

**Reports on inter-sessional meetings to 18th session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development**

New-York, USA

Monday, 3 May 2010, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Report on the development of the publication “Practices in the
Sound Management of Chemicals” and the related Expert
Workshop that took place in Geneva 3-4 December, 2009**

by

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Prior Informed Consent Procedure for certain hazardous
Chemicals and Pesticides in international trade**

Mr. Chair, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), UNEP /Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE)/ Chemicals Branch and the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants have the great pleasure and honour to present to the delegates of the Commission the publication on “Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals”;
2. Chemicals touch on many aspects of development. They are used in a large range of products used for, including protection of crops, effective control of vectorborne diseases, to a whole range of industrial consumer items; which make our everyday lives safer and easier. If not managed properly, chemicals can contaminate drinking water, air and food; and adversely affect human health and the environment. As such, the sound management of chemicals is central to sustainable development and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
3. Building upon their complementary expertise UN/DESA, UNEP-chemicals and the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention have joined forces to develop the publication “Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals”. This is a successful example of the UN “delivering as one” to mainstream the sound chemicals management into the international development agenda.
4. The publication aims at contributing to the work of the current cycle of the Commission in assessing the present trends and emerging issues, and in identifying successful practices and experiences towards the achievement of the overarching goal, adopted during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, that by 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
5. This publication presents 18 case studies from countries, NGOs and private sector associations that can be considered for replication and scaling up to improve the sound management of chemicals. In this regard, it provides good examples of policy actions and measures to be considered by the Commission in the perspective of its 19th session of next year towards achieving the 2020 goal on the sound management of chemicals;
6. With the objective of reviewing the draft version of the publication on case studies, experts and practitioners from different countries as well as representatives of relevant agencies of the United Nations system and the business sector attended the Workshop on Case Studies in the Sound Management of Chemicals, Geneva on 3-4 December 2009, an event organized jointly by the Division for Sustainable Development of UNDESA, the Secretariat of the

Stockholm Convention and the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) Chemicals Branch.

7. It was recognized that significant progress on the sound management of chemicals has been made and many successful experiences have emerged around the world that have reduced and prevented chemical risks through better practices in production, manufacturing, distribution, transport, use, storage and disposal of chemicals.
8. Despite these achievements, the fact remains that the environment and human health continue to suffer from the negative impacts of improper management of chemicals, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition where countries might face a dilemma of finding a balance between the risks and benefits when making national decisions on chemicals;
9. In this regard, the following main barriers and obstacles have been identified by participants as impeding the sound management of chemicals:
 - Low priority of chemicals management in development plans; which can cause a lack of financial resources;
 - Lack of coherent and/or integrated legal and institutional frameworks; including inter-ministerial coordination;
 - Lack of public awareness and knowledge on the risks posed by chemicals on human health and the environment;
 - Lack of technical capacity, particularly human capacity, to assess risks posed by chemicals and enforce legal framework;
 - Inadequate management of activities and practices in the informal sector which can pose high risks to exposure to toxic chemicals;
10. The following lessons learned have been identified in the case studies contained in the publication of “Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals”:
 - ***Priority Setting at the National Level:*** Increase understanding of the linkage between sound management of chemicals and development goals; particularly enhance decision-makers’ understanding of the financial cost of inaction in the field of sound management of chemicals;
 - ***Information and Knowledge:*** Improve access to information for risk assessment and management; and enhance public awareness on risks posed by toxic chemicals; through adequate, scientific and reliable information and data;
 - ***Multi-sectoral and Integrated Approaches:*** Strengthen coordination among relevant Ministries, and mainstream the sound management of chemicals into the work plans of relevant agencies;

- ***Stakeholder Involvement:*** Ensure broad stakeholder engagement: Empower local communities, farmers and other practitioners; Engage business sector in development of innovative methodologies for identification of chemicals hazard and for risk assessment and management;
 - ***Legislation:*** Improve legislation and enforcement related mechanisms; including explore voluntary approaches can be successful to complement laws and regulations;
 - ***Life Cycle Approach:*** Take a full life-cycle approach when assessing and managing chemicals;
 - ***Alternatives:*** Increase research on and promote alternatives, and make them more available and cost effective;
 - ***International Harmonization and Cooperation:*** International programmes on hazard identification and risk assessment provide consistent and harmonized information and data to countries, thereby providing a harmonized basis for a first step in the sound management of chemicals.
11. For further insights on the publication, I am pleased to invite all delegates to join us at the High-Level Launching of the Publication on Wednesday 12 May at 6:15 p.m. in Conference Room 6.
 12. Thank you for the opportunity to address this important meeting, and I look forward to the productive debates during this current cycle of CSD which provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to have better understanding of the sound management of chemicals and place it high in the global sustainable development agenda, towards achieving the 2020 goal on the sound management of chemicals.