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**Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting on the Strategic Approach  
to International Chemicals Management**  
Panama City, 14-16 February 2008**Report of the Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting on the  
Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management****Introduction**

1. At its first session, which took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), comprising the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action (GPA).<sup>1</sup> The Conference also adopted a number of resolutions, including resolution I/1 on arrangements for the implementation of SAICM.<sup>2</sup> In the Overarching Policy Strategy and resolution I/1, it was recommended that work on implementation of SAICM between sessions of the ICCM be undertaken through regional meetings. The current meeting, held in Panama City, Panama, from 14-16 February 2008, was the first such meeting for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Its purpose, as envisaged in paragraph 26 of the Overarching Policy Strategy, was to review progress on implementation of SAICM in the region, to provide guidance on implementation to regional stakeholders and to provide a forum for technical and strategic discussions and the exchange of information.

**I. Opening of the meeting**

2. The meeting was opened at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 14 February 2008 by Mr. Muhammed Omotola, Programme Officer, SAICM Secretariat, who noted that the current meeting was the eighth regional meeting to be convened, and completed the first series of regional workshops held since the adoption of the Dubai Declaration. Mr. Omotola expressed his appreciation to the Government of Panama for its hospitality and to the Governments of Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America for their financial contribution. He also voiced his thanks to the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean which had assisted in the organization of the workshop. Finally he welcomed the participants and introduced the speakers who were to make opening statements.

3. Opening statements were made by Mr. Ricardo Sanchez, Director, UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and Mr. Gonzalo Entenza (Argentina), SAICM regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Mr. Sanchez highlighted the existing strong collaboration between countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. He said that at the last meeting of the Health and Environment Ministers of the

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the work of its first session (SAICM/ICCM.1/7), annexes I–III. The Conference adopted the Dubai Declaration and the Overarching Policy Strategy and recommended the use and further development of the Global Plan of Action as a working tool and guidance document.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, annex IV.

Americas (HEMA), which had taken place in Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2005, SAICM and its related issues had had a prominent part on the agenda and he hoped that HEMA would be kept abreast of the outcome of the current meeting. He commended the broad participation at the current meeting and associated workshops of representatives from all sectors and expressed his appreciation to the Governments of Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America that had assisted in the provision of financial support for the participation of up to three participants from developing countries facilitating that broad representation. He drew attention to the importance of the issues of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), discussed in a workshop prior to the meeting (Workshop on continuing PCB management in Latin American and Caribbean countries, 11-12 February 2008) and of mercury and persistent organic pollutants which would be discussed in a one-day regional consultation immediately following the current meeting, as well as to the full agenda in front of the meeting, emphasizing elaboration of coordination mechanisms on SAICM issues, priorities of the region, regional coordination arrangements and development of regional positions to present to the second session of the ICCM, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2009. He also noted the need to discuss the Quick Start Programme which was of high priority for all countries. He closed by wishing the meeting success and strong conclusions for the effective management of chemicals in the region.

5. Mr. Entenza welcomed participants to the first regional meeting in Latin America and the Caribbean and highlighted the fundamental role chemicals played in our lives. Noting that only since the last century had attention been focused on the negative effects of chemicals he said that chemicals management was now a global issue requiring global action and that the international community, including the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, conventions under the auspices of UNEP and the International Labour Organization, amongst others, were now seeking rational solutions for chemicals management. However a partial response was not sufficient; a global strategic approach was necessary to address chemicals during their entire life cycle adapting to their multi-faceted and multisectoral character. In the two years since the first session of the ICCM, several regional meetings had been held and at this, the last regional meeting in the series, in addition to the multiplicity of issues raised at previous meetings, other critical issues, such as ensuring sufficient funds to carry out work on chemical issues, would be discussed. It was vital, he said, to have cooperation from all sectors. He concluded by thanking all Governments and organizations that had enabled the convening of the current meeting.

## **II. Organizational matters**

### **A. Election of officers**

6. Mr. Gonzalo Entenza (Argentina) and Mr. Jules de Kom (Suriname) were elected to serve as Co-Chairs for the current meeting. Ms. Maria Inés Esquivel (Panama) was elected to serve as rapporteur.

### **B. Adoption of the agenda**

7. The meeting participants adopted the following agenda as set out in SAICM/RM/LAC.1/1:
  1. Opening of the meeting
  2. Organizational matters
    - (a) Election of officers;
    - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
    - (c) Organization of work.
  3. Information about SAICM implementation activities
    - (a) Other regional groups;
    - (b) Intergovernmental organizations;
    - (c) Non-Governmental organizations and others.
  4. Implementation of SAICM in Latin America and the Caribbean
    - (a) National implementation of SAICM

- (i) Identification of priorities and initial planning to implement SAICM, including the involvement of Governments and industry;
    - (ii) Guidance materials for national implementation of SAICM;
    - (iii) Role and responsibilities of the national focal point;
  - (b) Regional coordination
    - (i) Role and responsibilities of the regional focal point;
    - (ii) Role and responsibilities of regional representatives serving on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board;
    - (iii) Possible formation of a regional committee to support the SAICM regional focal point and other regional representatives;
    - (iv) Cooperation and coordination with other significant processes and bodies at regional and global levels;
  - (c) Regional implementation of SAICM
    - (i) Activities, initiatives and approaches to implement SAICM at the subregional and regional levels, including by industry and other actors;
    - (ii) Promotion to obtain the commitment of regional organizations for the implementation of SAICM, including those concerning regional economic integration and regional development banks;
    - (iii) Promotion of the exchange of information and experiences from region to region;
    - (iv) Development of a regional action plan for implementation of SAICM in the Latin American and Caribbean region, considering the existing subregional initiatives.
- 5. Quick Start Programme
  - (a) Quick Start Programme trust fund;
  - (b) Extension of the Quick Start Programme and presentation of other sources of financing for SAICM implementation;
  - (c) Possible regional projects.
- 6. Preparation for the second session of the ICCM
  - (a) Agenda for the second session of the ICCM
  - (b) Reporting to the second session of the ICCM on progress in the implementation of SAICM;
  - (c) Further development of the SAICM Global Plan of Action;
  - (d) Preparations for the first meeting of the Open ended Legal and Technical Working Group (OELTWG).
- 7. Financial considerations.
- 8. Establishment and activities of the SAICM secretariat and its indicative budget.
- 9. Possible regional and subregional meetings and other intersessional work.
- 10. Other matters.
- 11. Adoption of the report.
- 12. Closure of the meeting.

### **C. Organization of work**

- 8. The participants agreed to meet in plenary from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

## **D. Attendance**

9. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

10. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Basel Convention Regional Coordinating Centre for Latin America, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organization of American States (OAS), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)<sup>3</sup>, Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Chemicals Branch, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and World Health Organization (WHO).

11. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following non-governmental organizations: Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA), Asociación Nacional de la Industria Química - Mexico, Centro de Análisis y Acción en Tóxicos y sus Alternativas (CAATA / RAPAM), Centro de Ecoeficiencia y Responsabilidad Social – Peru (CER), Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Centro de Estudios sobre Tecnologías Apropriadas de la Argentina (CETAAR), Centro Mexicano para la Producción Más Limpia, Centro Nacional de Producción Más Limpia – El Salvador, Centro de Producción Más Limpia - Nicaragua, COLNODO – Red de Desarrollo Sostenible - Colombia (RDS), Croplife International, Environmental Health Fund, International Confederation of Energy and Mineworkers (ICEM), International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), Red de Acción en Agricultura Alternativa (RAAA / RAPAL), Red de Acción sobre Plaguicidas y Alternativas (RAPAM), Sociedad de Química y Toxicología Ambiental de Latinoamérica (SETAC Latinoamérica) and World Chlorine Council (WCC).

12. In addition, a number of Governments and organizations and representatives were represented as observers: Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Asociación de Directivos y Técnicos Profesionales de la Industria del Petróleo (ADECO), Asociación para la promoción de nuevas alternativas de desarrollo, Centro de Calidad Ambiental - Mexico, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Red de Acción en Plaguicidas RAPAL (CEREB – Union of Panama), Foro de Sociedad Civil Ambiental, and the University of Panama

## **III. Information about SAICM implementation activities**

### **A. Other regional groups**

13. In considering the item, the meeting had before it the report of the African regional meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, from 11 to 14 September 2006 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/6), the report of the first meeting of the EU (European Union)-JUSSCANNZ (Japan, United States, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway, New Zealand) countries held in Barcelona, Spain, from 20 to 22 November 2006 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/7), the report of the Central and Eastern European regional meeting held in Riga, Latvia, from 4 to 6 December 2006 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/8), the report of the meeting of Arab countries held in Cairo, Egypt, from 1 to 2 April 2007 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/9), the report of the Asia-Pacific regional meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21 to 23 May 2007 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/10), the report of the second meeting of the EU-JUSSCANNZ countries, held

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<sup>3</sup> The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) serves as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization

in Paris, France, on 12 June 2007 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/11), and the report of the Pacific Island workshop held in Apia, Samoa, on 8 and 9 November 2007 (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/12).

