

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management
for its second and third sessions

1st teleconference, Monday 22 June 2009

SECRETARIAT SUMMARY NOTES¹

1. The Bureau of the the International Conference on Chemicals Management for its second and third sessions held its first teleconference on Monday 22 June 2009 to discuss its working methods and initial planning for intersessional activities.

2. The teleconference was attended by the following participants:

Members

Mr. Ivan Eržen (Slovenia – Central and Eastern Europe) (President)

Mr. Ndiaye Sylla (Senegal – Africa)

Mr. Eisaku Toda (Japan – Asia-Pacific)

Mr. Osvaldo Alvarez² (Chile – Latin America and the Caribbean)

Mr. Victor Escobar (Spain – Western European and Others Group)

Representatives of IOMC and non-governmental organizations and IOMC³

Ms. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri (International Labour Organization – IOMC)

Ms. Lilian Corra (International Society of Doctors for the Environment – health)

Ms. Birgit Engelhardt (International Council of Chemicals Associations/ICCA – industry)

Mr. Joe DiGangi (Environmental Health Fund – public interest)

Ms. Judith Carreras (International Trade Union Confederation – trade unions)

Regional focal point⁴

Ms. Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica – Latin America and the Caribbean)

3. The Bureau member for Latin America and the Caribbean recalled that rule 15.5 of the Conference's rules of procedure provides that the President may, in consultation with other members of the Bureau, also invite such participants to meetings as he deems appropriate. In that regard he requested that the regional focal point for his region be permitted to participate in the

¹ Informal report prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the President.

² Representing Mr. Carlos Portales in accordance with rule 14.6 of the Conference rules of procedure.

³ In addition to the governmental members of the Bureau, representatives of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and non-governmental organizations participate in discussions during meetings of the Bureau for the purpose of advising and responding to the Bureau.

⁴ See paragraph 3 for an explanation of the presence of this additional participant.

present teleconference, which would include discussion of planning for regional meetings. The President, in consultation with the Bureau, agreed to this proposal.

4. The Bureau proceeded with its teleconference on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat as follows:

1. Working methods of the Bureau.
2. Intersessional activities, 2009-2012.
3. Next teleconference or meeting.

Working methods of the Bureau

5. *Roles.* The Bureau noted the summary of its roles contained in document 2 prepared by the secretariat for the teleconference. Generally, the task of the Bureau was to “advise the President and the secretariat on the conduct of the business of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies.” In addition, it had specific roles in relation to the preparation of provisional agendas for the Conference and the Open-ended Working Group, deciding the venue and dates for the third session of the Conference and facilitating the nomination of experts to serve on a project steering group relating to one of the emerging policy issues discussed at the second session of the Conference (“chemicals in products”). In response to a query on the costs of participation in the steering group, the secretariat advised that information should be sought from the Chemicals Branch of UNEP, which had been invited by the Conference to lead and facilitate the project.

6. *Participation.* Further to the decision to include the regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean in the present teleconference, the Bureau member for the Western European and Others Group proposed that all regional focal points be invited to join Bureau meetings as a matter of course, subject to cost considerations. The Bureau agreed that regional focal points should be included in its teleconferences as observers but, given the travel cost implications, left aside the question of whether they should also be included in face-to-face meetings of the Bureau.

7. *Frequency and means of meeting.* The Bureau agreed that, in addition to having teleconferences as needed, it would aim to meet face-to-face once a year. The Bureau welcomed the President’s indication that Slovenia would be willing to host the first such meeting in Ljubljana in 2010. The Bureau member for the Western European and Others Group advised that Spain would be willing, in principle, to consider hosting the 2011 meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau agreed with a proposal by the President that Bureau members should submit written comments in advance of teleconferences in order to increase their efficiency. The Bureau Member for the Western European and Others Group, supported by other participants, proposed that the agenda for the Bureau’s 2010 meeting which had been tentatively outlined by the secretariat in document 2 be elaborated in more detail by the Bureau, taking into account the outcomes of regional consultations in the coming months. He also proposed that a document similar to document 2 be provided by the secretariat for reference at each teleconference and observed that the provision in the Conference’s rules of procedure that items recommended by regional meetings are to be given priority when developing the agenda for a Conference session would equally apply to agendas for meetings of the Open-ended Working Group.

