



International Conference on Chemicals Management

Second session

Geneva, 11–15 May 2009

Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda**

**Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International
Chemicals Management: emerging policy issues**

Background information in relation to the emerging policy issue of chemicals in products

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, relevant background material on the emerging policy issue of chemicals in products, as outlined in document SAICM/ICCM.2/10. The material is provided for the information of participants and has been reproduced as received without formal editing. The preparation of the material has been facilitated by Ms. Johanna Lissinger Peitz (Sweden).
2. The background material has been developed from the original submissions received on this issue from stakeholders ahead of the informal discussions held in Rome on 23 and 24 October 2008. The facilitators have followed the additional guidance developed by the informal Friends of the Secretariat planning group in preparing the document and have provided the opportunity for comment by Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management stakeholders by making drafts of the material available on the Strategic Approach website. The background material aims to set out how this issue meets the screening criteria for emerging policy issues developed during the informal discussions and to provide the rationale for the proposed cooperative actions on this issue contained in document SAICM/ICCM.2/10/Add.1.
3. There will be an opportunity for participants to discuss the background material at a technical briefing to be held on Sunday, 10 May 2009, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

** SAICM/ICCM.2/1.

Annex

Background information in relation to the emerging policy issue of chemicals in products

Introduction

1. Access to information is a key factor to help enable actors to minimize adverse effects from the presence of hazardous chemicals in products, to promote safer alternatives when ever possible and feasible and to facilitate the management of risks to human health and the environment that chemicals in products may pose. The need for enhanced information flow throughout the product chain from manufacturing, distribution, use, recycling and waste handling has been identified and the overall aim of this initiative is to facilitate informed decision making with regard to chemicals in products.

2. This emerging policy issue focuses on information needs related to chemicals in products that are not covered by any comprehensive international system for dissemination of information regarding health and environmental aspects, for example commonly used products like clothes, toys, jewellery and electronics and their accessories. The proposed cooperative actions were developed with knowledge of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and a desire to avoid duplicating efforts under this system. There are a few regional definitions that try to define these products, or “articles”, as a group, which is also referred to in the GHS, but no common international definition exists today. Through out this document we therefore use the term products meaning the non chemical products, for example toys, cars, furniture, clothes, electronics etc.

3. Chemical substances provide important functionality in a wide range of products, but there is a growing understanding of the potential exposure to chemicals contained in commonly used products. At the same time there is an increased awareness of the gap between information provided in existing systems such as the GHS and information on chemicals in products. Hazardous chemicals in products are transported through international trade and have in particular cases shown to cause significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, for example, from lead in children’s toys and jewellery and on the environment through the release to water of nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs), for example. Chemicals in products may pose future risks to human health and the environment at different stages of the life cycle of a product: during production, use, recycling or disposal. The risks involved will depend on many factors during the lifecycle; for example possible exposures during production/manufacturing, the use patterns by adults or children, the ability for the chemicals to release from the product and risks involved at recycling and waste handling. Current efforts and capacities to provide information about chemicals in products and alternatives are not always sufficient for informed decision making to fully understand and, where needed protect human health and the environment from risks that may occur throughout the life-cycle from hazardous substances in products. Thus further action needs to be taken to reach the 2020 goals of SAICM.

4. The emerging policy issue of information needs on chemicals in products is closely related to the paragraph 15 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach which in short aims to ensure that: “information on chemicals throughout their life cycle including where appropriate, chemicals in products, is available, accessible, user friendly, adequate and appropriate to the needs of all stakeholders....”. . The need for international cooperation has been recognized to promote global harmonization or compatible information flow and access about chemicals in products, and to avoid a patchwork of information systems while maximizing benefits to all stakeholders. In doing so, the confidentiality requirements as stated in paragraph 15 (c) of the Overarching Policy Strategy have to be considered, as well as the other parts of paragraph 15. In the Global Plan of Action of the Strategic Approach, activities 108, 111 and 112 are of particular relevance.