14. The secretariat introduced the above mentioned documents highlighting the following issues: at the African regional meeting an African core group was established and a statement on financial matters as well as a regional action plan were adopted; the EU-JUSSCANNZ group had, at its first meeting, agreed that there would be no formal coordination arrangements and that meetings would be held informally back to back with relevant meetings of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the third meeting of EU-JUSSCANNZ countries had been held in Paris on 12 February 2008 and had focused on preparations for the second session of the ICCM and the preceding meeting of the OELTWG; the Central and Eastern European regional meeting had agreed on regional coordination and financial issues; the Asia-Pacific regional meeting agreed on an informal approach to coordination; and the workshop for Pacific Island countries focused on the Quick Start Programme and how countries of the region might have access to projects under the programme.

15. The meeting took note of the outcome of the regional meetings.

## **B. International organizations**

16. The secretariat introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/3, which included questionnaires completed by intergovernmental organizations concerning their initial SAICM implementation activities. Intergovernmental organizations present provided information to supplement that report.

17. The representative of ILO said that, following the endorsement of SAICM by the ILO Governing Body in 2006, a Meeting of Experts had been convened in December 2007 to examine instruments, knowledge, advocacy, technical cooperation and international collaboration as tools with a view to develop a policy framework for hazardous substances. The meeting also recommended that ILO should fully contribute to the implementation of SAICM by actively collaborating with other members of the Inter-organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), as well as through strengthening of ILO participation in SAICM.

18. The representative of OAS outlined a programme established one year previously, part of which dealt with capacity building and regional environmental management, assisting countries to negotiate at multilateral environmental agreements. A substantial component was sound management of hazardous chemicals and projects aimed at strengthening implementation of the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel conventions and to foster the principles of SAICM in the region. The programme afforded opportunities for countries to improve chemicals management policies and legal frameworks and to enhance cooperation amongst ministries and with countries of the region. Countries were encouraged to bring issues of concern to the attention of the OAS secretariat to place on the regional political agenda. She said OAS would do everything possible to identify financing to undertake those activities prioritized by countries of the region.

19. The representative of UNEP noted that one of the six priorities of the proposed UNEP medium-term strategy (2010 – 2013) was harmful substances and hazardous wastes. He said UNEP would focus efforts on enhancing strategic alliances with all stakeholders in chemicals management and would assist in servicing the SAICM secretariat. Noting other issues of concern, such as mercury, ozone depleting substances, development of national institutions and infrastructures for chemicals management and the UNEP partnership activity on mainstreaming chemicals issues into national development strategies, he emphasized the broad range of activities through which UNEP Chemicals could provide support to countries to implement SAICM.

20. The representative of UNITAR noted three areas of work in particular. Firstly, support for implementation of strategic priorities of the Quick Start Programme, carried out through a pilot project to develop a national programme for the sound management of chemicals and waste in four countries, including Panama. The results of this project would be presented to the second session of the ICCM. Secondly, technical assistance was being provided by UNITAR for 37 countries, including 8 in the region, with support from the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund. Thirdly, specialized capacity building programmes and services were being provided in such areas as the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) and skills building for risk management decision-making for priority chemicals.

21. The representative of PAHO emphasized work done on development of national profiles and health sector participation on chemicals management. PAHO was promoting projects to develop risk assessment methodology, on effectiveness evaluation and health risk assessment in polluted areas as well as exchange of information on chemical substances through virtual libraries available on the

internet and networks of professional associations. Support was provided to projects on strengthening monitoring and eliminating use of persistent organic pollutants. In addition support was provided to poison control centres and for vulnerable populations.

22. The representative of UNDP outlined the strategic priorities for 2008-2011, which she said had a large emphasis on energy and environment. She emphasized the importance of developing partnerships for mainstreaming sound management of chemicals into development plans and policies. Currently a programme was under way for six pilot countries.

23. The representative of the FAO emphasized the multidisciplinary aspect of SAICM and the importance of the agricultural sector. He noted the importance of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides which had been adopted not only by Governments but also by intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Code served as a reference for management of pesticides as a group of chemical substances and was recognized in the SAICM global plan of action. The FAO Council had adopted SAICM in 2006 and supported its implementation, which was dependant on cooperation among all sectors, in particular at the national level. FAO also focused on risk reduction of pesticides. The Council suggested that as a new activity FAO should assist countries to progressively ban highly hazardous pesticides and noted the need to eliminate obsolete pesticides and to create laboratories for analysis of pesticides. FAO was currently preparing a list of pesticides that would fall into the category of highly hazardous. FAO was also reviewing guidelines on the Code.

### **C. Non-Governmental organizations and others**

24. The co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/3, which included questionnaires completed by non-governmental organizations concerning their initial SAICM implementation activities. Non-Governmental organizations present provided additional information to supplement that report.

25. The representative of the WCC outlined his organizations activities including a partnership with UNEP for mercury reduction in the chlor-alkali sector. He noted that the mercury cell process, while on the decline, represented approximately 20 per cent of global chlor-alkali production and facilities that had closed or converted to non-mercury cell technologies had significant amounts of surplus pure mercury requiring environmentally sound long-term management. He said the objective of the partnership was to provide economical, technical and educational benefits by promoting commercially competitive and environmentally sound solutions for reducing the use and release of mercury in chlor-alkali production. Approaches included to encourage use and implementation of best environmental practices, to develop sustainable and replicable models to reduce mercury consumption and release, encourage and support facilities to convert mercury cell chlor-alkali production to non-mercury technologies, and develop and share information for managing surplus mercury and mercury containing waste. He noted a recent mercury stewardship international workshop conducted in Veracruz, Mexico.

26. The representative of CropLife International noted his association's endorsement of the International Code of Conduct as an appropriate instrument to achieve the objectives of SAICM. It would allow for the establishment of areas of joint work for the implementation of SAICM.

27. The representative of the ISDE noted that her organization had official relations with WHO and undertook activities relating to the health effects of environmental changes. ISDE worked on education, information and epidemiological studies as tools for policy development and intervention. ISDE promoted multisectoral partnerships and focused on vulnerable populations, conducted studies on biomarkers, for example on lead and pesticides, and published reports on pesticides and their containers as well as on health and on children's environmental health. ISDE promoted standardized collection and reporting of data to facilitate comparison and measured advances to support the strategy of sustainable chemicals management.

28. The representative of CAATA noted work undertaken under an International POPS Elimination Network's project, involving 290 activities executed by 350 non-governmental organizations in 65 countries to assist civil society to prepare for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. He said non-governmental organizations in the region had prepared national reports on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), contaminated sites, pesticides and participating inventories of sources of POPS, among others. He further described a new SAICM outreach project to educate important sectors of civil society on sound chemicals management. He said there were several networks participating and that there was a plan to collect signatures on a common statement from over 1,000 non-governmental organizations in 80 countries. He added that the second aim of the project was to prepare educational

papers on a series of topics related to SAICM and chemical safety in all six languages of the United Nations. The outreach campaign would help form the basis for a report on non-governmental organizations' implementation of SAICM for the second session of the ICCM.

29. The representative of CETAAR spoke on behalf of the Pesticide Action Network and its Latin American affiliate, RAPAL, a network with members in 18 countries. He reported that RAPAL had organized subregional meetings with Government officials to discuss implementation progress and enforcement of the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions as well as SAICM and the International Code of Conduct. RAPAL, in cooperation with IPEN, was currently working on a report concerning alternatives to endosulfan in the cultivation of various crops.

30. The representative of ICEM noted his organization's action to promote compliance with occupational health and safety regulations with Governments, non-governmental organizations and companies through global agreements. Independent of whether States ratified international conventions, the Confederation was advocating best practices to avoid double standards. Trade union organizations had developed a civil society project in relation to SAICM which had, as its main objective, to train workers on occupational health in different sectors of chemical safety and to promote tripartite action. The objectives of the project were to be pursued with the participation of national authorities, civil society, academia and other organizations.

