



UNEP Chemicals Newsletter

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Division of Technology, Industry and Economics



Per M. Bakken at the 25th Session of the Governing Council, February 2009

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From the Head of Branch

It is now seven years since UNEP Governing Council launched the development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and three years since its adoption in Dubai. UNEP remains fully committed to SAICM both through the provision of secretariat services and as a participant in this unique multi-sectoral process.

The upcoming second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in May 2009 will be an important milestone in the evolution of SAICM. UNEP looks forward to playing its part in ICCM-2 and to a successful meeting that will maintain the momentum of SAICM implementation.

Per M. Bakken, Head,
Chemicals Branch, DTIE, UNEP

SAICM – ICCM-2

The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) is the governing body of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The second session of the ICCM will be held in Geneva from 11-15 May 2009 back-to-back with the Stockholm Convention COP-4 and the 62nd World Health Assembly.

ICCM-2 will be the first opportunity to review implementation progress since SAICM's adoption in 2006. Given that ICCM-1 was devoted to the final negotiations of the SAICM texts, ICCM-2 will also be the first time that the ICCM performs its designated functions, including in relation to finance, reporting, identified emerging issues, i.e. electronic wastes, chemicals in articles, lead in paint and nanotechnology and strategic decision-making.

ICCM-2 is also expected to decide on outstanding institutional matters such as the adoption of rules of procedure, including provisions for a bureau and subsidiary bodies.



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ICCM-2 will be of great importance in maintaining the momentum of SAICM implementation, renewing political commitment, setting the agenda for international chemicals management in the coming years, resolving outstanding institutional issues, and forging a preliminary agreement on more substantial financial arrangements beyond the initial enabling phase. For further information please visit www.saicm.org

UNEP – ICCM-2

The ICCM-2 will provide the first opportunity for an overall global assessment of the implementation of SAICM and discuss issues related to the future of SAICM in the framework of the multi stakeholder and cross sectoral nature of SAICM. ICCM-2 will furthermore provide the stakeholders with the possibility to reconfirm the commitments on sound management of chemicals made in Dubai when SAICM was adopted.

UNEP will at ICCM-2 place particular emphasis on the cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of SAICM, the development of an efficient reporting system, assessment of emerging issues such as chemicals in articles and financing of SAICM.

UNEP will describe some of its activities related to SAICM implementation through three side events at ICCM-2. UNEP will:

- in cooperation with UNDP host an IOMC side event on integration of sound management of



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chemicals into development planning processes;

- in cooperation with WHO host a side event on Chemical Incidents, Accidents and Emergencies: New Guidance and Tools from International Organizations;
- in cooperation with SETAC host a side event on Life Cycle Management applied to Chemicals.

Historic decision on mercury



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At the Governing Council in February this year, the plenary erupted in cheers as agreement was reached on a historic decision on mercury. Delegates worked through the night to reach an agreement on the decision, which includes a programme for the elaboration of a legal instrument as well as detailed requirements for interim activities. Negotiations for the legal instrument will start in

2010, with the goal of completing the agreement before the Governing Council in 2013. Preparatory work will start in 2009 with an open ended working group to discuss the negotiating priorities, timetable and organisation for the intergovernmental negotiating committee. The decision sets out in detail both the provisions which should be included in the instrument as well as a range of issues which should be considered by the committee.

Interim activities form a crucial part of the decision, with governments keen to ensure that progress on reducing mercury emissions will not be halted by the negotiating process. The decision requests that the work coordinated by the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership be continued and enhanced in a number of areas.

Other important chemicals issues at Governing Council

Mercury was not the only major chemicals issue discussed at the Governing Council. The meeting considered the progress made to date under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and asked that UNEP continue to strengthen the process and to play a leading role in assisting with the implementation. The continued support of Governments and other organisations, both financially and in kind, to implementation of the Strategic Approach through a number of approaches. A decision was also taken on lead and cadmium, recognising that they pose particular problems in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The continued efforts of Governments and others to reduce the risks to human health and the environment throughout the whole life cycle were recognised, and UNEP was asked to facilitate this work upon request, provided funds were available. UNEP was also asked to continue to address the data and information gaps identified in the scientific reviews, and a request for further information has been circulated to gather additional information. The scientific reviews will be finalised and the reviews provided to the Governing Council in February 2011.

