
International Conference on Chemicals Management

Third session

Nairobi, 17–21 September 2012

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of the Strategic Approach to
International Chemicals Management: Strengthening of
national chemicals management capacities**

**8 Years - 8 Actions: An initiative to reach the 2020 goal of
Sound Chemicals Management**

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, for the information of participants, in annexes to the present note the “Declaration of intent – towards the 2020 goal for Sound Management of Chemicals” and the launched on 24 April 2012 by the Stockholm plus 40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development by the Ministry of the Environment of Sweden related background document “8 Years - 8 Actions: An initiative to reach the 2020 goal of Sound Chemicals Management”.
2. The information is presented as submitted and has not formally been edited.

* SAICM/ICCM.3/1.

Annex I

Stockholm den 25th April 2012

Declaration of intent – towards the 2020 goal for Sound Management of Chemicals

Launched the 24 of April 2012, in tandem with the Stockholm plus 40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development, by Minister for Environment Ms Lena Ek

Chemicals are an essential part of our daily lives in today's global economy and therefore a vital component in all three pillars of Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development cannot be realised without managing the challenges and utilising the opportunities that chemicals provide. The Sound Management of Chemicals should therefore be an integrated part in any approach aiming at addressing solutions for Sustainable Development so that significant adverse effects on humans and environments are minimized.

Having taken due consideration to the outcome of the Global Stakeholder Dialogue 8 years -8 actions – An initiative towards the 2020 goal for Sound Chemicals management that was held in Stockholm on 24 April 2012, I Lena Ek, Minister for Environment of Sweden, hereby declare that steps will be taken to:

REINFORCE efforts for further action within the eight areas outlined below under the coming eight years, so that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. Innovation is an important driver in these efforts, and more over further action should be governed by the precautionary principle;

STRENGTHEN targeted awareness-raising on Sound Chemicals Management, as a vital mean to reach out to decision makers at all levels of society. In so doing, the costs of inaction as well as the benefits of actions, needs to be communicated;

STEP UP efforts towards enhancing implementation of the eight areas and the approach to do so needs to be efficient, coherent, coordinated and to include a preparedness to handle new and emerging challenges;

SUPPORT new strategic partnerships, taking into account the role and responsibility of the private sector, as a mean of implementation towards the 2020 goal. However, no nation, or any single sector of society can tackle the challenges of Sound Chemicals Management on its own. Working together as strategic partners, will be a key for tackling the challenges and utilizing the opportunities that chemicals can and must play in Sustainable Development.



Taken the above into account, I call for further actions among all stakeholders in the following eight areas:

1. Awareness raising; focusing on increased awareness on Sound Chemicals Management as a key component in Sustainable Development.
2. Access to information; focusing on actions that improve accessibility to clear, timely and appropriate information to decision makers at all levels in the society.
3. Health aspects; focusing on action that would further strengthen the health aspects of Sound Chemicals Management and further integrate chemicals aspects in the health agenda.
4. Substitution; focusing on action toward progressive substitution of chemicals that pose an unmanageable risk to human health and the environment.
5. Resource efficiency; focusing on action towards improved waste prevention and waste management, including prevention of chemicals risks from waste.
6. Chemicals in the development agenda; focusing on action that contributes towards strengthening the linkages between Sound Chemicals Management and the development agenda.
7. Capacity building; focusing on more coherent action towards bridging the gap in differences of capacity to handle the challenges and opportunities for Sound Chemicals Management.
8. International Environmental Governance; focusing on further enhancing cooperation and coordination and an integrated approach to financing for chemicals and waste.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lena Ek'.

Lena Ek, Minister for the Environment



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Ministry of the Environment
Sweden**

Annex II



BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

8 Years – 8 Actions

An initiative to reach the 2020 goal of Sound Chemicals Management

24 April 2012

The sound management of chemicals and waste continues to be a priority area for many countries around the world. In recent years, a significant number of countries have given more importance to this area in recognition of the increasing adverse impact on human health, the environment, national economies and the society at large caused by unsustainable production and use of chemicals.

While significant progress has been made in some parts of the world, there are still differences between and within regions of the global community. Only eight years remain for governments, industry and other stakeholders to achieve the 2020 goal agreed by heads of state in Johannesburg 2002 and further reinforced through SAICM. This calls for all stakeholders to further step up efforts towards reaching the 2020 goal.