31. The representative of ICCA said that his organization continued to participate actively in the SAICM process. He outlined the ICCA plan which included implementation of the Responsible Care Global Charter introduced in Dubai, which sets a global vision of improved performance, enhanced public confidence, transparency and strengthened communication with suppliers and customers. ICCA's 53 registered national federations and associations would organize local implementation programmes for their chemical industry members. He added that much progress had been made on the Global Product Strategy, the second element of the ICCA plan, which had been developed to improve product stewardship within the chemical industry and with suppliers and customers throughout the chain of commerce. Product stewardship performance was promoted through a set of global guidelines posted on the ICCA website. To address SAICM objectives with regard to knowledge and information, ICCA was funding research through its Long-Range Research Initiative (LRI) programme. SAICM objectives with regard to capacity-building and technical cooperation were being pursued through partnering with intergovernmental organizations. In the region, national associations of the ICCA had met to discuss Responsible Care and product stewardship in light of SAICM implementation and had organized training workshops on GHS.

32. The representative of the Nicaraguan National Centre for Cleaner Technology (CNTL) Cleaner Production Centre said it was part of a network of cleaner production non-governmental organizations in Latin America with the objective of promoting sustainable industrial development and assisting in strengthening of national capacities. CNTL was particularly active in activities related to implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, notably the Stockholm Convention and the Montreal Protocol. He said CNTL was undertaking training and national diagnostics and, in coordination with Governments and civil society, was examining ways for facilitating implementation.

## **IV. Implementation of SAICM in Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **A. National implementation of SAICM**

#### **1. Identification of priorities and initial planning to implement SAICM including the involvement of Governments and industry**

33. The co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/2, containing information submitted by Latin American and Caribbean countries on their initial SAICM national implementation activities. Additional information on initial national planning activities or updates on national programmes that address chemicals management were provided as follows.

34. The representative of Barbados said her country had designated a national focal point and established a multisectoral committee to oversee SAICM and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements including representatives from several Government agencies, ministries, academia, unions and non-governmental organizations. With UNITAR's assistance, Barbados had proposed a project for funding by the Quick Start Programme to update its national chemical profile, carry out a capacity assessment and set priorities for SAICM implementation and other chemicals

management activities. That proposal had been approved and the project was scheduled to start in June 2008.

35. The representative of Costa Rica said that as soon as it had so been requested, Costa Rica had nominated a national focal point. In addition, by Executive Decree, a Technical Coordination Secretariat for the Management of Chemical Substances had been established and included representatives from the following sectors: environment, health, agriculture and animal husbandry, foreign affairs, customs, occupational health, academia and industry. Within the framework of SAICM, a short- and medium-term national action plan had been elaborated with the aim of promoting sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle so that chemicals substances were used and produced in a manner that minimized their adverse effects on human health and the environment. The specific objectives of the plan related to institutional coordination, information, definition of standards for air, soil and water quality, governance and illegal traffic. She announced that Costa Rica had initiated a project on mercury in hospitals, was updating its national profile and was finalizing its Stockholm Convention national implementation plan.

36. The representative of Honduras said that a national focal point had been nominated. Honduras was developing its Stockholm Convention national implementation plan, had developed a national profile and established an inter-sectoral committee for the management of chemicals. With the assistance of UNITAR, a joint regional project with Guatemala and Nicaragua had been approved under the Quick Start Programme and was soon to be implemented. It would serve to update the national profile, and to evaluate national capacities and develop national policies to implement SAICM.

37. The representative of Mexico said that a national focal point had been nominated. Since 2005, a national forum for the application of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions had been organized, with SAICM being included in 2006. A cooperation project between the Governments of Mexico and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, entitled "Integrated Programme Development for the Implementation of SAICM", had been developed. The programme included a workshop to establish priorities to manage chemical substances and waste, updating the national profile on chemical substances and a regional workshop on the implementation of SAICM.

38. The representative of Argentina highlighted the work undertaken on implementation of SAICM within the framework of MERCOSUR. A sub-regional action plan was being developed based on the SAICM Global Action Plan. Priorities for action would be defined subsequently, relating to four priorities: mercury, pesticides, the GHS and contaminated site remediation.

39. The representative of Guatemala said that a national focal point had been nominated. Nationally there was a committee that included all relevant sectors. Guatemala was implementing a project through the Quick Start Programme and had initiated a project on mercury. She said that Guatemala had a coordination system to guarantee sound management of chemicals.

40. The representative of Ecuador said that a national focal point had been appointed and, since 1998, there had been a national committee for the management of dangerous chemicals which was multi-sectoral in nature. The members actively participated in committees developing national action plans for the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Currently Ecuador, with the support of UNITAR and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) was preparing a national inventory on mercury and was undertaking dissemination activities related to GHS. Ecuador was also on the verge of initiating a project with UNDP and UNEP on implementation of SAICM and was considering including that project within national development plans.

41. The representative of Chile said that a national focal point had been designated. A national chemical safety policy addressing all sectors dealing with chemicals management had been developed. The plan, awaiting endorsement by the Government, included short-term and mid-term measures and was framed within SAICM. Nationally there was strengthening of institutions linked to chemicals management, of the legal framework, and of management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle. Chile endorsed ratification of existing multilateral environmental agreements, especially in the workplace, and application of voluntary codes for management of substances in small and medium size enterprises. Chile planned to implement, within SAICM, work on contaminated sites.

42. The representative of Cuba said that an inter-ministerial committee with concrete responsibilities related to chemicals management had been established and undertook follow-up action on various international initiatives on chemicals issues. The SAICM process had been included in the work of the committee and the main challenge had been the development of a national action plan for the implementation of SAICM, integrating existing plans and programmes and incorporating needs and national priorities. Concerning the designation of a national focal point, he noted that Cuba had faced

some difficulties to meet the criteria set out by SAICM, given its own situation, and called for the designation of two national focal points: one at the political level and one at the technical level. He suggested that national focal point arrangements be considered a sovereign matter and that countries be permitted to determine the best way to establish an internal system that would allow them to fulfil their responsibilities under SAICM.

43. The representative of Nicaragua said that a national focal point had been designated and an inter-sectoral safety committee had been established. Chemical substances and toxic products were covered under the environmental agenda and included a policy for solid waste management. Nicaragua had a pilot project approved under the Quick Start Programme and was currently elaborating a pesticides project involving an approach to the evaluation of risk reduction. Nicaragua also aimed to update two national profiles related to safety issues.

44. The representative of the Dominican Republic said a national focal point had been nominated and national committees existed to deal with chemicals issues. There was a strong legal foundation for various aspects of chemicals management and a strong legislative platform existed to promote implementation of SAICM. His country had worked with UNITAR to present a project to fourth round application of the Quick Start Programme. Nationally there was also a project on risk reduction of mercury.

45. The representative of Peru said that a national focal point had been nominated and there was a national committee to deal with chemicals related conventions and wastes. She said that a fundamental aspect of the project submitted by Peru in the third round of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund was institutional, technical and legal strengthening for chemicals management.

46. The representative of Venezuela said that a national focal point had been nominated. Although a national strategy for the implementation of SAICM had not yet been developed, a series of public and private sector actions focused on SAICM had been initiated. An epidemiological monitoring system programme had also begun and a programme on lead would start shortly. There was a provisional centre for coordination of SAICM. Venezuela was also implementing GHS and undertaking other activities, including adapting the national tariffs systems to reflect the Rotterdam Convention and other international conventions. Venezuela had organized a Latin American Workshop on Green Customs and had a programme aimed at reducing the use of agrochemicals through the development of biological products and by incorporating a network of laboratories where formulations and production were evaluated. The country had a resolution on the elimination of endosulfan from agricultural use and on incorporating the Responsible Care programme into the industrial sector. The national profile on chemicals management was being updated, as was a preliminary inventory of persistent organic pollutants. The country was currently developing action plans to implement the Stockholm Convention. She noted that Venezuela had a sound legal and institutional basis for implementation of SAICM and would do so shortly.

47. The representative of Uruguay said a national focal point had been nominated. While there was currently no coordination committee solely for SAICM, existing coordination committees were supported and activities related to SAICM included in their agenda. Uruguay had not made any applications to the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund so far. Uruguay emphasized regional projects as a positive way in which to address common concerns of the region. She also said that, subregionally, there was a specific strategy and that a regional plan of action had been prepared taking into consideration the international framework adopted in Dubai.

