

# **Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)**

## **International Project Steering Committee- Reporting modalities**

Teleconference of Wednesday 17 December 2008

Secretariat summary of discussion

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1. In accordance with the understanding reached during the informal discussions held in Rome on 23 and 24 October 2008, the secretariat had reconvened the international project steering committee as part of the follow-up work in preparation for the second session of the International Conference for the Management of Chemicals. Under agenda item 4 (c) of the provisional draft agenda, the Conference will consider the modalities for reporting by stakeholders on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach.

### **Participation**

2. The following participants took part in the teleconference: Chris Allan (Environmental Health Fund), John Atherton (ICCM), Roxanne Blessam (Palau), Ana Corado (US), Maria Delvin (Sweden), Mike Gribble (ICCA), Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica), Suzanne Lee (Palau), Kaj Madeson (UNEP), Katerina Sebkova (Czech Republic), Tim Meredith (WHO) and Henry Williams (Liberia). Apologies were received from Bjorn Eriksson (representing the labour sector) and Valentina Radjenovic (Serbia).

### **Facilitator**

3. The representative of the US agreed to facilitate discussions at the teleconference.

### **Adoption of agenda**

4. The draft agenda prepared by the secretariat was adopted with no amendments.

### **Taking stock of work on reporting modalities**

5. The secretariat provided an overview of the work that had taken place following the last teleconference of the international project steering committee on 4 March 2008 and made reference to the following documents prepared for the informal discussions: SAICM/InfDisc/4 – summary of reporting project outcomes; SAICM/InfDisc/INF/4 – the possible indicators for implementation of the Strategic Approach prepared in the Government of Canada-sponsored project by Resource Futures International (RFI); SAICM/InfDisc/INF/4/Add.2- the submission by ICCA on the possible industry indicators; SAICM/InfDisc/INF/4/Add.3 – the African regional position; and SAICM/InfDisc/INF/5 – the baseline estimates report prepared in the Government of Canada-sponsored project by RFI. The secretariat also reported on the pilot testing phase in which nine Governments had completed the proposed questionnaires for gathering indicator data and on the results from that pilot testing which were contained in document SAICM/InfDisc/INF/4/Add.1.

6. The secretariat then introduced an extract from the record of the informal discussions held in Rome on 23 and 24 October 2008 where the work undertaken since the last teleconference had been reviewed and it had been discussed whether the indicators provided a good basis for consideration by the second session of the Conference in May 2009. The participants in the informal discussions

appreciated the large amount of work that had been undertaken so far but called for the indicators to be reviewed further in order to simplify them and to make them more user-friendly and less resource-intensive to apply. A number of participants in the informal discussions had spoken of different approaches to be considered in simplifying the proposed indicators. The secretariat was requested to produce a single “slimmed-down” questionnaire covering 15 to 20 indicators. It was understood that stakeholders could supplement the questionnaire with their own reporting and use the work contained in document SAICM/InfDisc/INF4 as appropriate.

### **Preparation of the revised proposal**

7. The secretariat briefly explained how the report of the informal discussions had been taken into consideration when preparing the proposal of the secretariat contained in document 4 for the present teleconference and referred to the explanatory notes contained in annex 1 of document 4 as setting out the rationale for the revised proposed indicators. Two additional background documents were welcomed by teleconference participants: firstly a document containing the informal working notes of the secretariat mapping the original RFI proposal, the temporary reporting questionnaires and the revised proposed indicators, and secondly, a document containing the guidelines for monitoring and observance of the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and use of Pesticides.

8. The chair invited the participants in the teleconference to indicate whether the revised proposed indicators were broadly acceptable after addressing the concerns raised in the informal discussions. A number of participants expressed the view that selection of appropriate indicators was important in ensuring that trends in the progress with the implementation of the Strategic Approach could be monitored over time in a credible and transparent manner. All participants that made interventions indicated support for the approach and for the revised proposals and expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat in preparing the simplified proposals.