Background

5. This section aims to describe the development of the present document rather than providing for a historical background of the issue as such. Matters encompassed by this issue were suggested for discussion by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (“information needs on chemicals in products”), the Government of Japan (“chemicals in products”) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, IFCS (“toys and chemicals safety”).

6. Opportunities to provide comment on the development of the present document were notified on the website of the Strategic Approach and by e-mail to Strategic Approach focal points. A workplan giving the intended timeline for preparation of the document was included. Interested stakeholders were requested to provide the facilitator with relevant information and signal their interest to participate in the work. This group of interested stakeholders has been the primary mechanism for further developing the present background information.

7. The first draft of the background paper was based on the outcomes of an informal international workshop on "Stakeholders' Information Needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products" held from 9 to 12 February 2009, Geneva, Switzerland. The aim of the workshop was to develop a common understanding of the problem, discuss the issue in relation to the criteria for an emerging policy issue developed during the informal discussions held to prepare for the second session of the International Conference on Chemical Safety and to develop proposals for cooperative actions.

8. At the workshop the issue was discussed in depth between stakeholders from the 63 Governments, and the representatives from intergovernmental organizations, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, the business community including relevant industry sectors, academia and research institutes, and non-governmental organizations. Regional focal points and non-governmental organizations were consulted ahead of the Workshop to ensure a geographical balance among participants. The presentations and report from the workshop can be found at the UNEP Chemicals website (http://www.chem.unep.ch/unepsaicm/cheminprod_dec08/default.htm). The workshop report, including conclusions and recommendations, served as the basis for preparation of this background information document. A copy of the conclusions and recommendations from the workshop is contained in the Annex to this document.

Magnitude of the problem

9. International trade results in chemicals being transported among regions. Such transport includes transportation of chemicals in products. This has caused adverse impacts in particular cases and may pose future risks to human health and the environment at different stages of the life cycle of a product: during production, use, recycling or disposal. This gives the issue of chemical substances in products a global dimension, and appropriate global efforts should be considered. The global dimension of the issue also indicates the magnitude of the problem. The extent and relative risk of exposure from chemicals in products is not yet fully understood. Enhanced access to information would however increase the knowledge and thus the understanding of the problem.

10. The report "Toxic substances in articles: the need for information"¹ provides case studies exemplifying the impact on human health and environment. Case studies are presented on perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in water proof textiles, lead in children toys and jewellery, nonylphenol ethoxylates contamination from textiles and hazardous substances in computers/electronics. It should be noted that these case studies are specific examples of effects from chemicals in products however, there are articles which are traded internationally that have not posed such problems. The report from the informal workshop on stakeholders information needs also identifies a number of other examples².

11. With today's practices combined with lack of information, workers, users, the general public and the environment may be exposed to unacceptable risks from hazardous substances in products. Vulnerable groups such as children, at all stages of development from conception to adolescence, may be at particular risk from exposure to a variety of products contain hazardous substances. In particular cases, these exposures have led to severe effects (e.g., lead in jewellery).

12. Not knowing the chemical content of components that companies use in their manufacturing can, beside the health and environmental effects, increase costs as recalls and withdrawal of toys or electronic equipments or other products from the market can be very costly and can damage companies' images. Better information on chemicals in products would therefore help companies in taking responsibility for the safety of the products that they produce and avoiding costs for recalls. There are also several examples of very expensive clean-up costs, which could be avoided with enhanced access to relevant information. One example is the use of PCB in insulated window glass panes used mainly in the 1950s - 1970s. The total discounted cost to replace PCB contaminated windowpanes and to remove

1 Nordic Council of Ministers (2008). Toxic substances in articles: The need for information. TemaNord 2008:596. <http://www.norden.org/pub/sk/showpub.asp?pubnr=2008:596>

2 Report from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholders information needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products. UNEP

and place PCB in a permanent storage has been estimated at EUR 37 million for the EU³. The study concludes that the estimated environmental costs for “the PCB mistake” in EU, during the years 1971 to 2018, will reach a total of at least EUR 15 billion.

