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## New WHO-UNEP resource tool for managing pesticide poisoning

Health and environmental impacts of pesticide use, sound management of pesticides, including persistent and acutely toxic pesticides is of growing concern, in particular in developing countries. Improvement in access to information on pesticides, increasing awareness, education and training of public user communities and trainers have been recognized as priorities at the IFCS and the recently adopted SAICM.

This electronic resource tool, developed in collaboration with the Universiti Sains Malaysia is aimed at addressing these needs. It provides information on different aspects of pesticide management, including judicious

and safe application within the context of integrated pest/vector management, personal protection measures and measures to protect the general public and the environment, as well as information on first aid and treatment of pesticide poisoning.

Building on existing guidance materials, the tool is intended to assist national programmes and those involved in management of pesticides and diagnosis and treatment of pesticide poisoning in formulating training courses adapted to specific needs of different target group(s).



Sound Management of Pesticides and Diagnosis and Treatment of Pesticide Poisoning—A Resource Tool

## Mercury partnerships 'small grants' programme

The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNEP Governing Council called for the development and implementation of partnerships for mercury as one approach to reducing risks to human health and the environment from exposure to mercury. UNEP's Chemicals Branch is currently working with countries and NGOs in this respect.

One of the immediate priorities has been to work with partners to mobilize technical and financial resources to support mercury management efforts. As suggested by donor countries and stakeholders at an informal meeting in Vienna in September 2005, UNEP's Chemicals Branch initiated a mercury 'small grants' programme. This allows countries to implement small projects up to \$50,000 that contribute to many risk reduction activities.

Over 20 proposals have been received to date. Among the needs expressed are technical assistance and capacity building on inventories, training and awareness raising/information exchange, measures to reduce or eliminate releases from wastes, best available techniques and best environmental practices, as well as development of policy and regulatory controls.

A number of projects will be launched in the coming months, including initiatives on inventories, awareness raising, as well as activities in the health care and the gold mining sectors. <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/support.htm>



Photo / c/o 8th International Conference on Mercury

Scientists have observed that with high levels of Hg, fish-eating birds such as the loon are failing to incubate eggs and are abandoning their nesting territory.

## ILO Resolution on Asbestos

The International Labour Organization, at its 95th session in June 2006, adopted a resolution on asbestos to eliminate all future uses of all forms of asbestos (including chrysotile) and identify and properly manage asbestos currently in place to protect workers from asbestos exposure and to prevent future asbestos related diseases and deaths.

The UNEP Chemicals Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.

UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.

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# UNEP Chemicals Newsletter

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

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## SAICM regional meetings

The SAICM OPS (Overarching Policy Strategy) and the ICCM resolution I/1 called for regional meetings to be held between sessions of the ICCM. The purpose of the regional meetings is to review progress on implementation of SAICM in the regions, provide guidance on implementation to regional stakeholders and provide a forum for technical and strategic discussions and information exchange. The SAICM secretariat organized the first meeting for the African region in Cairo, Egypt (11 to 14 September 2006). For further information please see [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/)

## CIEN: linking for sound management of chemicals

UNEP's Chemicals Branch information exchange activities comprise two components; dissemination of information from developed countries and strengthening countries' capacity to access chemical information. The first component, supported by OECD, makes information obtained from the co-operative investigation of existing chemicals in OECD available worldwide. The second builds on the UNEP/US-EPA partnership to provide electronic equipment and training to government agencies, enabling access of chemical information on the Internet. IFCS and the Rotterdam Convention focal points suggested that CIEN be an integral part of the implementation of Rotterdam Convention and other related Conventions. The project covers, to date, 42 countries in Africa and will be expanded to more African countries and 6 Asian countries as funds become available. <http://jp1.estis.net/communities/cien>

## First Meeting of the Lead and Cadmium Working Group

The first meeting of the Lead and Cadmium Working Group was held in Geneva from 18 to 22 September 2006. During the meeting, the Working Group finalized reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium, focusing especially on long-range environmental transport. This review will form the basis for UNEP's secretariat report to the 24<sup>th</sup> Governing Council on the implementation of GC decision 23/9 III on lead and cadmium). The WG also prepared technical summaries of the key findings of each review in order to inform relevant discussions at the upcoming GC to be held in February 2007, outlining the hazardous properties, exposures and effects of lead and cadmium; and covering:

