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**Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4)**

Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

Nairobi, Kenya, 27 February – 3 March 2023\*

**Proposal on labour sector aspects of implementation**

**Submission by the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Labour Organization and the International Commission on Occupational Health**

**Note by the secretariat**

The attached to the present note contains a submission by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH).

It is reproduced as received by the secretariat, without formal editing.

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\* The fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) was held from 29 August to 2 September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. The meeting was adjourned on 2 September 2022 and will be resumed from 27 February to 3 March 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

## **Proposed CRP to be submitted by ILO, ITUC, ICOH on labour sector aspects of implementation**

Exposure to hazardous chemicals in the world of work, including pollutants, dusts, vapours and fumes remains a global challenge. Workers are the first users and those most exposed to hazardous chemicals and waste in nearly all sectors around the world, and are at risk of serious injury, debilitating chronic conditions and even death. They are exposed to hazardous chemicals throughout the entire supply chain: from primary extraction, to production, to handling, to storage, to transport, to disposal and treatment of waste chemicals. Those in developing countries, economies in transition and in the informal economy are particularly vulnerable and frequently have limited occupational safety and health (OSH) protections.

The Governing Body is the executive body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), composed of representatives from governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations. During its 297th Session in November 2006, the ILO Governing Body approved the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and endorsed follow-up action. In paragraph 8, the ILO has committed to *"support the implementation efforts on those activities of the Strategic Approach of most relevance to the ILO, in consultation with its constituents (Governments, Employers and Workers) at country, regional and international levels."*

The sound management of chemicals in the world of work and strong and resilient OSH systems are essential for protecting workers, communities and the environment, as well as contributing towards numerous Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3, 8, 11 and 12).

*'A safe and healthy working environment'* is considered a Fundamental Principle and Right at Work (FPRW), and a UN-recognized human right, with the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) designated as fundamental Conventions. Countries are now obliged to follow up on their commitment to tackling workplace hazards, including the protection of workers from hazardous chemical exposures. Furthermore, the Governing Body requested the Office to prepare a document for its 347th Session (March 2023) containing proposals and a road map for the review of the Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health adopted at the 91st Session (2003) of the Conference (Global Strategy), which includes explicit mention of the importance of sound chemicals management for workers' health and safety.

To achieve the goal of sound management of chemicals in the world of work, governments are called upon to ratify and implement the two fundamental OSH conventions (C155 and C187); the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), as well as other OSH conventions, risk-specific conventions and sectoral conventions.

The compilation of recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 is being considered by the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. Section V1, Mechanisms to support implementation, states that enhanced sectoral and stakeholder engagement is needed, with Section D stating that IOMC organizations (including the ILO) should promote awareness about the cross-cutting nature of the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

It is proposed that the SAICM Beyond 2020 instrument includes a section on labour sector engagement, with specific reference to '*a safe and healthy working environment*' as a fundamental principle and right at work, and a description of key priorities to the world of work.

## **Suggested text for consideration**

### **V1. Mechanisms to support implementation**

#### **D. Enhanced sectoral and stakeholder engagement**

##### **New 11. Labour sector implementation**

The sound management of chemicals in the world of work and strong and resilient occupational safety and health (OSH) systems, built on social dialogue, are essential for protecting workers, communities and the environment. A safe and healthy working environment is a Fundamental Principle and Right at Work (FPRW), therefore all workers, and particularly those in vulnerable situations, should be protected from hazardous chemicals and waste, along the entire supply chain. Critical world of work measures and policies should be integrated in chemicals management efforts, including the ratification and implementation of fundamental and other relevant International Labour Standards, global application of the GHS, harmonization and implementation of work-related risk assessment, application of the Hierarchy of Controls, and the strengthening of occupational health services.