Dioxin emission factors from open burning of waste

The UNEP project with China, Mexico, Sweden, and USA has generated first field data for dioxins/furans from open burning of waste in developing countries. Emission factors to air from field samplings in China and Mexico range two orders of magnitude and are at the high end of known sources. There was no indication that waste composition has significant effects on emission factors. The burn quality seems more important. Other drivers are not yet apparent.

Mercury partnerships – a vehicle for interim activities



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The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group had its 1st meeting in Geneva in early April. The positive results at the Governing Council, particularly the commendation of the partnership for its achievements and the clear message that interim activities are to be strengthened during the negotiating process, encouraged the group to a new level of commitment.

Discussions included considerations of how to encourage the work of partnership areas, improve linkages between related partnership areas, as well as how the work of the Partnership could inform discussions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee. The need to ensure objectives for the partnership areas were both ambitious and achievable was recognized, and there were discussions on the need for increased resources for all partnership areas.

The meeting also welcomed the offer of the Zero Mercury Working Group to serve as an interim lead on storage issues, as well as the willingness of the Natural Resource Defense Council to serve as a co-lead for the artisanal and small scale mining partnership area. The next meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group will be held in September 2010.

Stockholm Convention-COP-4

COP-4 of the Stockholm Convention will be held from 4-8 May 2009 in Geneva. The meeting will include a high-level segment on 7-8 May with the theme "Meeting the challenges of a POPs-free future." The COP will consider amending the Convention to list nine additional chemicals in Annexes A, B or C that were proposed by Parties and recommended by the POPs Review Committee. Other issues on which the COP will make decisions include: business plan for promoting alternatives to DDT use in disease vector control; proposal for a PCB elimination club; evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention; financial and technical assistance; and non-compliance. The COP will also consider the adoption of a decision on enhancing cooperation and

coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions: the same decision that was adopted earlier by the Basel and Rotterdam COPs. This would set in motion a synergistic process for programmatic cooperation, establishment of joint services among the Secretariats of the three Conventions and holding coordinated extraordinary meetings of the COPs of the Conventions with the UNEP Governing Council Special Session/Global Ministers Environmental Forum in 2010.

Basel Convention and e-waste

The Basel Convention has been focusing on electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) in various ways since 2002. One of the most successful achievements of the Basel Convention is the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI) and its guidance documents prepared by the Mobile Phone Working Group which were adopted at COP-9 in 2008.

In 2006, the theme of COP-8 addressed the environmentally sound management of electronic waste through the "World Forum on E-waste" which adopted the "Nairobi Declaration on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste". The Nairobi Declaration underlines the fact that the Basel Convention provides an effective framework for developing strategic partnerships to continue discussing

and exchanging views and experiences with a view to continuing to improve the environmentally sound management of e-waste worldwide.

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention and its regional offices will implement more e-waste projects, including an e-waste Africa project supported by the EC. The SBC is also preparing Technical Guidelines on e-waste. Lastly, the Basel Convention has launched a Partnership for Action on computing equipment, and is working with stakeholders from various sectors.



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First World-wide UNEP Inter-calibration Study on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Throughout the year 2009, Chemicals Branch invites POPs laboratories from developed and developing countries (including CEITs) to take part in the first UNEP inter-laboratory proficiency study. The POPs include basic POPs (pesticides, PCB) as well as dioxin-like chemicals (PCDD/PCDF, dl-PCB) and matrices can be chosen from standard solutions, sediment, fish, mothers' milk, and flyash.

