

**Practical Information for Participants in the
Latin America and Caribbean regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to
International Chemicals Management (SAICM), Panama City, Panama,
14-16 February 2008**

* Note: The SAICM regional meeting will be preceded by UNEP workshop on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from 11 to 12 February 2008 and on Strengthening Chemicals Management Infrastructure from 12 to 13 February 2008.

Date and Venue

The meeting will be held from 14 to 16 February 2008 at the Hotel El-Panama, Panama City, Panama. Registration will commence at 8:00 a.m. and the opening session will start at 10:00 a.m.

Hotel Address:

Hotel El-Panama,
Via Espana 111,
Panama City, 1753
Panama 1
Tel: +507 215 9000
Fax: +507 269 3309
E-mail: lguerra@elpanama.com
Website: www.elpanama.com

Language

The meeting will be conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation in Spanish.

Travel Arrangements

For those participants receiving travel assistance, the SAICM secretariat will provide the least costly return airfare from your nearest airport to Panama City. You should make a reservation in accordance with the instructions attached to the travel assistance confirmation letter. You are kindly requested to provide us with full details of your travel itinerary as soon as possible.

Daily Allowance and Payment

Participants sponsored by UNEP will also be provided with accommodation, breakfast, lunch and 30% of Daily Subsistence Allowance at the UN rate for Panama. In accordance with the UN rules, the allowance is paid from the first day of arrival in Panama over the most direct route up to and including the last day before the traveler returns home on the first available flight after the closure of the meeting. Beyond the payment of this allowance, UNEP accepts no responsibility for the payment of the hotel bills, meals, taxis, excess baggage charges, insurance, ground transport charges, and other incidental expenses. These liabilities should be settled directly by the participants.

Accommodation

Accommodation for funded participants has provisionally been reserved at the Hotel El Panama. Such participants should contact the Hotel El-Panama (Ms. Ludy Guerra) to confirm a room and provide their expected arrival and departure dates. Ms. Guerra can be reached using the following contact details.

Ludy Guerra
Gerente de Cuenta
Tel: +507 215 9446
Cell: +507 6673 3921
Fax: +507 269 3309
Email: lguerra@elpanama.com

Other participants are requested to make their own hotel arrangements. A list of hotels close to the meeting venue can be found on the SAICM web site at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/grulac/LAC%20Panama/default.htm>

Transportation

On arrival in Panama City International Airport, participants are required to make their way to the hotel. The easiest means of transportation from the airport to Hotel El-Panama is by taxis- The hotel is approximately 35 minutes away from Panama International Airport depending on traffic conditions. Public taxis are readily available in the taxi rank just outside the airport buildings both during the day and night. Taxi rates are based on the special rate of \$20 by person for a maximum of two passengers and one collective rate of \$24 for a maximum of three passengers to the hotel.

Organizing Committee**Sr. José De Mesa****Oficial de Bromuro de Metilo**

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Mr. Carlos Santos**Oficial de Administración Financiera**

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Visa Arrangements:

Participants are responsible for obtaining their own visa(s) if required. Please contact the Panamanian Embassy or Consulate in your country. Further information on visa entry to Panama is available at the web site: http://panamatours.com/Facts/Useful%20Facts_esp.htm.

Insurance:

Participants are expected to make their own arrangements for insurance against accidents, if so desired.

Currency:

The currency used in Panama is Panamanian Balboa. There 100, 50, and 20 banknotes and 10, 5, 1 coins as well as 50 and 25 satang. The exchange rate is approximately \$1 to 1.016 Panamanian Balboa as of November 2007.

Weather:

The climate in Panama is tropically warm all year round and pleasantly cool at night. The average daytime temperature in February is 35 degrees C (89 degrees F). February is in the middle of summer season. Light clothing will, therefore, be adequate. The hotels and meeting room are equipped with air-conditioning.