8. *Regional focal points.* The Bureau noted that it would be up to each region to determine the most practical means of coordination and the division of responsibilities between Bureau members and regional focal points. In that regard the representative of Japan noted that communication with Asia-Pacific stakeholders, especially those in non-governmental

organizations, was difficult. The non-governmental representatives participating in the teleconference offered to use their regional networks to assist. The regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean observed that its regional coordinating committee was a useful communication mechanism for her region.

Intersessional activities, 2009-2012

Timeline for activities

9. The Bureau noted the tentative timeline contained in document 3 prepared by the secretariat, which included proposals for an initial series of regional coordinating committee and full regional meetings. The secretariat observed that resources were available for African and Latin and American and Caribbean events, thanks to the support of the Government of Spain, but that fundraising would be required for other regions, notably Asia-Pacific. The Bureau member for the Western European and Others Group requested that papers on funding needs be provided for consideration by donors, in reply to which the secretariat indicated that such papers were currently under preparation.
10. The Bureau member for Africa confirmed his region's interest in holding a meeting of the African Core Group in Nairobi on 20 and 21 August 2009, back-to-back with regional mercury consultations. He hoped it might be possible to fund more than one representative per country to attend the Nairobi events.
11. The Bureau member for Asia-Pacific noted the funding gap for his region and indicated that Japan would try to consider the possibility of providing some support for a further regional meeting.
12. The President advised that the Central and Eastern Europe region was potentially interested in a suggestion to hold a regional committee meeting in Brno, Czech Republic, on 6 September 2009, which was the eve of the 10th International HCH and Pesticides Forum.
13. The regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean indicated that her region was exploring the possibility of holding a regional committee meeting in Santiago in November 2009 and a full regional meeting in March 2010, possibly in Jamaica or Central America.
14. The Bureau member for the Western Europe and Others Group advised that a meeting for European Union and "JUSSCANNZ"⁵ countries was being considered for early February 2010 in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. There were, however, some concerns about proximity with the dates for the meetings of UNEP Governing Council and the Conferences of Parties of conventions scheduled for Bali, Indonesia, later in February 2010. He also observed that scheduling of SAICM intersessional meetings would need to take into account dates for other major chemicals meetings such as sessions of the Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee for the proposed new mercury convention.

Scheduling the third session of the Conference.

15. The Bureau reviewed the proposal prepared by the secretariat for a process and criteria for the selection of the venue and dates for the third session of the Conference. It noted the

⁵ Japan, United States, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway.

secretariat's advice that it would be desirable to finalize the venue and dates as soon as possible in order to plan for the intersessional activities leading up to the third session and because 2012 venue bookings were already filling up.

16. The representative of IOMC advised that one of its participating organizations was tentatively interested in the possibility of the third session of the Conference being scheduled back-to-back with its own governing body meeting in 2012. The need for internal consultations meant that a firm proposal was unlikely until after July 2009.

17. The President expressed interest in scheduling the third session of the Conference back-to-back with the 2012 meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York. The secretariat advised that it had not explored this possibility with the Commission secretariat in the light of uncertainties surrounding the Commission's 2012 calendar and agenda. A proposal under consideration by Governments to schedule a "Rio+20" summit in 2012 would have a considerable impact on the Commission if approved. It was understood that the matter would be resolved by the United Nations General Assembly later in 2009. The Bureau member for Latin America and the Caribbean recommended that the secretariat seek further information from Brazil, which was the prospective host and a proponent of the "Rio+20" summit.

18. The Bureau noted that if no governing body meeting was identified for back-to-back scheduling, the third session of the Conference could be held as a stand-alone event.

Next teleconference or meeting

19. The Bureau agreed to have another teleconference to address, among other things, the issue of scheduling the third session of the Conference. In the light of the anticipated timeframe for a possible proposal from an IOMC participating organization, it was agreed that the teleconference be scheduled for late August or earlier September. The secretariat would coordinate a date with the Bureau nearer the time.