13. Information can also give an incentive to stimulate the research for alternatives and implementation of substitution. We are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that recovery of products at the end of their useful lives is very important to achieve a sustainable future and can be done in a safe way only if the chemical contents of products are sufficiently known.

14. For products information on chemical content exists very rarely even though they may contain harmful substances which may be emitted in considerable amounts during use or disposal. Safer and suitable alternatives are sometimes available for those products containing these harmful substances but consumers are not always aware of their availability.

15. Historically, activities to address chemical risks have focused primarily on releases to air and water connected to the manufacturing process. However, hazardous substances may also be released from products during use and at the end of their useful life. For some chemicals, most human and environmental exposures can also occur during product use or disposal, rather than in the manufacturing stage. For example, in the case of DEHP, used as a plasticizer in polymer products, about 95 % of the emissions occur from end-product uses and waste handling⁴.

The relevance of the issue to countries or regions and stakeholders, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition

16. The consultative process recognises the issue as being of relevance to a range of different stakeholders, regions and countries. For example, the lack of information about chemicals in products was recognized at the informal workshop as a problem for the widest range of stakeholders, including industry, manufacturers, retailers, consumers, workers and government authorities. It may be noted that when referring to industry it includes also, among others, retailers and original equipment manufactures. In further development of this issue it is important to take into consideration the different needs of the different stakeholders.

17. The global dimension of this emerging policy issue makes it relevant to all regions. Initiatives have been taken by Governments, industry and others to facilitate information exchange on hazardous substances in products in some areas, but to date no comprehensive international actions have been developed. It is however important to consider that to make efficient use of available information there is a need for capacity to manage, interpret and apply the information available.

18. There is a global need for awareness-raising on the potential risks associated with hazardous chemicals in products and on available suitable alternatives both in developed and developing countries as well as in countries with economies in transition having a low level of awareness⁵. Some stakeholders has stressed that this is especially true with regards to the exposure of hazardous chemicals in products other than chemical products, for example toys or electronics.

The extent to which the issue is a cross-cutting nature

19. Through out the life cycle the chemicals contained in a product move along the supply chain and may cause risks to human health and the environment along this chain. Access to information about these chemicals is fundamental to the sound management of chemicals throughout the life cycle of products, involving a broad range of stakeholders and actors with specific information needs. The issue is relevant to different sectors of the society such as regulators, industry, workers, retailers, the protection of the public, and the environment. Communicating information on chemicals contained in products would open more possibilities for risk reduction of chemicals at all stages in the product life-cycle: during design, manufacturing, distribution and use as well as in the disposal/recycling phase. The issue of information on chemicals in products is part of the life cycle approach to management of

3 Nordic Council of Ministers (2004). Cost of Late Action - the Case of PCB, TemaNord 2004:556.

4 European Commission, Institute for Health and Consumer Protection, Toxicology and Chemical Substance (TCS), European Chemicals Bureau. “BIS (2-ETHYLHEXYL) PHTHALATE (DEHP), Summary Risk Assessment Report,” 2008, accessed at http://ecb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/Existing-Chemicals/RISK_ASSESSMENT/SUMMARY/dehpsum042.pdf, October 28, 2008

5 Report from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholders information needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products. UNEP

chemicals at the point when a chemical substance or mixture becomes part of a product whether that product is a component of another product or the final commercial product itself.

20. An improved information flow could also stimulate development of new products and processes through innovation, reduce risks and lead to economic benefits.

21. Recovery of disposed products is very important to achieve a sustainable future – and this is only possible to do in a safe way if the contents of hazardous substances are sufficiently known.