48. The representative of Brazil advised that a national focal point had been nominated. He said there was a national commission for chemical safety (CONASQ), which was a consulting body for the formulation of public policies in the field of chemical safety in Brazil and had been active since 2000. He said that Brazil was initiating a national policy for mercury and had an inventory for authorized pesticides. GHS implementation was a priority in the national programme on chemical safety. Brazil also had a system of accreditation of chemical laboratories, and was undertaking activities in the labour sector, including training of health institution workers. He noted several cooperation activities with other countries of the region.

49. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago said a national focal point had been nominated. A Quick Start Programme project had been submitted and was due to commence. That project included development of model legislation and updating of national profiles.

50. The secretariat thanked representatives for the information on SAICM implementation activities and encouraged those who had not responded to the pre-meeting questionnaire to do so during the meeting in order for their activities to be included in the documentation for the meeting. In responding

to Cuba's concerns regarding the nomination of a SAICM national focal point, the secretariat noted that of 142 Governments that had nominated national focal points, three had nominated more than one focal point per country. He acknowledged that this was a sovereign decision but noted that the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy called for the designation of a single focal point and that, for practical reasons, the secretariat encouraged Governments to follow that approach if possible.

## **2. Guidance materials for national implementation of SAICM**

51. The co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/4 concerning the guidance materials currently available from participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).

52. The representative of UNITAR provided a brief summary of the guide to resources, guidance and training materials highlighting that it served to inform country deliberations and associated capacity building initiatives related to implementation of SAICM.

53. The meeting took note of the guidance materials.

## **3. Role and responsibilities of the national focal point**

54. In introducing the sub-item, the co-chair said that paragraph 23 of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy and ICCM resolution I/1 on implementation arrangements recommended the designation of SAICM national focal points. National focal points were designated according to a procedure initiated in March 2006. For the Latin-American and Caribbean region, 26 national focal points had been nominated out of a possible 33. The national focal points nominated by Latin American and Caribbean countries, so far, were listed in the draft directory contained in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/5.

55. The Overarching Policy Strategy further indicated that the role of national focal points was "to facilitate communication, nationally and internationally, to act as an effective conduit for communication on SAICM matters, including invitations to participate in meetings and information dissemination [and]... be a representative of the country's inter-ministerial or inter-institutional arrangements, where such arrangements exist." As indicated in their respective meeting reports (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/6, SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/8, SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/7 and SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/10), the African region, Central and Eastern European region, the EU-JUSSCANNZ countries and the Asia-Pacific region did not find it necessary to elaborate further the roles and responsibilities of national focal points.

56. The meeting took note that countries that had not yet nominated their national focal point should do so as a matter of urgency.

57. The meeting agreed that it was not necessary to elaborate further guidance as to the role and responsibilities of the national focal point.

## **B. Regional coordination**

### **1. Role and responsibilities of the regional focal point**

58. The co-chair noted that at its first session, the ICCM, in its resolution I/1 on implementation arrangements, had recommended the designation of SAICM regional focal points. Those regional focal points were designated following a consultation process in March and April 2006, coordinated by representatives of the former bureau members of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of SAICM and of the ICCM. For the Latin American and Caribbean region, the coordinator was Uruguay, and Mr Gonzalo Entenza (Argentina) was designated as regional focal point. It was noted that the ICCM did not specify the role and responsibilities of the regional focal points. The meeting participants have before them document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/26, summarizing action taken by other regions in this regard.

59. In the ensuing discussion, the regional focal point invited comments or suggestions from participants that would improve the dynamics of communication in the region. It was noted that, while it was not essential to develop terms of reference, they would be helpful to the regional focal point to define and limit his responsibilities. It was suggested that the terms of reference developed by the other regions be used as a basis for discussion for elaborating the role and responsibilities of the focal point for the current region.

60. The meeting agreed to establish a small working group to develop terms of reference for the regional focal point co-chaired by Ms. Therese Yarde (Barbados) and Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez (Uruguay).

61. The terms of reference for the SAICM regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean, as amended and adopted, are set out in annex I to the present report.

## **2. Role and responsibilities of regional representatives serving on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board**

62. Introducing the sub-item, the co-chair said that in its resolution I/4, the ICCM had established the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, whose membership included two Government representatives from each of the United Nations regions. The regional representatives had been nominated through a consultative process coordinated by representatives of the former bureau members of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of the SAICM and of the ICCM. Following coordination by Uruguay, Ms. Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Ms. Vilma Morales Quillama (Peru) were nominated to represent the Latin American and Caribbean region on the Executive Board.

63. The co-chair noted that some other regions had considered it appropriate to develop terms of reference for their representatives on the Executive Board. The meeting participants had before them document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/27, summarizing action taken by other regions in this regard.

64. In the ensuing discussion, one representative serving on the Executive Board said that the representatives could benefit from specific terms of reference and that the national focal points in the region should collaborate, cooperate and be proactive to establish coordinated priorities for the entire region for consolidated input to Board meetings. It was suggested, however, that the terms of reference should not include the responsibility of identifying funds. It was further suggested that regional consultations be held to identify regional points of concern and regional priorities in the performance of these activities

65. The meeting agreed to task the small working group established to develop terms of reference for the regional focal point, also to develop the role and responsibilities of the regional representatives serving on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board.

66. The terms of reference for the Latin American and Caribbean regional representative serving on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, as amended and adopted, are set out in annex II to the present report.

## **3. Possible formation of a regional committee to support the SAICM regional focal point and other regional representatives**

67. The Co-Chair drew the attention of the meeting to document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/28 which summarized the conclusions reached by other regions on whether or not it would be desirable to form a regional committee to support the work of the SAICM regional focal point and the Government regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board.

68. The secretariat added that the other regions had taken varied approaches to the formation of a regional committee. The African region had established the African core group, with fixed membership including non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations. That group had had several teleconferences, assisted by the SAICM secretariat, and had developed several position papers. The Central and Eastern European region and the Asia-Pacific region had not seen a need for a formal committee and preferred more informal mechanisms. The Arab countries had established a coordination unit.

69. In the ensuing discussion, support was voiced for the establishment of a regional committee that should not be too stringent but that would facilitate communications and gather regional views. It was suggested that the committee's roles should include to facilitate coordination between different subregional groups of countries. It was emphasized, however, that to optimize human and financial resources and efforts, a new forum should not be created. Work could instead be undertaken through telecommunication. It was noted that the regional coordination group should support the regional focal point, have clearly defined members and include key stakeholders.

70. The meeting agreed to task the small working group established to develop terms of reference for the regional focal point and the role and responsibilities of the regional representatives serving on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, also to develop guidelines for a regional committee.

71. The terms of reference for the regional committee to support the SAICM regional focal point and other regional representatives, as amended and adopted, are set out in annex III to the present report.

**4. Cooperation and coordination with other significant processes and bodies at regional and global levels**

72. The meeting was informed of processes and developments at the international level relevant to SAICM which were likely to engage the region.

73. The current discussions on synergies between the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, were summarized in the reports of the first meeting of their Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, held in Helsinki from 26 to 28 March 2007, and the second meeting of the Working Group, held in Vienna from 10 to 13 December 2007, and contained in documents SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/24 and SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/25 respectively.

74. The Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions reported that the third and final meeting of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group was scheduled to be held from 25 to 28 March 2008 in Rome, Italy. He said that the outcome would be presented to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention to be held from 23 to 27 June 2008 in Bali, Indonesia. He added that regional views were essential to the completion of the discussion.

75. The meeting was informed of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, bearing in mind the call in UNEP Governing Council decision 22/4 for SAICM to be “regularly reviewed to assess progress on chemical safety, in the light of the targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in cooperation with other relevant processes” and the scheduled consideration of chemicals issues by the Commission on Sustainable Development during its 2010–2011 cycle.

76. The meeting was informed of ongoing discussions on the future of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) following its fifth session, held in Budapest from 25 to 29 September 2006, and suggestions on different options for its working relations with SAICM in the future.

77. The representative of Argentina, member of the Working Group on the Future of IFCS as SAICM Regional Focal Point, described the valuable work of IFCS as a forum for debate on new and emerging issues and referred to the Forum’s facilitation of discussion by developing countries and countries with economies in transition on issues in the field of chemicals management. A discussion paper setting out possibilities for the future of IFCS would be considered at Forum VI to be held from 15 to 19 September 2008 in Dakar, Senegal. The results of that discussion would be communicated to the second session of the ICCM. He recalled the consensus reached by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in Budapest in favour of the continuity of the work of the IFCS, avoiding duplication and maximizing synergies with SAICM. He invited national representatives to express in plenary any new evolution of their positions on the issue in order to update the regional position to be communicated to the IFCS Forum Standing Committee at its 78<sup>th</sup> meeting (Bangkok, 26-29 February 2008). A representative of a non-governmental organization supported his assessment on the value and need for IFCS.

