



SAICM update



Photo / www.dtwcc.org

Tim Kasten

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was adopted in 2006 and is currently well into the next phase of implementation. SAICM regional meetings have been held throughout 2011 to prepare for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) and have been held in conjunction with awareness raising workshops on nanotechnology and perfluorinated chemicals with the support of IOMC partner organizations. The SAICM Quick Start Programme Trust Fund has mobilized \$39.5 million and supports enabling activities in 103 developing and transition economy countries through 139 projects approved over 10 rounds of applications from May 2006 to February 2011. A mid-term review of the Programme is currently underway.



Photo / Serbian Chemicals Agency

Belgrade

The First meeting of an Open-ended Working Group will be held in Belgrade, Serbia from 15 to 18 November, 2011 will examine progress made in the implementation, development and

enhancement of SAICM including progress made on substantive matters such as activities on past emerging issues, nominations for new emerging issues and proposed additions to the Global Plan of Action and make the necessary preparations for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. For more information please visit: www.saicm.org

Welcome to the new Head of Chemicals Branch

Tim Kasten joined Chemicals Branch in August 2011. Before joining the DTIE family, Tim held various posts in UNEP since 1998, including Deputy Director of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI). He also worked with Freshwater, co-founded the UN-REDD Programme (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation), and was the Caribbean focal point for the Basel Convention, managing projects on lead-acid batteries, pesticides and other persistent organic pollutants. Prior to joining UNEP, Tim spent 12 years with the USEPA working on regulations regarding hazardous wastes, underground petroleum tanks and sediment quality criteria for heavy metals, among many other issues.

Chemicals in Products (CiP)

UNEP is since 2009 leading the SAICM-ICCM2 initiated project aimed at addressing stakeholder information needs regarding CiP. It was mandated to review existing information systems, identify gaps against stakeholder needs; and develop recommendations for further actions. Main findings after studies into four product sectors and other activities include:

- Current information exchange is insufficient to allow sound management of chemicals throughout the product's life cycle;
- Types of information systems range from restricted substance lists and ecolabels to complex databases;
- Many end-producers want CiP information from their suppliers; and
- An international approach should help avoid a patchwork of differing systems while allowing a differentiated approach for different actors and sectors.

An international workshop recommended the development of a non-legally binding framework to facilitate information exchange and identified



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elements for future action, including identification of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders throughout the life cycle of articles; principles on what information could be transferred, and building on experiences of best practices. Draft recommendations will be considered at the SAICM OEWG and finalized for the ICCM3 in mid 2012.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals



Photo / Agneta Sundén-Byehrn

We protect our children from danger but are we aware of those that we are exposing them to? Some plastics contain endocrine disruptors

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) affect hormonal systems of humans and wildlife and are linked with gender bending, infertility, development of cancers, disorders of the thyroid, neuro-development, immune-, and metabolic systems and obesity. The most vulnerable group is the unborn (both human and wildlife) often irreversibly affected. Endocrine effects are associated with variety of chemicals found in different sectors for a range of uses (pesticides, plastic additives, flame-retardants, pharmaceuticals, etc.). Effects may manifest themselves at low exposures and through multi-chemical exposures. Only a small portion of EDCs have been adequately studied for their endocrine disruption potential.

There is an urgent need for improved scientific understanding of EDCs, enhanced methodologies for risk assessment to support management decision-making and prioritization. UNEP has therefore proposed EDCs as a new SAICM emerging policy issue suggesting an international cooperation to build awareness and understanding and promote actions. It will first be considered at the SAICM OEWG and then by ICCM3 in mid-2012. UNEP and WHO will, in 2012, release an update to the 2002 IPCS "Global Assessment of the State of the Science of Endocrine Disruptors".

For more information on endocrine disruptors, please visit:

http://www.who.int/ipcs/publications/new_issues/endocrine_disruptors/en/

National Strategic Planning for ASGM in South-East Asia

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) represents the largest demand for mercury globally. While this sector is a growing source of employment in many developing countries, with an estimated 10-15 millions miners worldwide, it also has significant environmental and social impacts and thus represents a complex development issue.

In recognition of this, UNEP Chemicals supported Cambodia and the Philippines to develop national multi-stakeholder strategic plans to improve the governance, working practices and conditions in ASGM, thus providing an entry point for work to reduce mercury use and release. The project, which finished in June 2011, was funded by the SAICM

Quick Start Programme (QSP) and resulted in strategic plans for both countries, a UNEP Guidance Document for developing such plans and a regional workshop that helped raise awareness. These efforts provided lessons for future projects and informed the global mercury convention negotiation process. A similar project has been implemented in Latin America and an additional proposal has been developed for interested countries in anglophone Africa.