From 1972 to 2012 - 40 years of progress in chemicals management

In 1972, Stockholm hosted the first *United Nations Conference on the Environment*. The conference secured a permanent place for the environment on the world's agenda and an Action Plan for the Human Environment was adopted. Among several other issues, the Action Plan recognized the harmful effects of agro-chemicals and called for a strengthening of international programmes for a reduction of these substances' harmful effects. The Action Plan also called for international cooperation regarding the discharge of toxic chemicals, where these affect the aquatic resources of other nations, as well as the development of an International Registry of Data on Chemicals in the Environment.

Twenty years later, Agenda 21 was adopted at the *Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992*. Its Chapter 19, entitled "Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals, including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products", recognized that there is a lack of sufficient scientific information for the assessment of risks entailed by the use of a great number of chemicals, and a lack of resources to assess chemicals for which data are at hand. To begin

to address these issues and achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals, six programme areas were proposed. Most of these are still relevant such as for example, information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks, the establishment of risk reduction programmes and strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals

The increased recognition of the importance of sound management of chemicals has resulted in the goal agreed at the 2002 *Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development* of ensuring that, by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. The WSSD 2002 also encouraged countries to implement the Globally Harmonized System of classification and labelling of chemicals (GHS), with a view to having the system fully operational as soon as possible. The aim of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) adopted in Dubai 2006 is to achieve the agreed 2020 goal by involvement of stakeholders in implementation of needed activities.

Introduction to the stakeholder dialogue "8 Years - 8 Areas for Action towards the 2020 goal for Sound Chemicals Management"

Chemical substances are in many ways crucial for our modern society, they are used in all sectors and countries in the world. Sound Chemicals Management is, as stated in the Dubai Declaration, essential if we are to achieve Sustainable Development, including eradication of poverty. During the last 40 years, significant progress has been made with the development and entry into force of the Vienna Convention/Montreal Protocol, Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions on chemicals and wastes-related matters, the launching of the synergies process aiming at enhancing coordination and cooperation among the conventions and a gradual strengthening of the implementation as well as the creation of SAICM and its Quick Start Programme. Furthermore, governments are currently

in the process of negotiating a legally binding instrument on mercury. A number of dangerous substances have already been prohibited or controlled worldwide. At the same time globalization and the increased use of chemicals occurring during the same period have brought new challenges.

In Johannesburg 2002, and reconfirmed in Dubai 2006, Heads of State agreed that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in a ways that lead to minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. With eight years remaining to 2020, it is Sweden's view that we all need to reinforce and accelerate our common efforts in aiming to reach the goal.

If we are to make sufficient progress during the eight remaining years, a strong multi-stakeholder involvement is needed and cross-sector cooperation, through partnerships and other means, will need to play a key role.

It is against this background that Environment Minister Lena Ek, together with Ms Nina Crommier, General Director for the Swedish Chemicals Agency, now invites representatives of key actors to an International Dialogue on "8 years - 8 Areas for Action, working towards the 2020 goal for Sound Chemicals Management".

The dialogue seeks to arrive at a common understanding of the importance of the 8 areas and the need to further accelerate implementation on national, regional and global level during the coming years. The 8 areas are intended to reflect key components of SAICM, as well as taking into account relevant decisions from UNEP's Governing Council and ongoing discussion within the Global Chemicals Outlook. The aim is to create a dialogue on how, through better cross-sector cooperation and stakeholder participation, efforts can be made to strengthen implementation of our common commitments. The 8 areas for actions are not to be seen as sequential or in any way undermining the importance of other areas, but rather to represent 8 broad areas that are of crucial importance for Sound Chemicals Management on all levels of society. Although the focus is on the 2020 goal, the scope of the actions is not limited to SAICM, but also intends to strengthen the role of chemicals in Sustainable Development.

In preparation for the dialogue, participants are encouraged to come with good examples of activities relevant for the 8 areas for actions but also, and maybe more importantly, to take the opportunity to contribute with ideas on what activities will be of importance on national, regional or global levels in working towards the 2020 goal and Sustainable Development.