78. The meeting was informed of the follow-up on the chemicals management objectives of the Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas (HEMA), whose declaration adopted at their third meeting, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from 16 to 17 June 2005, was contained in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/19. The participants noted the relevance of the declaration and cooperative agenda that emerged from that meeting as a basis for establishing national and regional priorities for SAICM implementation.

79. The representative of PAHO summarized the follow-up work in three areas: drinking water, chemicals and children’s health. With regard to chemicals the focus had been on pesticides and within that, on non-chemical means to control malaria. Disposal of obsolete stocks of persistent organic pollutants was also a priority.

80. The meeting was informed of the proposal of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry for the United Nations to designate 2011 as the “International Year of Chemistry”, on which information was provided in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/21.

81. The meeting took note of the information provided under this sub-item.

## **C. Regional implementation of SAICM**

### **1. Activities, initiatives and approaches to implement SAICM at the subregional and regional levels, including by industry and other actors**

82. Under this sub-item, the co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/22, summarizing current activities, initiatives and approaches at the subregional and regional levels in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Representatives of the groups involved were invited to provide supplementary information at the meeting.

83. In the ensuing discussion one representative highlighted the work of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and its linkages with SAICM principles. She said MERCOSUR Ministers supported the regional action plan for MERCOSUR and she noted the priority concerns of the sub-region on pesticides, GHS and mercury.

84. Another representative said the document needed to be updated to include all regional centres of the Basel Convention.

85. The meeting took note of the activities summarized in the information document.

### **2. Promotion to obtain the commitment of regional organizations for the implementation of SAICM, including those concerning regional economic integration and regional development banks**

86. Introducing the sub-item, the co-chair said that paragraph 2 of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy noted that the involvement of all relevant sectors and stakeholders, including at the regional level, was key to achieving the objectives of SAICM. A number of regional organizations and centres had responsibilities and expertise that were potentially relevant to SAICM implementation, including organizations with region-wide responsibilities such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the regional offices of IOMC participating organizations, centres associated with international agreements such as the Basel Convention, financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank and networks of national entities such as cleaner production centres.

87. A draft directory of intergovernmental and other organizations at the global and regional levels of relevance to the implementation of SAICM in the Latin American and Caribbean region was provided in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/5.

88. In the ensuing discussion, representatives noted several bodies to be added to the draft directory including the Caribbean Development Bank, the subregional offices of PAHO, offices of the InterAmerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, the regional office of the ILO in Peru and the regional and subregional centres of the Basel Convention

89. The meeting took note of the information in the draft directory.

### **3. Promotion of the exchange of information and experiences from region to region**

90. The co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/23 which considered mechanisms in other regions for the exchange of information relevant to SAICM implementation and ideas on how to implement region-to-region exchanges of information.

91. The representative of PAHO said that his organization successfully achieved exchange of information through RETOXLAC – the toxicology network of Latin America and the Caribbean in which 800 professionals with various expertise on chemicals issues participated. That network was used to disseminate information relevant to SAICM and chemicals issues. One representative said that the exchange of information from region to region was critical. One representative recalled that not all countries were at the same level in chemicals management and it was important to have exchange of information but also of resources and expertise, including within the region.

92. The meeting took note of the information provided in the document.

#### **4. Development of a regional action plan for implementation of SAICM in the Latin American and Caribbean region, considering the existing subregional initiatives**

93. The co-chair introduced the sub-item and noted that, as per paragraph 22 of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy, regional implementation plans may be developed, as appropriate, in a similar fashion to national implementation plans.

94. The attention of the meeting was drawn to the views of other regional meetings and specifically the African regional action plan on SAICM implementation (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/6). The meeting noted that EU-JUSSCANNZ countries and the Central and Eastern European region had concluded that it was not necessary to develop a regional action plan (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/7 and SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/8 respectively). The Asia-Pacific region considered that, given the diversity and differing stages of development of the countries in its region, subregional information would be a starting point and that a potential regional action plan should be considered later (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/10).

95. In the ensuing discussion several representatives indicated that it was premature to prepare a regional action plan in the Latin American and the Caribbean region when some countries had not, as yet, prepared a national action plan. All efforts should focus on preparation or finalization of initial implementation steps. Following that, and consideration of the experience of countries, a regional action plan could be developed.

96. It was suggested that while national implementation plans were being prepared, subregional priorities, such as those developed by MERCOSUR as well as cross-sectoral initiatives such as those of the HEMA, could be conveyed to the committee supporting the work of the regional focal point on an informal basis in order that priorities of the region were kept in mind for the future.

97. The representative of the Organization for American States noted that the results of the previously mentioned questionnaires sent to countries of the region might also provide information on subregional and regional priorities. She offered to make this information available for discussion among countries of the region together with financial support for the convening of a meeting as appropriate.

98. Noting the updates on SAICM implementation provided by countries at the meeting, it was suggested that the existing SAICM implementation questionnaire could be modified, or a new one developed, to request countries to identify their national priorities. This information could then be compiled at a regional level. Caution was expressed on moving ahead too quickly on preparing new questionnaires.

99. The meeting agreed that further discussion on the approach to regional priorities was necessary.

### **V. Quick Start Programme**

100. In its resolution I/4, the ICCM established the SAICM Quick Start Programme, comprising a UNEP-administered trust fund and multilateral, bilateral and other forms of cooperation. The executive summary and strategic action plan of the Quick Start Programme business plan adopted by the Quick Start Programme Executive Board on 24 April 2007 was provided in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/16.

#### **A. Quick Start Programme trust fund**

101. The secretariat briefed the meeting participants on the establishment of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, the outcome of the first three rounds of applications to the trust fund for project funding and noted that the fourth round was currently under way. The meeting had before it the following documents:

- (a) SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/13, status report on the Quick Start Programme;
- (b) SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/16, Quick Start Programme business plan (executive summary and strategic action plan) ;
- (c) SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/17, guidelines for applications to the Quick Start Programme trust fund;
- (d) SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/18, application materials for the Quick Start Programme trust fund.

102. The secretariat indicated that the establishment of the Quick Start Programme has been one of the secretariat's first priorities following the adoption of SAICM. The trust fund had become operational as of 1 December 2006 and would be open for contributions for five years and continue disbursements for a further two years after that. The secretariat noted that approximately \$13 million had been pledged to the trust fund in 2006-2007 by 19 donors, including several developing country Governments. Subject to finalization of one pledge, the 2007 replenishment had been exceeded and prospects were also good for 2008. He observed that, apart from setting an overall fundraising target of up to \$46 million, the business plan contained a series of performance indicators, for example with regard to maintaining a balance among projects. Many projects approved in the first round involved work on national profiles, capacity needs assessments and priority setting, supported by UNITAR, in accordance with strategic priority A of the Quick Start Programme. Another significant group were the UNDP and UNEP-supported projects on mainstreaming of chemicals management in national development planning (strategic priority C).

103. The secretariat acknowledged that the requirement for trust fund applications to be submitted in English was proving a barrier to certain Latin American countries, but noted the significant number of countries from the region which had nonetheless successfully submitted project proposals. He explained that the financial implications of document translation prevented the Trust Fund Implementation Committee from operating in multiple languages but undertook to keep the matter under review. He noted that some executing agencies might be in a position to assist with the translation of project proposals.

104. Several representatives commended the speed with which the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund and guidelines for applicants had been established and expressed appreciation to donors, such as Sweden, as major contributors. The SAICM business plan was also acknowledged providing a good basis for future planning, with the importance of broadening of the donor base and the need for multi-year commitments being highlighted.

105. Regarding the language barrier, it was suggested that, taking into account the financial constraints, means should be identified to facilitate translation of the application forms, as a minimum, into the six official languages of the United Nations.

106. The representative of Spain reiterated his country's commitment to assist countries of the region in relation to the Quick Start Programme and said that there was flexibility in the use of Spain's annual contribution to the secretariat. He also indicated that the Cleaner Production Centre in Barcelona, Spain was also ready to assist countries.

107. The meeting agreed that efforts should continue to identify solutions to the possible language problems.

## **B. Extension of the Quick Start Programme and presentation of other sources of financing for SAICM implementation**

108. The co-chair invited the representatives to discuss the potential extension of the scope of the Quick Start Programme beyond "enabling activities" with a view to providing guidance to the Government regional representatives for Latin America and the Caribbean serving on the Executive Board.

109. The secretariat said that the absence of a precise definition of enabling activities allowed some flexibility as to the kinds of activities that could be undertaken in a Quick Start Programme project.