For further information and registration, please see www.chem.unep.ch/Pops/GMP/default.htm

Mercury Storage and Waste Management Projects Launched

The Norwegian Government is funding two mercury projects addressing environmentally sound storage and waste management of mercury. Both projects are implemented by UNEP Chemicals and had their inception workshops between 4 and 6 March 2009 in Bangkok/Thailand and Siem Reap/Cambodia, respectively. The Storage project workshop was jointly conducted with the Zero Mercury Working Group in response to GC 24/3 priority of curbing supply and finding environmentally sound storage solutions for mercury, being an element that cannot be destroyed, hence must be stored to prevent its re-entry to the global market. Management options include the US above ground facility/warehouse and the EU below ground facility using salt mines. Participants from 19 Asian countries agreed to do options analysis as basis for countries' decision. More information available at www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/storage/main_page.htm. The waste management project includes five countries

– Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Pakistan, Philippines – and aims to increase the technical capacity in assessing, managing and reducing the risks posed by mercury-containing waste.

It is planned to develop sector-specific guidance and analyse selected human and environmental matrices for total and organic mercury. Further information at [www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/Sector-Specific-Information/Waste_management\(1\).htm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/Sector-Specific-Information/Waste_management(1).htm)



Photo: K+S Entsorgung GmbH, Kassel, Germany

Hazardous Substances Underground Storage/Waste Disposal Facility using Geological (Salt Rock) Formation

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A list of publications is available from UNEP Chemicals and on the Web (www.chem.unep.ch). Documents are free of charge.

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The UNEP Chemicals Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.

UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.

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Africa prepares for negotiations on chemicals

Responding to requests UNEP Chemicals Branch organized a Regional CIEN workshop to support countries' in preparing for international events on chemicals. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention and hosted by the Government of Togo. It was convened 31 March - 3 April 2009, in Lomé with financial support from the Norwegian Government for focal points of chemical-related agreements and network administrators from 15 African countries who use CIEN for the collection and dissemination of information on

chemicals and in the implementation of information exchange obligations under chemical related MEAs.

Participants shared experiences in collection of information on chemicals of major concern that are subject to international actions, and discussed issues of common interest for the region as well as follow-up actions that will better prepare countries for international meetings, such as the ICCM and Convention negotiations.

Updates on mainstreaming events

The integration of sound management of chemicals into national development planning processes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition was recognized as a priority in SAICM.

To support this priority area UNDP and UNEP have developed a Partnership Initiative for Integration of Sound Management of Chemicals (SMC) into development planning processes. The partnership is at present working in 4 countries (Zambia, Uganda, Macedonia and Cambodia) and will in the very near future be initiated in additional 6

countries (Ecuador, Belize, Honduras, Liberia, Mauritania and Belarus). As part of the partnership and based on support from Norway, Regional Workshops for facilitating understanding between officials responsible for development planning and officials responsible for chemicals management have been held in Uganda (September 2008), Cambodia (December 2008), Macedonia (February 2009) and Belize (March 2009).

The outcomes of all four regional workshops will contribute to the preparation of an Information Document to be provided to the ICCM-2.

Chemicals in the new UNEP web

www.unep.org is the principal UN web portal for information on the environment. UNEP has redesigned this essential information resource to coincide with its six priority areas. The result is an intuitive interface for locating the information users need on these cross-cutting priorities. UNEP Chemicals is a major contributor to the priority area of Hazardous Wastes and Harmful Substances (HWHS). We encourage you to visit www.unep.org

CIEN - Helping the implementation of MEAs

With its Chemicals Information Exchange Network (CIEN), UNEP supports countries in accessing, gathering and exchanging data on chemicals. This includes chemicals proposed for listing in the Stockholm Convention. Such national data can be used also by the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) risk profiles or in risk management evaluations. In 2008 and 2009, CIEN activities were launched in Kenya, Djibouti, Cambodia, the Philippines and Ghana. Please see: www.estis.net/communities/cien

Information on Chemicals in articles / products

The Informal Workshop on Stakeholders' Information Needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products convened 9-12 February 2009 in Geneva, to initiate international discussions on the implementation of Objective 15b) of the Overarching Policy Strategy of SAICM. The Workshop recommended that ICCM-2 establish a Working Group for developing a proposal which "responds to the need for information on chemicals in articles/products in the supply chain and throughout the life-cycle".