More information is available at:

www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/GlobalMercuryPartnership/tabid/1253/Default.aspx

Thank you to Per Bakken

Previously Director of the International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and acting-Deputy Director of DTIE, Per Bakken was appointed Head of the Chemicals Branch in September 2007.

Here, Per's main achievements were:

- The work leading up to the GC.25 decision of 2009: negotiations on a legally binding instrument for mercury;
- The work leading up to the GC.26 decision of 2010: enhanced coordination and cooperation of chemicals management;
- Chemicals Outlook: global trends in chemicals production and consumption, as well as cost of inaction.

These achievements pave the way forward for Chemicals Branch for the years to come.

All of Chemicals Branch wishes Per every happiness in his retirement.



The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint



Photo / Matija Potocnik

Although restrictions on the use of lead in paints were enacted in a number of countries in the first part of the 20th century, and by many more in latter decades, it has become clear in recent years that despite these efforts, paints containing high levels of lead are still widely available.

Lead paint is still being used for decorating the interiors and exteriors of homes and schools. It is also used on public and commercial buildings, structures such as bridges, as well as on toys, toy jewellery, and glazes as well as on furniture and playground equipment.

Lead can have profound and permanent adverse health effects on children. It also causes harm in adults, particularly those using it. The adverse effects of lead can be prevented. The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) is a voluntary collaborative initiative by UNEP and WHO to focus and catalyze the efforts of a diverse range of stakeholders to achieve international goals to prevent children's exposure to lead from paint and to minimize occupational exposures to lead paint.

To become a contributor to the Global Alliance please refer to:

<http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LeadCadmium/PrioritiesforAction/GAELP/PotentialPartners/tabid/6333/Default.aspx>

Mercury INC3

The third session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury (INC3), midpoint in the negotiations process, was held from 31 October to 4 November 2011 in Nairobi.

The session was attended by over 500 participants, representing 125 Governments, 47 non-governmental organizations and a number of intergovernmental organizations.

At INC3, Governments completed a comprehensive review of the new draft text on mercury based on Government submissions following INC2. Several contact groups met and developed new text on articles related to artisanal and small-scale gold mining; storage, wastes and contaminated sites; and awareness-raising, research and monitoring, and communication of information. The legal group, established at INC2, considered articles related to institutional arrangements, settlement of disputes and final provisions.

In the lead up to INC4 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in June 2012, intersessional work will include preparation by the secretariat of a revised text based on reports by contact groups and work of the legal group. The co-chairs of the contact group on financial resources, technical assistance and implementation will develop a conceptual approach and possible text.

More information at:

www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/tabid/3320/Default.aspx



The new office facility of UNEP Headquarters

Costs of Inaction

UNEP, in close cooperation with WHO, has drafted an assessment report on the costs of inaction related to the health and environmental effects of chemicals production and use. The economic cost of environmental and health effects of production and use of chemicals is a crucial element in raising the political awareness of the importance of sound management of chemicals. The report summarizes the available information and concludes that, while pointing to huge costs, the existing information is fragmented regarding the substances covered and their effects. However, it is nevertheless still possible to compare

and extrapolate the health effects of pesticides in some African countries to estimate the costs of inaction for the Sub-Saharan African region. While it remains an underestimation, as the greater costs of lives, livelihoods, and environmental effects were not included, the extrapolation study shows that there are significant health and economic costs to the African region. The study also shows that the economic costs can only be alleviated by cross-sectoral investment in sound management of chemicals and that financial and policy decision making can improve with more comparable data collection efforts.

Thank you to Matthew Gubb

Matthew Gubb, who served in Chemicals Branch from 2001 to 2011, has been appointed Director of UNEP/DTIE's International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) in Osaka. While in Chemicals Branch, Matthew was instrumental in the development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and was appointed coordinator for its new secretariat in 2006. SAICM is an innovative initiative that has strengthened the common resolve of Government, UN, NGO and industry stakeholders from multiple sectors in the pursuit of chemical safety. From mid-2009 he coordinated the staff team supporting intergovernmental negotiations for a new global mercury convention, another high-profile and priority task for UNEP. All of Chemicals Branch wishes Matthew every success in his new appointment as Director of IETC/DTIE.