110. The representative of UNDP noted that the objective of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund at the outset was to assist countries to mobilize resources for activities in three strategic areas which would facilitate further implementation work in the future. UNDP was focusing on the third strategic priority relating to the mainstreaming of chemicals management work in development planning.

111. In the ensuing discussion it was suggested that ways to expand the Quick Start Programme be considered, in order not only to go beyond enabling activities but also to overcome other constraints such as funding limits per project, limits per country and the scheduled end of the programme in 2013. Similarly, participants recognized the need for new sources of funding for the Quick Start Programme that would permit the continuation of the Programme and overcome the identified limitations.

112. The meeting agreed that efforts be pursued to ensure the extension of the Quick Start Programme.

### **C. Possible regional projects**

113. The co-chair introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/13, the Quick Start Programme status report, which included a list of national, multi-country and civil society projects approved for Trust Fund support in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

114. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that although countries were limited to having one national project supported by the Trust Fund at a time, those countries that were already participating in a multi-country or civil society project were still able to apply for a national project.

115. Several possible areas for regional projects were mentioned including projects on sound agricultural practices, children's environmental health, elimination of mercury in products, accident preparedness and emergency response and on GHS.

116. It was also suggested that ties between agricultural associations and academia should be strengthened as well as with non-governmental organizations having experience in problems associated with pesticides. It was noted that one of the concerns of countries and priorities of the region was capacity building and information exchange. It was suggested that consideration be given to exploiting centres of excellence and expertise in the region for training.

117. The meeting took note of the proposals for possible regional projects.

## **VI. Preparation for the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management**

### **A. Agenda for the second session of the ICCM**

118. The SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy provides, in paragraph 25, that the second session of the ICCM should be held in 2009 and that "where appropriate, sessions of the ICCM should be held back-to-back with meetings of the governing bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations in order to enhance synergies and cost-effectiveness and to promote SAICM's multi-sectoral nature".

119. The secretariat had, accordingly, provisionally scheduled the second session of the ICCM to take place in Geneva from 11 to 15 May 2009, immediately prior to the sixty-second World Health Assembly. The ICCM session would follow the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

120. At the request of the EU-JUSSCANNZ countries at their second meeting, a consultation note concerning the arrangements for the second session of the ICCM had been prepared by the secretariat (SAICM/RM/LAC.1/4). This included a draft provisional agenda, annotated provisional agenda and a budget, and drew attention to the high-level dimension of the ICCM and potential ICCM links with the World Health Assembly and the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention. The consultation note had been available on the SAICM web site since August 2007 (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/iccm/ICCM2/iccm2.htm>). The consultation note was reissued in Spanish on 18 December 2007. Comments were invited by 28 February 2008.

121. The secretariat advised the meeting that the budget being sought for the second session of the ICCM was based on provision for funded participation similar to the first session of the ICCM. Cost efficiencies due to its timing and location had been taken into account when preparing the estimate of 1.7 million US\$.

122. In the ensuing discussion, representatives stressed the need for maximum participation from all relevant sectors at the second session of the ICCM. The region requested a strong message be conveyed requesting financial assistance for developing country participation especially given concerns raised at the first session of the ICCM on the limited representation from the health sector in some country delegations. The meeting requested that the invitation letter clearly set out the number of participants that would be funded from each country. The meeting stated the need to have a minimum of three funded participants from each developing country.

123. The representative of WHO underscored that scheduling the second session of the ICCM in May 2009 offered the opportunity for an enhanced presence of the health sector and for the conclusions of the session to be presented to the World Health Assembly. Early advice, for planning purposes, on likely participation of the health sector from countries in the Latin American and the Caribbean region was sought in relation to both the second session of the ICCM and the World Health Assembly.

124. A number of possible options were being considered to give effect to the high level dimension of the second session of the ICCM including keynote speeches, a high-level segment, special events such as a high-level roundtable and a high-level declaration. Strategic links being considered included the outcomes of the multilateral environmental agreements' synergies work and the importance of health sector issues in chemical safety. The agenda item on collaboration with intergovernmental organizations could include the future of the IFCS and the contribution of the ICCM to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Some participants suggested that the rules of procedure used during the Preparatory Committee for developing SAICM should also be used for the second session of the ICCM.

125. It was noted that given that the rules of procedure for the second session of the ICCM had not been completed in 2006 in Dubai, there was no bureau currently in place. The secretariat reported that the rules of procedure would need to be dealt with at the OELTWG meeting tentatively scheduled for 22 to 24 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. In view of the periodicity of the sessions of the ICCM, consideration might be given to assigning an inter-sessional role to the bureau.

126. The meeting expressed appreciation for the preliminary agenda, which could assist in identifying where matters of importance to the region could be included. Following requests for clarification, the secretariat said that discussions on resources for SAICM implementation beyond the Quick Start Programme (i.e. both Quick Start Programme-related and non-Quick Start Programme-related) would be covered under item 4 (e) of the draft agenda. The further development of the draft agenda would also be informed by upcoming discussions of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, which would consider progress in implementing the Programme's business plan at its next meeting.

127. It was reiterated that the agenda was currently a draft and suggestion for additions or modifications could be submitted to the SAICM secretariat by 28 February 2008.

128. The meeting took note of the proposed arrangements for the second session of the ICCM and the need to provide comments to the SAICM secretariat by 28 February 2008.

## **B. Reporting to the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on progress in the implementation of SAICM**

129. In its paragraph 24, the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy provided that the ICCM would undertake periodic reviews of SAICM. The functions of the ICCM in that regard included receiving reports from all relevant stakeholders on progress in SAICM implementation and evaluating it with a view to reviewing progress against the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation<sup>4</sup> 2020 target for the sound management of chemicals. The aforementioned reporting and reviews would be facilitated by the SAICM secretariat, whose functions, as set out in paragraph 28 of the Overarching Policy Strategy, included reporting to the ICCM on the implementation of SAICM by all participants.

130. With the support of the Government of Canada, work was well under way to develop appropriate reporting modalities including draft indicators of progress and the development of a baseline report for 2006. This work was being guided by an international project steering committee consisting of Government representatives from each of the five United Nations regions, representatives of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, and the SAICM Quick Start Programme Executive Board and Trust Fund Implementation Committee.

131. Since July 2007, the international project steering committee had held four teleconferences to guide the development of the work and in addition had provided detailed comments in writing. A summary of the status of the work was provided in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/2.

132. A further teleconference of the project steering committee was planned for 4 March 2008. The regional representatives on the international project steering committee urged countries of the region to transmit comments to take forward to the teleconference.

133. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the baseline report being prepared would provide a "snapshot" of progress towards the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation target of 2020. It was proposed that the baseline report would present available information against the proposed indicators on key aspects of the Overarching Policy Strategy. Once agreed by the ICCM at its second session, future sessions of the ICCM would consider reports of progress against the indicators every three years. It was noted that the first baseline report could not be based on the questionnaire responses from countries as

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<sup>4</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

the indicators could not be considered until the second session of the ICCM. Information sought on the indicators would include narrative information. To supplement the baseline report, countries would be encouraged to consider reporting in 2008 using the draft indicators on a trial or pilot process. UNDP/UNEP noted that opportunities for conducting pilot reporting exercises existed under mainstreaming projects currently underway and further noted that arrangements to do this would be made.

134. The draft indicators were intended to solicit information from four main groups of stakeholders: countries, intergovernmental organizations, industry and non-governmental organizations. The level of aggregation of the information, particularly that requested from non-governmental organizations, would depend on the particular circumstances surrounding each group and the size of the task of compilation.

135. It was emphasized that the documents submitted to the ICCM were drafts for consideration in order to determine modalities for reporting under SAICM.

136. The meeting agreed that input was necessary from countries of the region to ensure that the final proposals were the most appropriate.

### **C. Further development of the SAICM Global Plan of Action**

137. The Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management contained a recommendation for the “use and further development of the [SAICM] Global Plan of Action, to address current and ever-changing societal needs, as a working tool and guidance document for meeting the commitments to chemicals management expressed in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the 2005 World Summit Outcome and SAICM.” The Global Plan of Action, together with the other SAICM texts and the resolutions of the ICCM at its first session, was reproduced in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/1.

