

Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)

Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee

Summary Record of the Eighteenth Meeting

The eighteenth meeting of the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOCC) of the IOMC was held 22-23 January 2002 at UNITAR, Geneva. UNIDO chaired the meeting.

The meeting was held back-to-back with a meeting of the Steering Committee that has been convened to develop a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Consequently the involvement of IOMC in the Steering Committee was a key matter discussed. Other topics included the enhancement of IOMC rules of procedure, IOMC Secretariat arrangements, IOMC contributions to the 4th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), the regular review of the work of IOMC Technical Co-ordinating Groups and other matters of common interest to IOMC Participating Organizations (POs).

UNITAR invited POs to contribute actively to the further development of a paper for Forum IV describing IOMC capacity-building activities and in particular to provide an annex of specific activities. In general, IOCC decided it should take a broad view of capacity-building activities and include awareness raising, technical assistance, and training etc. Furthermore, the IOCC decided that capacity building was of such importance that it should form a standing agenda item to be considered at each meeting. UNEP will consult with POs on an IFCS paper entitled "Prevention of Illegal Traffic in Chemicals" and FAO will consult similarly on an IFSC paper setting out proposals for a mechanism for the notification of severely hazardous pesticide formulations under conditions of use in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition.

In follow-up of decisions taken by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg 2002, IOCC decided to take stock of the involvement of POs in Type 2 capacity-building partnerships.

The IOCC discussed progress with a number of ongoing activities and the work of its Technical Coordination Groups (CGs). The IOCC adopted terms of reference for the CG on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); these are available on the IOMC website (<http://www.iomc.ch>). UNITAR will take the lead in seeking nominations to the group and will chair the first meeting.

It was agreed that Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) would be represented by UNEP and UNIDO on the Stockholm Convention Expert Group on best available techniques/best environmental practices.

Progress of IOMC CGs dealing with Pollutant Release and Transfer Registries, Chemical Accident Prevention, Preparedness and Response and

the Assessment of Existing Industrial Chemicals and Pollutants was reviewed. All groups had made progress since the last IOMC meeting and their progress reports are available on the IOMC website.

Other activities discussed included progress with the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (ILO), Hazardous Child Labour (ILO), asbestos (ILO) and a joint WHO/FAO Project to Update the Principles and Methods for the Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food. POs were invited to participate in these activities as appropriate.

The IOCC was encouraged by positive responses from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to its proposals to enlarge its membership to include them.. A representative from the World Bank gave a presentation about how chemical safety was considered by the World Bank in its environment strategy as it relates to poverty reduction activities. The World Bank will attend IOMC meetings as an observer, and consider full membership over the next 12 months as it develops its chemicals strategy. UNDP was unable to participate in the 18th IOCC meeting and therefore its participation in IOMC will be discussed at a future date.

The IOCC discussed ways to improve the functioning of the IOMC website. This was regarded as particularly important by a number of IOCC members given the forthcoming IFCS meeting. A number of outstanding issues had been corrected by the Secretariat, other changes identified that could be made relatively quickly and longer-term issues for improving the functionality of the website. The IOCC preferred to make other decisions regarding improvement of the IOMC website in the context of longer-term communications strategy. The OECD and the WHO agreed to collaborate on making proposals for further development of the website in this context. In the interim, it was agreed that out-of-date content and dysfunctional elements would be removed.

The IOCC discussed possible Rules of Procedure, including, in particular, the possibility of adopting a voting scheme in exceptional cases where agreement cannot be reached by consensus. IOCC agreed to organize a meeting of PO Legal Counsels to assist in the development of rules of procedure and to devise an acceptable mechanism for agreement in the event that consensus cannot be achieved provided that all POs are prepared in principle to consider a move to non-consensual decision-making in the context of IOMC. The IOCC further discussed possible rotation of the secretariat and trust fund. All but one of the POs is at least in principle in favour of rotation. It was agreed that IOCC would discuss this further.

The next IOMC meeting will be held 7-8 July 2003 at OECD, Paris.