The level of knowledge about the issue

22. There is no widespread or systemic level of knowledge on how information of chemicals in products could be best consolidated, disseminated and made accessible, but a wide body of experiential knowledge exists. There is a general lack of awareness through out the life cycle and the level of knowledge also differs among different industry sectors. Understanding of the problem related to the possible risks with hazardous substances in products is generally considered to be low. Although data and experience exist to a certain extent there is today not a general understanding or a system ensuring that stakeholders have access to appropriate information. The level of information might be quite detailed early in the supply chain but as the product moves along the life cycle the information seems to get lost and the general awareness and knowledge further down the life cycle is considered to be generally low. Awareness about a harmful substance in a product usually develops after a problem has already occurred. No structured information sources exist but rather information is produced on a reactive basis (example formaldehyde in indoor environment and plasticizers in PVC). Lack of coordination has lead to problems that have occurred in several regions, causing unnecessary costs and suffering. Some consider the nature of the problem poorly understood. However improved information on chemicals in products should contribute to better understanding of the problem.

23. The background study “Toxic Substances in Articles: the Need for Information”⁶, states that in developing an information system for chemicals in articles, a number of existing systems around the world are worth examining. In the absence of any internationally harmonized approach to information on chemicals in articles, some jurisdictions have created information disclosure requirements. The study discusses a few innovative policies that may be of interest as models for future policy efforts. These include national legal requirements for information disclosure and information management systems that have been created by the private sector.

24. The need for awareness-raising on the potential risks associated with chemicals in products and on available suitable alternatives has been recognized, especially in developing countries.⁷ Also, there is a need to counteract the risk of creation of double standards, i.e. information on hazardous chemicals in products and exposure to them should be available for stakeholders in all countries in a fair way.

25. It should be recognized that there are certain industry sectors that have invested in the development of infrastructure to provide adequate and appropriate information about chemical content in products in different cases. The level of knowledge might therefore differ among different stakeholders.

The extent to which the issue is being addressed by other bodies

26. At many levels of the supply chain efforts have been made to remedy the problem of the lack of information. This section introduces some ongoing initiatives with relevance to this emerging issue. Some of these systems could, potentially, provide a starting point for the development of a proposal for an information system or framework of systems and or other appropriate actions. It should be noted that this section does not include any evaluation but simply notes relevant areas of work.

27. The consultative process showed that although there is some ongoing work with relevance to this emerging issue, current efforts and capacities are not sufficient for informed decision making to protect human health and the environment⁸.

6 <http://www.norden.org/pub/sk/showpub.asp?pubnr=2008:596>

7 Report from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholders information needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products. UNEP

8 Report from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholders information needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products. UNEP

28. Examples of information systems can be found in the industry sector with the International Material Data System (IMDS), developed by auto manufacturers, or the Joint Industry Guide for Material Composition Declaration for electronic Products (JIG). Other examples are consumer-oriented databases such as Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)⁹ designed to facilitate decision-making when purchasing computers and monitors. Also, regulatory initiatives exist on a sub-regional level.

29. The OECD is working with completing and improving current information on chemical releases. The Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) include today direct point source releases (energy and manufacturing production processes and waste handling) and information of releases from diffuse sources in a limited way. The OECD Task Force on PRTRs is compiling information on releases from products, release mechanisms and release estimation techniques. The results will be published in the beginning of 2010. Thus, the PRTRs include information on chemical releases to the environment, which is a more narrow scope than is intended by this emerging issue, however it could provide a useful input to the process.

30. Recovery of disposed articles is important but only possible to do in a safe way if the contents of hazardous substances are sufficiently known. In that aspect there are connections between better information on chemicals in products and the aim of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (the Basel Convention) to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from generation, management, transport and disposal of waste. A review of the goal and scope of this initiative should take into account ongoing work under the Basel Convention's Partnership for Action on Computer Equipment (PACE) to ensure any possible synergies between the initiatives.

31. The *Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)*¹⁰ addresses the sustainable use of chemicals and sustainable production of products including the implications regarding recycling possibilities for products that contain hazardous chemicals. However although important linkages could be identified between the Marrakech process and this emerging issue no specific actions on information on chemicals in products has been identified.

32. For substances and mixtures the need for information for professional users and consumers is rather well established. Systems for dissemination of hazard information have existed in several countries for many years and recently the, *GHS*, has been established. This system does not cover chemicals in products, for example toys or electronics. However, the classifications developed within *GHS* may be useful for the further elaborations on chemicals in products.

