

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

The way forward on emerging policy issues

Preparations for the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM)

Teleconference of the “Friends of the Secretariat”, Friday 12 December 2008

Secretariat summary of discussion

1. The Friends of the Secretariat held a teleconference on 12 December 2008 to assist with the completion of preparations for the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the consideration of emerging policy issues under agenda item 4 (f) of the provisional draft agenda. Under this agenda item, the Conference may wish to consider recommending possible cooperative action on priority emerging policy issues as well as a longer-term procedure for carrying out its functions on emerging policy issues as set out in paragraph 24 (j) of the Overarching Policy Strategy.

Participation

2. The following stakeholder representatives participated in the teleconference:

(a) Governments, represented by official SAICM regional focal points (in this case Sweden, Japan, Nigeria, and Romania) [Absent: Argentina]; plus up to two regional representatives per region, (in this case Belarus, Iran, Jamaica, and the United States) [*Absent: Egypt, South Africa, Thailand, Georgia and Cuba*],

(b) Non-governmental organizations, represented by the Environmental Health Fund (IPEN/EHF, for public interest NGOs), the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE, for the health sector), and the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA, for industry), [Absent: International Trade Union Council (ITUC) for the labour sector],

(c) Inter-governmental organizations represented by WHO [*Absent FAO, ILO and UNEP*].

Facilitator

3. The representative of the Government of the Czech Republic also participated in the teleconference and agreed to facilitate discussions at the teleconference, following her role as co-chair of the informal discussions held in Rome on 23 and 24 October 2008.

Adoption of agenda

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

Comments received on the summary record and table of annotated emerging policy issues

5. The secretariat reported that comments had been received in writing from WHO, IPEN, ISDE and ICCA and these had been circulated to all participants ahead of the teleconference. Comments had also been received from the Central and Eastern European (CEE) regional focal point to convey the outcomes of regional consultations shortly before the teleconference and these were introduced during the teleconference.

6. The secretariat noted that document 4 for the present teleconference had been revised to take account of the comments made during the last teleconference and those subsequently received in writing. She added that a further annotation would be made to reflect the status of consideration of Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (reference 15 in document 4).

7. Participants discussed the possible future use of document 4, as amended, and agreed to recommend that it form part of the documentation for consideration by the Conference. This was considered appropriate as it provides a transparent and comprehensive overview of how each submission had been annotated, in keeping with the procedure requested during the informal discussions held in Rome on 23-24 October 2008. In addition it would provide an easily accessible reference to the submissions that had been received by the secretariat in preparation for the second session of the Conference. Participants agreed to provide any remaining additions to the document before 19 December 2008 when it would be finalised for translation. The title of the document would be "Annotated list of submissions-emerging policy issues."

8. The comments received from ICCA requested the addition of the following footnote to table 1 of the summary record (document 5 for the present meeting) "Given the limited resources available, ICCA advocates rigorous screening criteria to ensure that only those issues most relevant to SAICM are placed on the ICCM-2 agenda, and that SAICM is not duplicating the work of other forums. In identifying relevant priorities, ICCA is not advocating that these necessarily be added to the ICCM-2 agenda."

Continuation of discussion: Actions to be requested of the second session of the Conference

9. Participants received an update from regional focal points on the completion of their consultations aimed at identifying those submitted emerging policy issues could be best dealt with in detail during the second session of the Conference. Wherever possible regional focal points identified those submitted emerging policy issues receiving most support for detailed consideration at the upcoming second session of the Conference. In particular, participants noted the importance attached by the African regional focal point and by the representative of the Latin America and the Caribbean region to emerging policy issues identified by developing countries. These were sometimes issues seen as not sufficiently addressed from the perspectives of developing countries despite the fact that they may be known about in other countries or seen as being addressed by existing bodies. Participants also reflected on the importance of the second session of the Conference in starting to undertake its functions to focus attention, call for appropriate action on emerging policy issues and forge consensus on priorities for cooperative action (paragraph 24 (j) of the Overarching Policy Strategy).

10. The secretariat provided a further update on the format for the second session, emphasizing that the Conference would need to consider both the future modalities for handling emerging policy issues and any specific emerging policy issues recommended for detailed consideration and explained that a technical briefing would take place on Sunday 10 May 2009 for preparing the plenary consideration of specific emerging policy issues. Participants agreed that the technical briefing might also usefully include an overview of the preparations undertaken in the follow-up to the Rome informal discussions particularly to describe the process of annotating the issues according to the selection criteria and to convey a sense of the range of issues considered by stakeholders to be emerging policy issues.

11. After hearing the views of participants it was agreed to recommend the following issues for detailed consideration under agenda item 4 (f) of the draft provisional agenda for second session of the Conference;

- (a) “Chemicals in products” (reference 11 in document 4);
- (b) “Nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials” (reference 18 in document4);
- (c) “Electronic waste”(reference 2 in document 4); and
- (d) “Lead in paints” (reference 6 in document 4).

12. In addition to the annotated selection criteria, participants took into account that the above issues reflected an emerging policy issue which were not yet addressed internationally, an issue about which the global chemicals community was not fully aware and issues of particular and immediate concern for developing countries. While several participants wished to prioritize consideration of heavy metals, given the breadth of this issue, the fact that it was the subject of detailed consideration by the UNEP Governing Council (GC), and given that UNEP GC would meet a few months before the second session of the Conference, a narrower more practical focus of the topic was supported i.e., “lead in paints.”

13. Participants also agreed to recommend:

- (a) “Health sector-prevention of chemicals-related adverse health impacts” (reference 20 in document 4) be addressed through the planned high-level round table on public health, chemicals and the environment, with the understanding that the results from these round table discussions would be subsequently considered by the second session of the Conference in a plenary session.
- (b) “PFOA emission reduction and perfluorinated chemicals” (reference 15 in document 4) be discussed in a side event during the week of the second session.
- (c) “Ecologically-based IPM and IVM” (reference 26 in document 4) be further discussed by regional groups, in full collaboration with FAO and WHO.

14. The secretariat informed participants that these recommendations would now be incorporated into an ICCM2 meeting document. This meeting document could be supplemented by any proposals for draft resolutions or other ICCM action when ready. In addition, lead authors would be identified and invited to develop, together with interested stakeholders, more detailed information documents on each issue. These information documents would be needed by early March 2009 and the secretariat would provide the authors with further guidance by the start of January 2009. ICCA reiterated its earlier comment about not duplicating the work of other forums and advocated the engagement of the secretariat of the Basel Convention in respect of “Electronic waste.”

Other business

15. Participants congratulated the representative of the Government of Sweden on her new role as regional focal point for the Western European and Others Group.

16. The representative of the Government of the Czech Republic, in her role as facilitator of the teleconference, thanked participants for assisting in the completion of the follow-up work on emerging policy issues that had been requested during the Rome informal discussions.