

Cairo Declaration

Issued by the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)

On The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

The Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment adopted, in its 17th Session held in the League of Arab States headquarters in December 2005, the **Cairo Declaration on the Strategic Approach for International Chemical Management (SAICM)** and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) relevant to hazardous substances and wastes. This approach is regarded as a baseline for future action. It, also, reflects the Arab perception of the SAICM and the relevant MEAs, as follows:

- Having reviewed the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and chapter 19 of the agenda of the twenty first century (Agenda 21) regarding the Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals, including the prohibition of illegal international trade and trafficking of toxic and hazardous products;
- Referring to the implementation plan adopted by the World Summit Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, which targeted the year 2005 for the completion of the SAICM; and highlighting Resolution 22/4 adopted by the Conference, which set an objective to be achieved by the year 2020, where chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse effect on human health and environment;
- Considering the outcome of the three meetings of the SAICM preparatory committee, the regional meetings, and the meetings held by the Arab team in charge of MEAs relevant to hazardous wastes and substances;

We, the Ministers and Heads of delegates, meeting in the 17th Session of the CAMRE, held in Cairo from 20 to 21 December 2005,

- Referring to the Initiative for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, endorsed by the Arab Summit held in Tunis in 2004, which emphasizes the necessity of promoting the endeavors of the Arab countries to achieve the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes;
- Recognizing that the world production, usage of and trade in chemicals are increasing, and that growth patterns impose increasing pressure on developing countries with regards to chemicals management;
- and, Stressing:
 - Mutual Cooperation at the national and regional levels to improve the safe and secure living conditions for Arab citizens, especially in the arena of human health and environment;
 - The implementation of the seventh Rio principle regarding the common but differentiated responsibility for reducing the gap between developed and

developing countries, in terms of human, financial and technical resources needed for the execution of the relevant MEAs;

- The application of the Rio twenty-third principle regarding protection of the environment and natural resources of peoples under oppression, domination and occupation;
- The encouragement of Arab states that have not yet become a party of the relevant MEAs to accede to them as soon as possible;
- The promotion of the development of SAICM as an effective and efficient approach towards the sound management of chemicals for the coming decades, within the framework of the execution of Resolution 22/4 issued by the WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002;
- The deep concern as no definite and clear financial mechanism has been agreed upon internationally for extending technical and financial support and technology transfer to developing countries for the implementation of the SAICM;
- Furthermore, based on the participatory approach for achieving sustainable development; We acknowledge that the civil society and the private sectors should play an increasing important role to ensure the sound management of chemical substances.

We, hereby, declare that we will diligently endeavor to realize the following:

- 1 Implementation of the objective declared by the WSSD and the Initiative of Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, represented in minimizing of hazardous risks and adverse effect emanating from the production and usage of chemicals on human health and the environment, no later than 2020. Accordingly, we, hereby, emphasize the significance of approving the three components constituting the SAICM, namely: the Overarching Policy Strategy, the Global Plan of Action, and the High-Level Declaration;
- 2- Adoption of the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes strategy as a priority within the national, regional and international policy frameworks, including the strategies of developmental assistance provided by international donors;
- 3- Promotion of public participation comprising all sectors of the society, including women, to realize the effective and efficient management of chemicals;
- 4- Provision and dissemination of information and knowledge relevant to the chemicals and their effects on human health and the risks they impose on the environment, as well as making the information available to the public;
- 5- Exertion of special efforts to protect the social groups exposed to the risks of hazardous chemicals;
- 6- Effective implementation of the relevant MEAs to ensure mutual synergy intrinsic between them, benefiting from the aspects of activity-related compatibility among them and eliminating the loopholes within the framework of the international policies concerning chemicals;

- 7- Preventing illegal trade of chemicals which causes severe damage to the Arab States and other developing countries, along with the importance of holding the party responsible for such illegal trafficking accountable for compensation and damages remediation;
- 8- Incorporating the SAICM within the national and regional action programs and executive plans; and
- 9- Full, comprehensive, open and transparent cooperation in the implementation as well as continuation of the SAICM development.