9. One participant referred to the FAO guidelines as illustrating the benefit of adhoc reporting in addition to use of a core set of revised proposed indicators. She also foresaw the possibility for this to provide an opportunity for thematic reporting from time-to-time which could be very informative for the Conference in being able to evaluate certain issues, including those not apparent in the early stages of implementation. Another participant noted that several of the indicators were more applicable to Governments and that further refinements in formulation might need to be considered for other stakeholder groups e.g., IGOs and NGOs. The value of complementary reporting was emphasized in this respect by representatives of both industry and civil society. Both representatives spoke of their intention to provide, in preparation for discussions at the second session of the Conference, further information in which they would identify the areas of the reporting indicators where complementary information from their stakeholder group could be provided. One participant indicated that information from some stakeholders might also be incorporated in national or regional processes. Incorporating different types of information into the assessment of each indicator was also proposed for consideration, recognizing that some stakeholders did not have a “global constituency or footprint”. Such information might also be a form of complementary information.

10. Participants discussed how the different stages of progress had been incorporated into the revised proposals and recollected that in the earlier proposal information had requested information on whether activities were “indevelopment,” “completed,” or “notplanned.” The secretariat noted that in the current revised proposal an attempt had been made to incorporate more precisely the activity to be measured e.g., whether legislation was in place, and that this was part of the simplified approach. Supplementary information on the different stages or narrative comment could be invited from those completing the questionnaire if wished. However the experience from the pilot testing had shown that asking for this information for every question added to the burden of reporting. Participants were encouraged to indicate if any of the revised indicators would benefit from the addition of supplementary questions about the stage of progress, otherwise such an approach should be left as optional.

11. The following specific comments were made in relation to individual indicators, as numbered 1-20 in the revised proposals contained in document 4:

- Indicator 8: Clarify whether research might be wider than research into safer alternatives
- Indicator 13: Add information to the column headed “observations” to take account of the fact that not all countries will prepare a dedicated SAICM plan of action.
- Consider inclusion of additional indicators against the OPS section on illegal international traffic e.g., those not necessarily based on legislation. NGO activities, particularly in industry might be relevant.
- Indicator 6. It was reported that regional implementation of GHS was important for some countries.

12. Participants discussed the frequency of reporting to be proposed and the appropriate baseline against which progress was measured and supported the detailed consideration of these issues by the Conference. Participants noted the secretariats suggested inclusion of reporting at least every three years but requested a more specific formulation be put forward for consideration. One formulation that received support during the teleconference would be to have two rounds of reporting ahead of the third session of the Conference, reporting within the first year which would focus on progress achieved by stakeholders at the end of 2008, with a second reporting exercise looking at progress achieved at the end of 2010. This end of 2010 report would be compiled during 2011 in preparation for the third session of Conference in 2012. It was proposed that information from the baseline estimates report should also be taken into account as much as possible in making the baseline assessment together with relevant information from responses to the temporary reporting questionnaires being used in preparation for the second session of the Conference.

13. Finally participants discussed the process envisaged in future for preparing the assessment report after the collection of indicator information had been completed. Several participants spoke of the value of engaging regional groups in such as process, pointing to success in other forums such as the Stockholm Convention Global Monitoring Programme. The value in having a group to assist in putting together the global report was also broadly supported for further consideration.

### **Next steps**

14. Participants agreed that the proposed indicators should be put forward for consideration by the Conference as a proposal of the secretariat indicating that consultation with the international project steering committee had been supportive. Additional elements raised during the teleconference, particularly those relating to flexibility, complementary reporting, thematic ad-hoc reporting, frequency of reporting and preparation of future overall assessment of progress should be included in the secretariat paper.

15. In order to ensure the availability of the Conference paper in official languages, the secretariat would need to finalise its content by the end of December 2008. Further comments in writing, particularly to clarify the proposed revised indicators themselves would need to reach the secretariat in the days following the teleconference and by 30 December 2008 at the latest. An update of the proposal would be made available to members of the international project steering committee at the end of 2008 incorporating the comments made during the teleconference.

16. The secretariat thanked participants of the teleconference, for their supportive comments and suggestions and their time ahead of the holiday period.

### **Other business**

17. No items of other business were raised.

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