8 Years - 8 Areas for Action

In order to achieve, by 2020, the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, Sweden sees a need to further strengthen actions for implementation in the 8 areas listed below.

In addition, further implementation of these 8 areas are also aimed at contributing to strengthen the role of Sound Chemicals Management in the Sustainable Development Agenda, in particularly poverty eradication, health and environment degradation, as well as further clarifying which role different stakeholders can play in doing so.

For each of the below areas for actions, we encourage participants in the dialogue to contribute not only with good examples but also with concrete proposals, especially for cross sector activities that will contribute to further implementation.

Sweden calls for further cross-sector cooperation and implementation in the following areas;

1. Awareness raising; focusing on increased awareness on Sound Chemicals Management as a key component in Sustainable Development.

Currently, over 100,000 different substances are used in a wide variety of products that are an integral part of modern life. General awareness that many of these chemicals can cause significant damage if mismanaged is highly important, but today not sufficient. Toxic exposures are often associated with poverty and the lack of Sound Chemicals Management is an impediment to sustainable development. There is a need for national governments and civil society to conduct awareness raising activities about chemicals on a country-by-country basis, or even at local level.

UNEP has led a Costs of Inaction Initiative, to be released in 2012, which aims to raise political awareness of the benefits, stated in economic terms, of providing resources to sound management of chemicals, including strengthening the rationale for inclusion of Sound Chemicals Management priorities into national development plans. The information currently available within this initiative reveals significant economic consequences of continued unsound chemicals management. However, much remains to be done to raise awareness to decision makers in all levels of society.

2. Access to information; focusing on actions that improve accessibility to clear, timely and appropriate information to decision makers at all levels in the society.

Access to information on the health and environmental properties of chemicals is a prerequisite for managing environmental and health risks related to exposure to hazardous chemicals and wastes. Industry needs to provide relevant data for the chemicals that they place on the market. Information is needed by governments, citizens, and industry at all levels to take the informed decisions which are needed to minimize the impacts of chemicals. This is also part of the Overarching Policy Strategy of SAICM.

Addressing the gaps of information on chemicals in products would also enable resource efficiency through safer recycling, thus contributing to a greener economy. Many initiatives are on-going to improve access to information on chemicals, for instance the implementation in many countries of the Globally Harmonized System for classification and labelling, but there are still number of efforts to be made to promote this implementation and to address other significant information gaps.

The information gaps on chemicals in products are recognized within SAICM as an emerging policy issue that warrant global cooperation. Proposed further actions are, e.g., to identify roles and responsibilities of major stakeholder groups, develop guidance on what information on chemicals in products could be transferred and how the information access and exchange can take place to fulfill the needs of all stakeholders throughout the life cycle of products.

3. Health aspects; focusing on action that would further strengthen the health aspects of sound chemicals management and further integrate chemicals aspects in the health agenda.

An important aim of Sound Chemicals Management is the protection of human health. Exposures to toxins from inadequately controlled industry, hazardous products or waste all cause substantial health problems to populations and occasion high costs to the society. Within SAICM, and in consultation with the World Health Organization, a draft strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of SAICM has been developed and will be discussed at the next high level meeting for SAICM taking place in September 2012.

It is particularly important to protect children and young people from harm caused by chemicals. This also includes protecting human reproduction, so that chemicals do not harm our chances of having children. Measures to protect children and young people often

mean that adults are also better protected from chemical hazards in their everyday life.

A study by WHO (2011) states that the health cost due to insufficient chemicals management are at least 1.06 million deaths in 2004, which is in the same magnitude as road traffic accidents or malaria. The challenge remains however to make chemicals a more integral part of the health agenda.

4. Substitution; focusing on action toward progressive substitution of chemicals that pose an unmanageable risk to human health and the environment.

Many chemicals that are in use today cause significant damage to people and the environment. Less toxic alternatives exist for several of these chemicals, and alternatives are being developed for many others.

The capacity of industry to innovate is essential and its sense of corporate and social responsibility (CSR) provides a springboard for development of safe business practices and green alternatives around the world. Substitution of hazardous substances in products, clean production technologies and pollution prevention programs assist industry in avoiding future problems and costs.

5. Resource efficiency; focusing on action towards improved waste prevention and waste management, including prevention of chemicals risks from waste.