The feasibility of the action proposed

33. In the preparatory work on emerging policy issues three submissions were identified with regards to information needs on chemicals in products, and these were prioritized for consideration of cooperative actions at ICCM 2. These submissions were made by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union ("information needs on chemicals in products"), the Government of Japan ("chemicals in products") and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) ("toys and chemicals safety"). In its submission, the European Union referred to the growing understanding of the spread of and potential exposure to chemicals from products such as computers, textiles, toys and costume jewellery, the health risks to end users and the economic risks for producers. The Government of Japan said that there was a need for the sound management of chemicals in products through, for example, the recovery of chemicals from products in the waste recycling system. IFCS pointed to possible adverse health effects for children of chemicals in toys as a result of the toys' intended use or foreseeable misuse, the increased vulnerability of children to chemical harm and the actions agreed by IFCS at its fifth session (Budapest, 2006).

34. The European Union suggested in their proposal that ICCM 2 should consider adopting a decision to start a process that could aim at elaborating a proposal for information system/systems relating to the chemical content in products. In the consultative process SAICM interested stakeholders from all regions, including the government of Japan and IFCS, have been involved in the work to further elaborate this proposal. The process resulted in a recommendation to ICCM 2 as follows:

9 <http://www.epeat.net/>.

10 The Marrakech process on sustainable consumption and production is a global multi-stakeholder process to support the implementation of sustainable consumption and production and the elaboration of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable production and consumption which will be reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development during the 2010/11 two-year cycle <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech>.

Agrees, with a view to take appropriate cooperative actions, to further considers the need for information on chemicals in products in the supply chain and throughout their life-cycle and recognises the need for further actions to fulfil and implement the SAICM 2020 goal with a specific emphasis on the Objective 15 (b) of the Overarching Policy Strategy;

Decides to the establish a working group with a mandate to, in accordance with the terms of reference set out in Annex, review existing initiatives on information systems and other relevant information, and develop a proposal for an information system or framework of systems and/or actions, where appropriate, to address such need for information, subject to available resources (the “Working Group”);

35. Information on chemicals in products is relevant to and supportive of the implementation of a number of the elements in SAICM as well as the other prioritized emerging policy issues. For information on chemicals in products to be useful and turned into knowledge and action for risk reduction, adequate infrastructures are required. The SAICM OPS recognizes this in its objectives particularly those covering capacity building and technical cooperation. However more detailed actions related to capacity building is currently considered being outside the scope of this issue and should be dealt within the overall work on capacity building.

36. The consultative process including the informal workshop has identified and developed a supporting rationale for further actions:

(a) Current efforts and capacities to provide information about hazardous chemicals in products and suitable and available alternatives are not sufficient for informed decision making to fully understand and, where needed, protect human health and the environment from risks that may occur throughout the life-cycle of products;

(b) Cooperative action is needed at all levels for effective and efficient information generation and accessibility (i.e. international, regional, sub-regional, national with the involvement of all relevant sectors and stakeholders) subject to national authorities and regulations, and within available resources;

(c) Improved information flow can stimulate the development of and demand for new products and processes through innovation, which in turn can reduce business and health/environmental risks and result in economic benefits.

37. Subparagraph 24 (j) of the Overarching Policy Strategy calls for appropriate action on emerging policy issues. The proposed action on “information on chemicals in products” is for the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management to consider and decide upon the establishment of a working group with a mandate to review existing information and develop a proposal for an information system or framework of systems and/or actions, to address such need for information, subject to available resources.