SAICM health strategy

A proposed strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in implementation of the SAICM will be considered by the Open-ended Working Group for the International Conference on Chemicals Management when it meets for the first time in Belgrade 15-18 November 2011.

Developed in consultation with WHO, the proposed strategy is conceived as a sector-specific supplement to the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach. It sets out six specific objectives for a stronger health sector engagement - fostering a deeper interest and awareness of sound chemicals management issues; active involvement in improving information on the impacts of chemicals; strengthening the capacity of the health sector to fulfil its unique roles and

responsibilities in chemicals management; improving consultation, coordination and joint actions; ensuring the effective use of existing resources and leveraging additional resources where needed; and strengthening coordination, leadership and coherent actions among international agencies with regard to health sector implementation of the Strategic Approach. While multi-sectoral engagement is at the heart of the Strategic Approach, this will be the first time that a sector-specific strategy has been considered for further strengthening such engagement.



Photo / P. Delaney

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

Development of national legislation and infrastructures for chemicals management

Sound Management of Chemicals depends on the development of national legal and institutional infrastructures including legislation, regulation and assessment of chemicals together with monitoring and enforcement of these. However, many developing countries have not managed to get coherent legislation in place. This leads to uncoordinated national policies and inefficient use of resources for chemicals management. To assist countries in developing coherent and efficient chemicals legislation, UNEP has developed a guidance

document on development of legislation and institutional infrastructures with sustainable funding for sound management of chemicals. The guidance has been used by the Cambodian Ministry of Environment to develop a draft framework legislation covering the whole life-cycle of chemicals in the country. The draft proposal includes fee structures to partly financing of the administration. The draft proposal will be discussed in the government during the next year. Similar projects are planned for other countries such as Uruguay, Nigeria and Belize.

Children and chemicals: a priority

Healthy children in healthy environments are essential for sustainable development. Results of an intensive review of studies on Children's Environmental Health (CEH) done in developing countries (Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America) affirmed the crucial role of the environment sector in the prevention of chemical releases to reduce children's exposure risks. Chemicals of concern with significant impact on children in developing countries are metals (mercury, lead, arsenic, fluoride, manganese), pesticides, persistent organic pollutants, and mixtures of chemicals from electronic waste. Done in the context of the CEH project, the studies affirmed the crucial role of the environment sector in the prevention of chemical releases to reduce children's exposure

risks. Improving environmental conditions upstream is likely to be a cost-effective strategy to prevent environment related children's health outcomes. The need for global harmonization of exposure (environment) and outcome (health) measures to promote CEH is recognized.

In November 2010 until April 2011, UNEP worked with WHO on a collaborative research project that examined the studies on the impact of chemicals on children's health. The project was supported by the Japan Ministry of Environment.

More information on the CEH project is available at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/unepsaicm/mainstreaming/CEH/default.htm>

Welcome to the Global Environment Facility team

DTIE and Chemicals Branch welcomes the new "GEF team" who join us from the former Division of Global Environment Facility: Mr. Jan Betlem and Mr. Jorge Ocana are Task Managers for POPs/Chemicals related projects. Ms. Irene Kanyi is a Programme Assistant and also provides extensive administrative support to the team. Mr. Paul Vrontamitis is the Fund Management Officer and Ms. Pooja Bhimjiani works with Paul on all finance related issues. With the exception of Jorge Ocana who is located in Geneva, all are stationed in Nairobi.

Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants around the World

32 countries have participated in UNEP's training and capacity building to support the global monitoring plan of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Main funding was provided by the GEF, SAICM Quick Start Programme, Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention and donor Governments.

Expert laboratories from the Netherlands (IVM VU Amsterdam), Sweden (MTM Centre Örebro University), and Spain (Spanish Research Council, CSIC) conducted 20 training courses at laboratories in developing countries and more than 150 passive air samplers have collected POPs for one year. For POPs pesticides, lowest concentrations – if at all – were

detected in Africa; low dioxin/furan concentrations were found in the Pacific Islands region. In cooperation with the World Health Organisation, mothers' milk from 55 countries showed that where DDT is used to fight malaria have highest concentrations (Tajikistan, Solomon Islands), whereas in Central and Eastern Europe, PCB concentrations are still among the highest. A new source of dioxin exposure has been identified in some African countries when pregnant women eat certain types of clay to overcome dizziness; this geophagy results in concentrations higher than normally found in Africa.