The growing consumption of products results in a growing and unsustainable demand for resources, including chemicals. Today's flow of materials is also a flow of chemicals.

The UNEP Governing Council decided, in 2011, to call upon governments to consider waste prevention and improving waste management, including in the field of e-waste, as central objectives when adopting and developing their own national sustainable development strategies. Hazardous substances in the life cycle of electrical and electronic products are recognized within SAICM as an emerging policy issue that warrant global cooperation in order to address the risk such products can pose to human health and the environment.

During poorly controlled recycling operations and when recycled materials are used in new applications, unexpected and uncontrolled exposures to humans and the environment may occur. The phasing-out of chemicals of concern in new products would make it safer and more cost efficient to reuse and recycle more materials. If managed in a healthy and environmentally sound manner, the extraction of valuable secondary raw material from wastes can create green business opportunities and decent jobs for millions of people.

6. Chemicals in the development agenda; focusing on action that contributes towards strengthening the linkages between sound chemicals management and the development agenda.

The Dubai Declaration states that the Sound Management of Chemicals is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development, including eradication of poverty, and the elevation and maintenance of living standards in all parts of the world. Toxic exposures both at home and at workplaces are often associated with poverty, as the poorest are frequently those left without the information, education or protection equipment needed to use chemicals safely. Some toxins cause intellectual impairment, which affects the capacity for sustainable economic development. Poorly managed industry, including the informal sector, is a direct impediment to sustainable development.

The agricultural sector is the most important income generator in many developing countries. Emerging information indicates how agriculture yields, household incomes, and GDP can increase with Sound Chemicals Management. Given the potential magnitude of costs of inaction, and the potential development gains, the evidence favours further investment in capacity for downstream management and in upstream management wherever chemicals are produced or imported.

The UNDP-UNEP Partnership Initiative for the Integration of Sound Management of Chemicals into National Development Processes aims to raise awareness of the need and build capacity for improved integration of chemicals management into development agendas, and ultimately to mobilize sustainable financing for Sound Management of Chemicals. However, much remains to be done to fully integrate chemicals management to the national development process.

7. Capacity building; focusing on more coherent action towards bridging the gap in differences of capacity to handle the challenges and opportunities for Sound Chemicals Management.

One of the objectives of SAICM is capacity building. The Secretary General's report to the 19th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development in 2011 identified that a strong national infrastructure for Sound Management of Chemicals is essential to achieve sustainable chemicals management. An efficient infrastructure for management of chemicals in each country is crucial in order to ensure the safety of the citizens and the protection of the environment. However, national authorities are still often not

place or understaffed and the allocation of roles and responsibilities for the tasks involved in chemicals management are still not defined in many countries.

The UNEP Guidance on the Development of Legal and Institutional Infrastructures and Measures for Recovering the Costs of National Administration (UNEP LIRA Guidance) addresses the development of proposals for national legal and institutional infrastructures for Sound Management of Chemicals.

Legislation plays a crucial role and is most often needed to define the specific objectives to be reached; roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved; instruments and tools that can be used; and distribution of costs between stakeholders. Institutional arrangements give operational reality to policies by organizing the available resources, human, technical, financial, for decision making implementation, compliance and enforcement. Industry has a key role to play in the Sound Management of Chemicals in both developing and developed countries, and private sector action is critical towards reducing the costs to manage chemicals and wastes.

8. International Environmental Governance; focusing on further enhancing cooperation and coordination and an integrated approach to financing for chemicals and waste.

The 12th special session of the UNEP GC/GMEF reiterated in decision SS.XII/5 the request to the UNEP Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term. Moreover, the Executive Director was also requested in decision SS.XII/4 to continue to provide support to the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes with a view to further elaborating a final outcome based on the integrated approach to financing Sound Management of Chemicals and wastes.

Both processes are of vital importance for facilitating and strengthening implementation at the national, regional and global levels. To ensure a more efficient and effective use of both financial and human resources towards enhanced impact, it is critical that governments and other relevant stakeholders, including industry and civil society, continue to support and promote both processes. Only through a rethinking and an enhancement of existing governance and financing structures in the chemicals and wastes cluster will it be possible to enhance the capacity of governments, thus making possible increased efforts in the chemicals and wastes cluster at all levels.