental tool for national SAICM implementation*; World Bank and UNDP: *Chemicals and the Development agenda* (left photo); ICCA: *Responsible Care Charter and Global Product Strategy launch* (right photo); IPEN: *IPEN's commitment to the 2020 Goal*; Network of Women Ministers for the Environment: *Ministerial panel discussion on children, chemicals and the environment*; and Austria, industry, TÜV and UNIDO: *Chemical leasing and Cleaner Production: a global win-win strategy for risk management*

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