



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz
und Reaktorsicherheit



Announcement of a Symposium on Illegal International Traffic in Hazardous Chemicals

6-8 November 2006, Prague-Průhonice, Czech Republic

Background

Illegal international traffic in hazardous chemicals has for a number of years been recognized as an international problem with potential serious consequences for human health and the environment in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This has at latest been confirmed at the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai, 6-8 February 2006 that adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), where illegal international traffic has been appointed as one of the 5 main objectives of the Strategic Approach. The environmental and health problems connected to illegal international traffic have likewise been recognized in the Prague Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation among Chemical Related Multilateral Environmental Agreements. A number of initiatives have been carried out to meet the challenge of illegal international trade in hazardous chemicals and waste. UNEP and its partners are under the Green Customs Initiative working together to stop illegal international trade in hazardous chemicals and waste. The objective of the symposium is to share information and experience from different regions on the size of illegal international trade of hazardous chemicals and wastes, the adverse effects of this on human health and the environment and to take stock of and evaluate existing measures to address illegal traffic.

The symposium has been made possible by a contribution from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is organized in cooperation between the Ministry for the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Chemicals Branch of the Division on Technology, Industry and Economy of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Symposium participants will include representatives of governments, industry, public interest groups, international organizations and other interested groups. The symposium language will be English.

Major issues of the symposium

During the three days of the symposium it is planned to cover two major issues:

1. Share information and experience from different regions on the size of the problem with illegal traffic including major health and environmental effects.

Based on the review of concrete case studies it is the aim to investigate key questions. Questions related to these issues include but are not limited to: What is the size and nature of the problems with the illegal traffic? What effects on human health and the environment have been caused by illegal traffic?

2. Share information and take stock of existing measures to address illegal traffic. Key questions: Is there a lack of ratification and implementation of MEAs? Has the countries not ensured enforcement of MEAs and national legislation concerning production, import, export and use of hazardous chemicals? Are there other factors that might decrease control of illegal traffic such as missing awareness of human health and environmental effects of hazardous chemicals?

The answer to such questions might be useful when planning and prioritizing future activities in the different regions.

Symposium programme

The introductory presentations during the morning of Day 1 will be followed by a panel featuring the perspectives from the 5 UN regions followed by a discussion. The panel presentations and discussions will be the basis for in-depth discussions in the following two working groups that will run in parallel on:

- size and the nature of the problem
- measures to control illegal traffic

The working groups will commence working in the morning of the second day and run throughout the day.

On day three in the morning, a draft document will be tabled for discussion at the symposium by the rapporteurs of the working groups which summarize the views of the working groups. The symposium will close in the afternoon on the third day.

Participation, Panel Presentations and Sponsorship

The Czech Republic and UNEP, Chemicals invites representatives from governments, industry, public interest groups and intergovernmental organizations to participate in the symposium. However, there is a limit of 70 participants.

In order to assure equitable geographical representation in the meeting the organizers invite the regional coordinators for SAICM to nominate 4 representatives from Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean regions and 3 representatives from Central and Eastern Europe region whose participation will be supported thanks to the financial contribution of the German government. Moreover, participation of 3 NGO representatives will be sponsored.

Registration of participants who do not receive funding will be determined on first come first serve basis.

Interested participants should complete a Symposium Registration Form (available at www.chem.unep.ch) and submit it to UNEP by 6 **October 2006**.

The organizers recommend early registration (by 6 September 2006) to participants from countries having visa obligations when traveling to the Czech Republic. The personal invitation letters will be prepared by Czech organizers after the registration.