138. The executive summary of the Global Plan of Action noted that, in the document’s principal table, the columns dealing with suggested actors, targets and timeframes, indicators of progress and implementation aspects had not been fully discussed and sufficient time was not available to achieve agreement during the process to develop SAICM. The executive summary also noted that participants in the process to develop SAICM had been unable to conclude their discussions on a number of activities. Those activities were reflected in table C of the draft Global Plan of Action contained in document SAICM/ICCM.1/4<sup>5</sup> but were ultimately not included in the Global Plan of Action as recommended in the Dubai Declaration for use and further development.

139. Views of participants in the meetings of other regions varied widely on whether there was a need to revise the Global Plan of Action or to revisit the former table C during the current intersessional period. The African and Central and Eastern European regions ultimately concluded that such work was not a current priority. The Asia-Pacific region noted that the Global Plan of Action was a living document that could serve as guidance for action on priorities. It was agreed that further national, regional and international experience in using the Global Plan of Action was needed to decide whether it should be revised. At their second meeting, EU-JUSSCANNZ countries agreed that rather than review the Global Plan of Action it would be better to establish a drafting group to develop a possible process for adding to the plan and identifying newly emerging issues.

140. The representative of Spain said that the EU-JUSSCANNZ countries had established a drafting group, chaired by Spain, to prepare simple guidelines for including new issues in the Global Plan of Action. At the third and most recent meeting of those countries the proposal presented by Spain had received broad support but no final agreement had been reached.

141. Several representatives suggested that a method be adopted to add new and emerging issues as well as concerns of the region and sub-regions to the Global Plan of Action. It was stressed that since the Global Plan of Action was a living document and that the activities listed therein could be undertaken by countries on a voluntary basis, provision could be made for new and emerging issues. Taking that into account, there was no need to revise the document.

142. With regard to the former table C, it was suggested that while there had not been a consensus to include the table in the Global Plan of Action, several activities were important to the Latin American and Caribbean region including highly hazardous pesticides and children’s environmental health, and that consideration be given as to how those could be added to the Global Plan of Action. The efforts that

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<sup>5</sup> Available on the SAICM web site at [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm). (See the meeting documents page for the first session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.)

had gone into drafting that table should not be lost and it should be afforded greater visibility on the SAICM website and be made available to the region such that the activities listed there may be used to promote synergies. One representative noted that stakeholders were free to pursue the activities listed in the former table C, regardless of the fact that those had not been included in the Global Plan of Action.

143. The meeting agreed that the Global Plan of Action did not require revision at the current time but that a process should be developed for including new and emerging issues including issues listed in table C.

#### **D. Preparations for the first meeting of the Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group**

144. Introducing the sub-item, the secretariat said that the OELTWG meeting would be an opportunity to prepare for the second session of the ICCM. At its first session, the ICCM had agreed to apply the rules of procedure of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of SAICM, mutatis mutandis, to that session, on the understanding that the ICCM would adopt its own rules of procedure at its second session. The ICCM had also agreed that the ground work for its second session on the issue of rules of procedure would be carried out by an OELTWG, which would meet a few months before the second session. The present meeting has before it, for information, document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/15, containing the rules of procedure of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of SAICM.

145. Building upon the views expressed at regional meetings, the SAICM secretariat had developed a consultation note concerning preparations for the OELTWG meeting, which had been tentatively scheduled to take place in Rome from 22 to 24 October 2008, back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention. That paper was posted on the SAICM web site on 26 July 2007 and reissued in Spanish on 17 December 2007. The consultation note, which was reproduced for the present meeting in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/3, included drafts of a provisional agenda and annotated provisional agenda for the OELTWG meeting, a possible participation formula and a budget estimate.

146. The secretariat said that if the agenda remained limited to the rules of procedure the OELTWG meeting could be small and conducted only in English. If the agenda was broadened, as had been suggested by some stakeholders, then a larger working group might have to be convened with consequent increases in costs. Currently, however, funding was proposed for only five participants from each of the United Nations regions and some non-governmental organizations and he recalled that the secretariat was currently also facing a major fundraising challenge with regard to the second session of the ICCM.

147. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Spain said that at the recent meeting of EU-JUSSCANNZ countries, some representatives had said that the OELTWG should limit itself to discussing the ICCM rules of procedures while others considered that there should be a broader agenda. While participants in the EU-JUSSCANNZ meeting had not reached agreement, they had noted that broadening the agenda would have consequent financial implications.

148. All who spoke reiterated the importance of having multi-sectoral participation in the OELTWG meeting. The representative of the Rotterdam Convention secretariat said that, given the convening of the OELTWG meeting back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, his secretariat stood ready to work with the SAICM secretariat to facilitate maximum participation in the OELTWG meeting.

149. One representative proposed that the rules of procedure of the SAICM Preparatory Committees be used for the ICCM as that model offered multi stakeholder and multisectoral participation as well as transparent discussions. He added that it would be helpful to extend the agenda of the OELTWG beyond the ICCM rules of procedure as that would allow the regions to initiate discussions on issues that would be on the agenda of the second session of the ICCM. While several other representatives considered that, for practical reasons, the OELTWG agenda should be limited to discussions on the rules of procedure; some suggested that a limited number of technical or legal issues could be included on the agenda.

150. Regarding the issue of language all representatives who took the floor insisted on the need for including at least Spanish as an additional working language for the OELTWG.

151. The meeting requested the SAICM secretariat to make all efforts to identify funding for one participant from each developing country and to examine ways to ensure equitable participation of developing and developed country representatives. One representative suggested that, if funding for one

participant from each developing country was not assured, then the participation of WEOG countries should also be limited, especially considering that the proposed venue in Rome would imply unaffordable costs for several developing countries while very low travel costs for European countries, increasing inequality. Another representative said he preferred not to limit the WEOG participation but to assure funding for each developing country.

152. The meeting agreed to the addition of a small number of closely linked and clearly defined legal or technical issues to the agenda on the condition that funding was identified for one participant from each developing country.

153. Individual Governments and organizations were requested to submit any additional comments on the preparations for the Open-ended Working Group to the secretariat by 28 February 2008.

## VII. Financial considerations

154. The secretariat introduced the sub-item and said that the provisions of SAICM relating to financial considerations were set out, principally, in section V of the Overarching Policy Strategy. References to the matter were also found in the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management and in ICCM resolutions I/1 and I/4. He introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/20, presenting the positions taken by other regions during regional meetings in 2006 and 2007 on financial considerations, noting that the African and Central and Eastern European regions had developed a formal position but that the Asia-Pacific region had not, and had instead decided to continue discussions, particularly on issues such as the interconnections between the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and SAICM. The EU-JUSSCANNZ countries had established a financial working group to prepare a proposal for the second session of the ICCM.

155. The secretariat said that in 2007 GEF had adopted a new cross-cutting strategy on chemical management with the same overarching objective as SAICM. He added that the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund role of providing “seed money” opened the way for possible use of Programme funds as co-financing for GEF projects, thus facilitating access to the larger resources available from the GEF.

156. In the ensuing discussion many representatives noted that examination of financial considerations must take into account the need to move from enabling to implementation activities and how the latter could be supported, given the limited scope and timeframe of the Quick Start Programme. Some representatives called for the Quick Start Programme to be expanded to overcome financial limitations per project and per country and for ways to be found to retain the elements of the Quick Start Programme beyond 2013 in order to finance implementation activities. In that regard it was noted that additional sources for funding, including through the Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas and regional development banks, should be sought. It was further suggested that the secretariat should continue to explore, with the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, possibilities for the Fund to support SAICM implementation.

157. Some representatives called for the establishment of a more stable and predictable financial mechanism to support SAICM implementation. Several representatives proposed that the GEF be requested to examine possibilities for a new GEF window for chemicals. It was also recalled that existing GEF windows, such as those relating to persistent organic pollutants and land degradation, could be used as a means to access funds for chemicals management work in the meantime, as reiterated in GEF’s new cross-cutting strategy. One representative said that, if a new window was opened, funds should be both accessible and applicable. In that regard, several representatives noted the proposals for integration of chemicals issues into the national development strategies currently underway.

158. One representative, noting the current discussions of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, said that the coherence of chemicals management must be maintained and looked forward to seeing the inclusion of SAICM in the outcome of the discussions.

159. Some representatives said that modalities should be identified to speed up the process of approval and signing of projects and for the disbursement of funds under the Quick Start Programme.

160. The meeting agreed to provide input to the representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board on any Quick Start Programme issues of concern. The meeting further agreed it was not necessary to prepare a formal position paper on financial considerations at the present time.