38. Paragraph 24 (c) of the Overarching Policy Strategy states that the Conference will provide guidance on implementation of the Strategic Approach. Through the consultative process SAICM stakeholders identified the need for international cooperation on this issue to help promote harmonization in order to avoid a patchwork of information systems while ensuring compatibility with existing systems and maximizing benefits to all stakeholders. For that reason the overall purpose with the proposed cooperative action is to promote the fulfilment of the SAICM 2020 goal with a special emphasis to the Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 15 (b) and related activities in the Global Plan of Action. In doing so the confidentiality requirements as stated in paragraph 15(c) of the Overarching Policy Strategy should be considered, as well as existing initiatives and information as outlined in this document and that other stakeholders might bring during the further elaboration of this issue, and the efficiency of the systems/actions within the resources available. The proposed cooperative action should therefore provide further guidelines to implement the relevant objectives and activities in SAICM.

39. Interested SAICM stakeholders were invited to contribute to the development of this document. The comments have shown a general support for the need of further work on international level on this emerging policy issue and the proposed cooperative actions. The proposed cooperative actions suggest that the Working Group shall, subject to available resources, carry out the tasks, relevant to the OPS Objective 15 (b), to review existing initiatives on information systems and other relevant information, and develop a proposal for an information system or framework of systems and/or actions, with an emphasis of the following priority areas:

- (a) identification and prioritization of product groups and scientifically determined hazardous chemicals including identification of areas where risk may occur;
- (b) identification of the relevant stakeholders and their specific information need, further elaboration on which information to provide and in what format;
- (c) elaboration on how governments and stakeholders will gain access to such information system and how it will operate;
- (d) analysis of the costs and benefits to industry, governments and others in providing and gaining access to such information, as well as potential constraints (e.g. confidential business information) associated with providing such information; and
- (e) appropriate ways and other solutions for making the information available to all stakeholders.

40. As mentioned throughout this paper the consultative process indicates a common understanding of the need to address this emerging policy issue. The comments received also point towards a commonality across some of the problems, needs and proposed actions. Different stakeholders have expressed different needs and interests. The different needs have been taken into account to the extent possible, however as there might still be differences and it is therefore suggested that the proposed Working Group is given the task, as one priority area, to further identify the specific needs of relevant stakeholders. For the same reason more detailed comments on scope, implementation, costs and benefits have been left out as considered being part of the tasks of the Working Group. This also applies to comments that address more generic SAICM implementation matters such as the need for capacity building, financial needs and technical support. The paper notes, however, that progress in these areas is of high importance for making use of an improved information flow. The comments received reflect to some extent different perspectives with regards to what and when information may be accessible. This could be considered being a natural part of different wishes from different stakeholder depending on where in the life cycle the information might be used. For examples some stakeholders see the need for more exhaustive systems when information is being used for recycling or recovery, while others focus on risks related to exposure or release during product use. For that reason this might be considered to be an area for further work for the proposed working group when carrying out its tasks on priorities, needs, costs and benefits.

41. Taking into account received comments and discussion on this issue the proposed cooperative actions seems to be feasible and needed.

Other relevant information

1. The background study "Toxic Substances in Articles: the Need for Information", that was prepared for the informal Workshop held in Geneva February 2009 and presented at a side event at ICCM2, (available <http://www.norden.org/pub/sk/showpub.asp?pubnr=2008:596>)
2. Report from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholders information needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products. UNEP
3. Information om varors innehåll av farliga kemiska ämnen, English summary KemI rapport 6/04
4. Toys and Chemical Safety - A Thought Starter, Prepared by: Forum Standing Committee Working Group (IFCS/FORUM-V/03-TS, 11 July 2006) (available in UN languages) http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum5/meet_docs/en/index.html
5. Toys and Chemical Safety, Recommendations of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (Forum V), FORUM V Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Budapest, Hungary, 25 - 29 September 2006, FINAL REPORT (IFCS/FORUM-V/05w, 30 September 2006) (available in UN languages) <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum5/report/en/index.html>
6. Dakar Recommendations on Substitution and Alternatives; Forum VI Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Dakar, Senegal, 15 - 19 September 2008 Final Report, Executive Summary (IFCS/FORUM-VI/07w , 10 October 2008) (available in UN languages) <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum6/report/en/index.html>

