

**10TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN)**

Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 29 -30 June 2004

Under the auspices of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its tenth session, African Ministers of the Environment adopted:

1. The Sirte Declaration on the environment for development; and
2. Decision 5 on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues:

The following extracts have been taken from both documents for their direct relevance to SAICM*.

1. SIRTE DECLARATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

We, the African Ministers of Environment, having met in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 29 and 30 June 2004, at the tenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Hereby declare our resolve:

19. To commit ourselves further to prioritizing and drawing synergies from the issues of chemical management, the strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM) process, environmental impact assessment, the phasing out of leaded gasoline, sustainable human settlements, post-conflict environment assessment, health and environment and disaster risk management highlighted during the tenth session of the conference;

* Extracts provided by the SAIM Secretariat for information purpose only, not for official use

2. Decision 5: Development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues

We, the Ministers of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling decisions SS.VII/3 and 22/4 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme of 15 February 2002 and 7 February 2003, respectively, in which the Governing Council initiated the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management through a multi-sector consultative process,

Recalling also the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg on 4 September 2002, which set a goal that, by 2020, chemicals would be used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment and endorsed the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management,

Recalling that the Plan of Implementation also called for initiatives to assist African countries in elaborating national chemical profiles and regional and national frameworks and strategies for chemical management and establishing chemical focal points,

Recalling also decision 6 of the ninth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, adopted on 5 July 2002, in which the Conference endorsed the Rabat Declaration on the Environmentally Sound Management of Unwanted Stocks of Hazardous Wastes,

Recalling further the resolution on the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products adopted by the *Intergovernmental* Forum on Chemical Safety at its fourth session, held in Bangkok from 1 to 7 November 2003,

Welcoming the entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade on 24 February 2004 and of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants on 17 May 2004, and urging African Governments which have not yet done so to become parties to the two conventions as soon as possible,

Welcoming also the timely and important Africa Stockpiles Programme, the objective of which is to clean up and safely dispose of all obsolete pesticide stocks from Africa and establish preventive measures to avoid future accumulation, and underlining the need for additional donor funding to support the programme,

Noting the successful launch of consultations on a strategic approach to international chemicals management at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, held in Bangkok from 9 to 13 November 2003, as continued during the African regional meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 26 May 2004,

Further noting the link between poverty and vulnerability to toxic chemicals, the impact of toxic chemicals on biodiversity, including natural resources depended upon by the poor, and the significance of chemicals and hazardous wastes in the context of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Declaring our interest in and commitment to implementing fully and quickly relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other integrated chemicals management mechanisms such as the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals by 2008, as agreed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety at its third session, held in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, from 15 to 20 October 2000, and in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and as reinforced by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety at its fourth session, with the understanding that, in many cases, such implementation will require substantial international technical and financial support,

Expressing appreciation for international support for chemical safety initiatives in Africa,

Decide:

1. To endorse and encourage the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management;
2. To emphasize the need for African Governments to prioritize sound chemicals management in national, subregional and regional planning;
3. To urge stakeholders to elaborate a comprehensive plan for enhanced capacity-building for developing countries in the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management;
4. To encourage multi-stakeholder participation in the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management, particularly with respect to sectors such as agriculture, environment, justice, health, industry, labour and customs, including civil society;

5. To invite the African Union, subregional organizations such as the Arab Maghreb Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and others to participate actively in the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management as an integral part of efforts by African Governments to achieve the goal of sustainable development and poverty reduction;

6. To appeal to the governing bodies of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to adopt and to reflect in their programme of work the above decisions to enable African countries to implement fully the strategic approach to international chemicals management;

Further decide:

1. To set as a common goal effective action to deal with all impacts for chemicals and according priority to ratification and implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal, Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and to call upon the regional groups such as the Arab Maghreb Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community to take chemical safety as a priority issue and to play a more active role in the negotiation and implementation of conventions and participation at conferences of the parties to conventions;

2. To urge the development partners to mobilize the funds necessary for the implementation of national action plans related to chemical conventions, through, among other measures, financial cooperation, capacity-building and institutional strengthening mechanisms, for the strengthening of chemical management in order to facilitate the implementation of the national action plans,

3. To urge the African Union and the United Nations Environment Programme to revitalize the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, including the establishment of a Convention secretariat and the hosting of the first meeting of the Conference of the parties within the next two years;

4. To urge the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to adopt a decision on undertaking the tasks assigned to it in ensuring the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products;

5. To support the efforts to strengthen the capacity of the regional centres of excellence in Africa, including the Basel Convention regional centres in Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, as key regional instruments for the implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and to call upon interested States and other stakeholders to provide further support to the centres of excellence in Africa.