- the extent to which the metals undergo intercontinental, regional, national and local transport;
- sources of releases;
- production and uses of lead and cadmium;
- lead and cadmium issues in developing countries;
- levels and time trends in air and deposition;
- human exposure routes and effects;

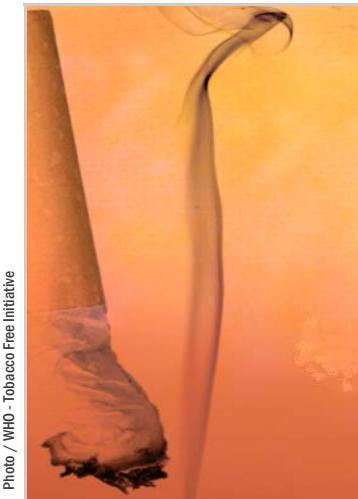


Photo / WHO - Tobacco Free Initiative

Cadmium inhaled through cigarette smoke is more easily absorbed by the body than cadmium in food or water

- impacts to the ecosystem;
- and data gaps.

The meeting brought together 96 representatives of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Further information can be found on the Lead and Cadmium Activities website at [http://www.chem.unep.ch/Pb\\_and\\_Cd/Default.htm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/Pb_and_Cd/Default.htm)

## Bali Strategic Plan and sound management of chemicals

The Bali Strategic Plan, developed in response to the UNEP Governing Council Decision SS.VII/1 (2002) concerning the strengthening of international environmental governance, is intended as an inter-governmentally agreed approach to strengthen technology support and capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by reinforcing the role of UNEP for this purpose, building on areas where it has demonstrated comparative advantage and expertise.

One of the core thematic activity areas identified is the sound management of chemicals (SMC) to address the urgent need to enhance capacities towards the 2020 goal of the Johannesburg Plan "to produce and use chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment". UNEP's Chemicals Branch is presently developing a number of initiatives, also in cooperation with other UN



Photo / Ian Britton (of FreeFoto.com)

agencies including UNDP, to strengthen its support to countries for building their capacities in SMC, and in particular for mainstreaming SMC in the development process. There is a growing gap between the dependence on chemicals and in the capacity to ensure chemical safety, in particular in the least developed countries.

## From the Director



Photo / Andrew Isaac, UNEP Chemicals Branch

Chemicals are integral to development. While their fundamental role in society due to the increasing dependence on chemicals of many products, services and processes is undisputed, they may, if improperly or inadequately managed, pose serious threats to environmental integrity and human health. This is why a clear goal was

agreed at WSSD in 2002, which calls for efforts to "achieve sound management of chemicals so 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". This goal clearly requires international cooperation in a globalised world.

The toxic waste pollution crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has, once again, demonstrated the need for international cooperation and action to ensure sound management of chemicals from cradle to grave. It has also highlighted the need to tackle difficult issues such as illegal traffic with hazardous chemicals, and, more importantly, to better use existing international instruments, both legally binding and voluntary, in a coordinated and synergistic manner.

*Maged Younes, Head, UNEP Chemicals Branch, DTIE*

## Activities for UNEP's implementation of SAICM

UNEP's Chemicals Branch and the Czech Republic's Ministry of Environment are organizing a Symposium on Illegal International Traffic in Hazardous Chemicals to take place on 6 to 8 November 2006 in Prague-Průhonice, Czech Republic. This symposium is one of the initial activities for SAICM implementation in UNEP and has been made possible by a contribution from the Federal Republic of Germany. The purpose is to share information from different regions on the size of the problem and to take stock of the existing measures to address illegal traffic.

Further information on the symposium can be found on <http://www.chem.unep.ch/unepsaicm/default.html>. The proposals for future activities to be initiated in order to implement SAICM are centered around a number of areas of which capacity building is a priority.

The proposals for capacity building focus on the development of legislative and institutional infrastructures for sound management of chemicals in developing countries, together with the mainstreaming of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda.