## **VIII. Establishment and activities of the SAICM secretariat and its indicative budget**

161. The secretariat introduced document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/INF/14, on the establishment of the secretariat, its services and budget outlook and summarized the information therein including filling of staff positions and functions performed since SAICM was adopted. The secretariat said that initially, with limited resources, it had concentrated on establishing the Quick Start Programme and organizing regional meetings. Now that the first series of regional meetings had been completed, the secretariat was focusing on other priority areas such as the website, the clearing house function and integrating INFOCAP (the Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals) into those functions. The secretariat recalled that INFOCAP had been developed by IFCS and had recently been transferred to the SAICM secretariat for administration. The latter was now working to modernize and adapt it to current needs in consultation with stakeholders. Proposed modifications would be presented at a forthcoming meeting of the IFCS Forum Standing Committee in Bangkok and were also available on the SAICM web site for comment.

162. With regard to the funding of SAICM, the secretariat said there were a core budget and an activities budget. Regional meetings had been the principal activity in the past two years and been supported by both cash and in-kind contributions. Details of the Panama meeting would be included in an update of the budget table following the current meeting.

163. In the ensuing discussion, it was emphasized that some regularized method of funding for the SAICM secretariat was essential for it to continue to function in a sustainable manner. Responding to a question on the budget status of 2008, the secretariat informed the meeting that financial contributions from Spain and the United States of America for 2007 had been carried over to 2008 to convene the current meeting but that at present there was otherwise no confirmed contributions to the 2008 activities budget.

164. The meeting took note of the report on the establishment and activities of the SAICM secretariat

## **IX. Possible regional and subregional meetings and other intersessional work**

165. Introducing the sub-item, the Chair said that the meeting might wish to consider whether any further Latin American and Caribbean regional or subregional meetings should be convened during the remainder of the period leading up to the second session of the ICCM. The secretariat said that while no further regional meetings had been planned at the current time, the African and the Asia-Pacific regions were considering convening meetings before the end of 2008, funds permitting.

166. Several representatives voiced their support for convening at least one additional meeting prior to the second session of the ICCM to facilitate the preparations of regional positions.

167. The representative of Mexico reiterated his Government's offer to host a regional workshop in 2008 to continue to address regional problems of implementation of SAICM and activities to follow up on the current regional meeting. The regional workshop would be undertaken within the framework of the "Integrated Programme for the Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management", a cooperation project between Mexico and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The date of that meeting could be determined in consultation with national focal points of the region.

168. The representative of the Organization of American States reiterated her offer to provide assistance for a meeting of the regional coordinating committee.

169. The meeting agreed to convene a meeting of the regional coordination committee, with the support of the Organization of American States as soon as possible, and prior to the convening of the OELTWG, and noted the offer of Mexico to host a regional workshop.

## **X. Other business**

170. No other business was raised.

## **XI. Adoption of the report**

171. The meeting participants adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report contained in document SAICM/RM/LAC.1/L.1 and entrusted the Rapporteur, working together with the co-chairs and secretariat, with its finalization.

## **XII. Closure of the meeting**

172. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 6.00 p.m. on 16 February 2008.

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## Annex I

### Terms of reference for the Latin American and Caribbean regional focal point for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

1. The SAICM regional focal point has the following responsibilities:

#### **Information exchange**

- a) To facilitate effective communication related to SAICM amongst national focal points, the SAICM secretariat and the SAICM regional coordinating committee;
- b) To facilitate regional meetings and other related activities to support the implementation of SAICM;
- c) To work closely with the regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to inform national focal points about potential sources of funds for SAICM implementation.

#### **Liaison point**

- d) The regional focal point will serve as a liaison point with the SAICM secretariat and the other regional focal points.

#### **Promoting consultation**

- e) To take account of concerns and input from national focal points and the SAICM regional coordinating committee in respect of SAICM-related programmes and activities;
- f) To convene regional meetings as appropriate;
- g) To seek assistance on specific tasks from national focal points and the SAICM regional coordinating committee, if required;
- h) To facilitate consultation regarding the nomination and designation of regional representatives for SAICM ad hoc working groups and committees for the purpose of ensuring equitable geographical representation from the region;
- i) To facilitate regional coordination during the sessions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, if required.

2. The regional focal point will serve until the close of each session of the International Conference of Chemical Management. Funding and support for full participation should be encouraged. The appointment of the regional focal point should be made on a rotational basis among countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

3. The country selected by the region should nominate the person who will serve as the regional SAICM focal point. If the regional focal point is unable to carry out his or her functions, the Government from which the regional focal point was nominated may provide an alternate.

## Annex II

### **Terms of reference for the regional representatives for Latin America and the Caribbean on the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)**

1. The main roles of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board representatives are to consult, convey the region's positions to the Executive Board and report back to the region. The responsibilities are as follows:
  - (a) To monitor the efficiency of the Quick Start Programme and share information within the region in relation to access to and utilization of funds and accounting by beneficiaries, in order to ensure a focus on SAICM implementation;
  - (b) To share, collect and discuss views on Quick Start Programme Executive Board documents with Latin American and Caribbean national focal points prior to meetings of the Executive Board;
  - (c) To facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of experience with other regions' representatives and with donor participants on the Executive Board;
  - (d) To inform SAICM national focal points of possible sources of funding through the Quick Start Programme;
  - (e) To facilitate the sharing of experiences and information relating to the SAICM Quick Start Programme among national focal points and the SAICM secretariat in order to achieve effective implementation of the SAICM Quick Start Programme;
  - (f) To collate regional views on the SAICM Quick Start Programme and convey them to the Executive Board, taking into account the interests of the Latin American and Caribbean countries;
  - (g) To coordinate with the regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean for the implementation of the Quick Start Programme in the region.
2. The representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean region on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board will serve until the close of each session of the International Conference of Chemical Management. The appointment of the representatives should be made taking into consideration the languages used by countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.
3. The countries selected by the region should nominate the representatives to participate in the Quick Start Programme Executive Board. If a representative is unable to attend meetings of the Executive Board, the Government from which the representative was nominated shall provide an alternate.
4. Funding and support for full participation should be encouraged.

## Annex III

### **Terms of Reference for the Latin American and Caribbean regional coordinating committee for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)**

1. The Latin American and Caribbean regional coordinating committee for SAICM is established as a mechanism for consultation, dissemination and exchange of information, and to support, with the assistance of the SAICM secretariat, the regional focal point and the region's representatives on the SAICM Quick Start Programme Executive Board in the execution of their duties.

#### **Composition**

2. The membership of the regional coordinating committee comprises:
- a) The regional focal point;
  - b) Regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board;
  - c) One [Two] SAICM national focal point[s] from each of the Latin American and Caribbean sub-regions;
  - d) One representative from a non-governmental organization in each of the following four sectors: industry, trade union, public interest and science;
  - e) One representative of a key regional organization (for example, one that has region-wide responsibilities relevant to the sound management of chemicals) on a rotational basis;
  - f) One representative from a participating organization of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals with a significant regional chemical safety program;
  - g) The immediate past SAICM regional focal point.

#### **Working procedures**

3. The working procedures of the regional committee are:
- a) To the extent possible, to undertake its work through correspondence, teleconferencing and face to face meetings whenever it is possible.
  - b) To use English and Spanish as the working languages of the committee. The provision of interpretation during meetings shall be decided on a case-by-case basis, but whenever possible the language difficulties of the region shall be taken into account;
  - c) To designate alternates or technical advisers to participate in meetings as required in order to ensure continuity and involvement;
  - d) The documents released by the committee should be written in both English and Spanish whenever possible;
  - e) The committee will allow the participation of observers as appropriate.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

4. The role of the regional coordinating committee is to support the regional focal point in the execution of his/her duties as well as to fulfil the following responsibilities:
- a) To assist the regional focal point and regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board in follow-up efforts intersessionally;
  - b) To encourage Latin American and Caribbean advocacy for the creation of a new GEF focal area for chemicals management;
  - c) To consider the SAICM Global Plan of Action from time to time, and identify new issues for their possible inclusion;

- d) To assist the regional focal point in preparing, as appropriate, draft regional position papers for submission to the region, ministerial conferences and the International Conference on Chemicals Management;
- e) To serve as conduits for the views of subregions on SAICM implementation;
- f) To facilitate reporting on SAICM implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean and on the provision of resources to support such implementation;
- g) To facilitate preparations for the development of a regional action plan, as necessary, and to follow up on its establishment and implementation;

**Term of Office**

5. The regional coordinating committee shall carry out its mandate from the end of each session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management until the end of the subsequent session, commencing at the second session in 2009. The regional coordinating committee will function on an interim basis until its formalization by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States at the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

6. Countries selected by the region should nominate the persons who will serve as the representatives on the regional coordinating committee.