

## **Summary of the technical briefing on “Evaluating Progress Towards the 2020 Target”**

1. The summary of this technical briefing has been prepared at the request of the Bureau. The technical briefing was held Sunday 16 September 2012 from 10:00 to 11:30 at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi.
2. The Strategic Approach provides a policy framework to guide efforts to achieve the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goal that by 2020, chemicals will be produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment. A key function of the International Conference on Chemicals Management is to periodically review the Strategic Approach with a view to evaluating progress against the 2020 target. The first periodic review will be undertaken at the present session of the Conference - 8 years ahead of the 2020 target.
3. In order to support the review, the secretariat has prepared a document based on information provided by stakeholders using an online reporting tool. Quantitative information on 20 agreed indicators of progress covering the five areas of the Overarching Policy Strategy objectives (risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity building and technical cooperation and illegal international traffic) is provided in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6. In addition, documents prepared by the IOMC, ICCA, IPEN and Strategic Approach Regional Focal Points give their perspectives on the progress with the implementation of SAICM (see respectively documents SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/9, INF/7, INF/8 and INF/36).
4. The highlights of these information documents were presented at the technical briefing session followed by a general discussion among participants. The objective of the technical briefing was to provide an overview of the information which is available to assist the Conference in making an evaluation of progress towards the 2020 goal. This summary reflects some of the key points from the information presented and common points that were raised that might assist the Conference in the formal discussions later in the week.

### **Key points made at the technical briefing**

5. The reporting by stakeholders on progress in implementing the Strategic Approach has been a worthwhile effort. The large response rate to the reporting on the 20 indicators, coordinated by the secretariat reflects a strong commitment of the SAICM stakeholders. The submissions made enable a robust insight into the overall progress with implementation of the Strategic Approach. For example it is evident that in a very high percentage of countries, relevant ministries (such as those of environment, health, agriculture, labor, and industry) are all involved, and that the Strategic Approach is in practice a real multi-sectoral effort with a strong engagement of a variety of stakeholders.
6. The information compiled by the secretariat was well supplemented by information from the other documents, which showed that:
  - IOMC Participating Organizations are engaged in activities in almost countries, their commitments cover most of the activities listed in the Global Plan of Action and their guidance and tools (e.g. from FAO, WHO, OECD and UNITAR) are very well used;
  - the ICCA data show that there is considerable progress made by industry since 2009, keeping in mind that there remains important areas where further efforts are needed;

- the 300 SAICM-related projects undertaken by IPEN can be considered as an important indication of the extensive work of the NGO community in catalyzing improved chemicals management;
- the reporting of progress by Regional Focal Points show that regions have achieved to set clear priorities for their many activities and that the Quick Start Programme has been essential in establishing good foundations for sound management of chemicals.

7. The following general key points regarding progress with implementation of the Strategic Approach were made during the technical briefing session:

- SAICM has been instrumental in focusing chemical safety discussions, at national, regional and the global level in the context of sustainable development, even though awareness-raising could be further improved;
- SAICM has greatly helped stakeholders to see chemical safety in an overarching perspective; while the UNEP Chemicals Conventions are very important, they cover selected aspects of chemical safety, and the OPS objectives have been very helpful to lay out the bigger picture; further integration of SAICM and implementation of other priority international chemicals instruments could be explored;
- the reporting on the 20 indicators shows that there is a high level of activity regarding the OPS objectives on risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance and illegal international traffic;
- SAICM efforts concerning the QSP and work on emerging policy issues have been of special relevance in achieving progress in implementation;
- the survey from the on-line reporting tool indicates that the level of activity with respect to capacity-building and technical cooperation is markedly lower; while the QSP has achieved important results, more efforts, in the QSP context and through other channels, are needed for this OPS objective;
- the pace of progress with implementation appears to be greatest in the Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others regions; the Latin America and Caribbean region appeared to move at a somewhat lesser pace; while the African region is moving well ahead, there remains much to be done; these outcomes could be considered with respect to prioritizing capacity-building efforts; in addition to the existing priority for least developed countries and small island developing states;
- overall it was seen as necessary to accelerate the pace of the Strategic Approach implementation in order to achieve the 2020 goals by that time;
- more and better collaboration among all stakeholders and intensified partnership efforts would further promote effective and efficient implementation of the Strategic Approach;
- Greater emphasis is needed on fully integrating the Strategic Approach into the sustainable development agenda;
- Placing higher political priority on the Strategic Approach at the national level could help facilitate greater coordination, financial resources, and infrastructure needed to achieve the 2020 goal;
- Strategic Approach processes, procedures and planning are now well established; progress might be further accelerated if Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including the private sector, would now, even more than in the past, focus on achieving practical results in countries, including formulation and implementation of preventive actions.
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