### SAICM Africa regional meeting

An African regional meeting on SAICM was held in Cairo, Egypt from 11 to 14 September 2006. The regional meeting finalized and agreed on key documents for SAICM implementation in the region such as the African Regional Action Plan. The meeting also reacted to the recent dumping of toxic substances in Cote d'Ivoire and issued a statement condemning the act. A full report on the meeting will soon be available on [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/)

## SAICM Quick Start Programme Trust Fund

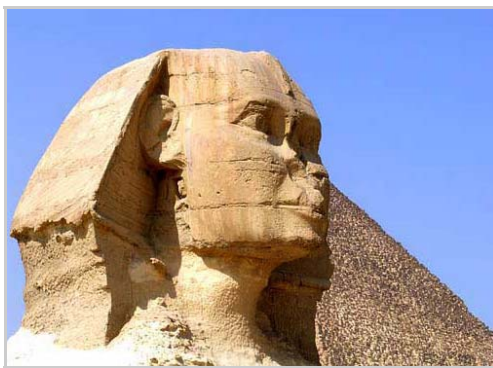


Photo / Ian Britton (c) FreeFoto.com

In February 2006, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) invited UNEP to establish a voluntary, time-limited trust fund to provide seed money to support the objective and strategic priorities of the SAICM Quick Start Programme (QSP). Developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and, on an exceptional basis, NGOs are eligible for support from the trust fund. Projects that support initial

enabling capacity-building and implementation activities consistent with the objective and strategic priorities of the QSP may receive between \$50,000 and \$250,000. The first round of applications to the QSP Trust Fund closed on 18 August 2006.

The SAICM secretariat has received 44 applications, 32 from Governments and 12 from NGOs. Eligible and complete applications will be reviewed on 18 October 2006 by the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee, consisting of representatives of participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and UNDP. Additional information on the QSP Trust fund is available on the SAICM website: [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm)

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## Rotterdam Convention - COP.3

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention will be held in Geneva 9 to 13 October 2006. A major topic for discussion will be the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention text. An inclusion will recognize the hazards associated with chrysotile asbestos, and provide protection for Parties who do not wish to receive chrysotile, while allowing the continued use and trade of it where Parties feel they can manage it safely.

The meeting will also continue discussions on sustainable financing for the Convention and consider an additional study into possible options. A special working group on non-compliance will work in parallel to the main session, with the aim of agreeing on a mecha-

nism for non-compliance. The issue of synergies between the 'chemicals and waste Conventions' will also be discussed, as will the programme of work (including technical assistance) for 2007 and 2008.

The meeting will include a high-level segment. The theme for this segment is "The Rotterdam Convention – towards full implementations – opportunities and challenges". Ministers from a number of countries have confirmed their participation.



Photo / Ian Britton (c) FreeFoto.com

## Basel Convention - upcoming events

COP.8 of the Basel Convention will take place in Nairobi from 27 November to 1 December 2006. The theme of COP.8 is "Creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes". In particular, computers and their accessories, as well as television sets are targeted through the theme. As part of the high-level segment of COP.8, a panel of eminent persons will be convened on 30 November 2006 to discuss the COP.8 theme. The panel would be composed of high-level representatives from Government, Inter-Governmental Organisations, civil

society and industry and will be chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP. The discussion should be interactive and open to questions and comments from other delegates and stakeholders present. The outcome could be the adoption of a strategy to address e-wastes, set in the broader context of end-of-life equipment, environmentally sound management and the Millennium Development Goals.

A Norway-funded UNEP-DEC workshop for Non-Governmental Organizations will be convened during COP.8 to inform NGO representatives about the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and discuss how these agreements could be useful for their work.

### Status of the Rotterdam Convention Ratifications

As of 15 September 2006, 109 countries and the European Community had deposited instruments of ratification for the Rotterdam Convention. There are currently 39 chemicals subject to the Rotterdam Convention, including 24 pesticides, 4 severely hazardous pesticide formulations and 11 industrial chemicals.

### Status of the Stockholm Convention Ratifications

As of 15 September 2006, there were 130 Parties to the Stockholm Convention. New Parties since last issue: Belgium, Cambodia, Gambia, Greece, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Niger, Sudan and Zambia.

## Stockholm Convention - launch of electronic system for reporting

On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006, the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention launched the electronic system for reporting under Article 15 of the Convention. The system which has been designed to be user friendly, by allowing Parties to fill in the questionnaire directly on-line or off-line, has been developed in time to be used by Parties when preparing their first national reports pursuant to Article 15, which are due on 31 December 2006.

Under the Stockholm Convention, Parties have the obligation to report on the measures they have taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and on the effectiveness of such measures in meeting its objectives. The information provided in the national reports is to be used

by the Conference of the Parties when undertaking the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention as called for in Article 16, the first of which is scheduled for 2009.

For further information please visit the Convention's home page at: <http://www.pops.int> or contact the Convention Secretariat at: [ssc@pops.int](mailto:ssc@pops.int)