7. Dakar Statement on Manufactured Nanomaterials; Forum VI Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Dakar, Senegal, 15 - 19 September 2008 Final Report, Executive Summary (IFCS/FORUM-VI/07w , 10 October 2008) (available in UN languages) <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum6/report/en/index.html>
8. IFCS Priorities for Action beyond 2000, Forum III Third Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Final Report, Executive Summary (IFCS/FORUM III/23w, 20 October 2000) (available in UN languages) <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum3/en/index.html>
9. Bahia Declaration, Forum III Third Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Final Report, Executive Summary (IFCS/FORUM III/23w, 20 October 2000) (available in UN languages) <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum3/en/index.html>

Annex

Extract of the conclusions and recommendations from the Informal Workshop on Stakeholder' Information Needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products

Held from 9 to 12 February 2009, Geneva

The Workshop,

Recognizes that:

- hazardous chemicals in articles/products are transported globally through international trade and have caused adverse impacts and may pose future risks to human health and the environment at different stages of the life cycle of an article/product: during production, use, recycling or disposal
- knowledge and information about chemicals in articles/products is fundamental to the sound management of chemicals throughout the life cycle of articles/products and is an important cross-cutting issue involving a broad range of stakeholders with specific information needs
- initiatives have been taken by Governments, industry and others to facilitate information exchange on hazardous substances in articles/products in some areas, but to date no comprehensive global action has been developed
- there is a global need for awareness-raising on the potential risks associated with chemicals in articles/products and on available alternatives especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition having a low level of awareness
- subparagraph b (i) of Objective 15 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of SAICM on knowledge and information states *inter alia* that: information on chemicals throughout their life cycle, including, where appropriate, chemicals in products, is available, accessible, user friendly, adequate and appropriate to the needs of all stakeholders.
- information on chemicals in articles/products is a vital element supporting capacity building and other actions in SAICM

Concludes that:

- current efforts and capacities to provide information about chemicals in articles/products and alternatives are not sufficient for informed decision making to protect human health and the environment throughout the life-cycle of articles/products
- for effective and efficient information generation and accessibility, cooperative action is needed at all levels (international, regional, sub-regional, national and intersectoral) with the involvement of all relevant sectors
- international cooperation on this issue is essential and urgent action is needed to ensure global harmonization of information flow and access, avoid the creation of a patchwork of information systems and maximize the benefits to all stakeholders
- improved information flow stimulates development of new articles/products and processes through innovation, reduces business risks and has economic benefits

Recommends that:

- a working group be established by the ICCM at its second session that responds to the need for information on chemicals in articles/products in the supply chain and throughout the life-cycle with a mandate to review existing information and develop a proposal for an information system or framework of systems and/or actions
 - the working group may be open-ended and be comprised of stakeholder groups on the basis of equitable geographical distribution including a number of countries per region, relevant experts, industry and other actors in the supply chain and non-governmental organizations
 - the working group addresses a range of issues and goals, including
 - which chemicals and articles/products to prioritize;
 - identification of the relevant stakeholders and their specific information needs
 - what information to provide and in what format;
 - appropriate technical and other solutions
 - the working group takes into account the following key elements identified by the workshop:
 - where appropriate, complementary activities of other relevant emerging policy issues
 - work undertaken in international fora, including the Marrakesh process and possibilities for synergies
 - work and activities in other multilateral and international processes that are relevant to information systems such as the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
 - specific challenges and needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, such as capacity building, technical and financial assistance and technology transfer
 - special needs of small and medium sized enterprises and the informal sector
 - the working group make use of the outcome of the workshop when carrying out its tasks
 - the working group incorporate any further guidance that the ICCM may provide at its second session
 - during the intersessional period, the working group conduct its business primarily through electronic means and teleconferences, meeting in person and on the margins of other existing meetings as appropriate
 - the Working Group may work with the SAICM secretariat to help facilitate the development and use of relevant information, case examples, approaches and tools that might be compiled consistent with its clearinghouse function
 - the working group provide a report on the progress of its work through the SAICM website and to the third session of the ICCM
-