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Strategic Approach
to International
Chemicals Management

Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

cordially invite you to a side-event

“Introduction to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)”

**Wednesday, 11 June 2008, 13:15 – 14:45
Room Sigma, Hotel Reval Latvija**

Side-event Chairperson

Ivan Narkevitch, RUE “Bel SRC “Ecology”, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Republic of Belarus

Panelists

Introduction to Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM): objectives, core texts and recent developments, Kevin Munn, United Nations Environment Programme Chemicals Branch, DTIE

Supporting SAICM implementation: Pilot projects, guidance materials, and related activities. Pilot Experience of SAICM implementation in Belarus, Tatiana Terekhova, UNITAR

Enabling activities for SAICM Implementation: Quick Start Programme supported projects. Experience of Georgia, Nino Gokhelashvili, Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia

Questions and discussion

Background Information

Public Participation in the International Policy Context

Agenda 21, Chapter 23 recognizes that broad public participation in decision-making is a fundamental prerequisite of sustainable development. Furthermore, Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, also adopted at the Rio Summit in 1992, states that environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, as outlined in the Rio Declaration, “each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. [...] States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available”.

These principles of public participation have been re-emphasized through a number of regional initiatives and agreements, such as the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters—also known as the Aarhus Convention—and the Latin American Regional Initiative on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making.

SAICM and Stakeholder Participation

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a global policy framework to support the achievement of the goal of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) that, by 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. The development process for SAICM has been multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral, with a strong presence of NGOs, on a virtually equal footing with Governments. The three core documents, *Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management*, the *Overarching Policy Strategy* and the *Global Plan of Action* emphasize the need for stakeholder participation and specifically for access to information, as well as highlighting the responsibility of all stakeholders to contribute to SAICM implementation.

The *Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management* embodies the core political commitment to SAICM, and *inter alia* calls for effective and efficient governance of chemicals management by means of transparency, public participation and accountability involving all sectors of society (para 18). Furthermore, it stresses the responsibility of industry to make available information on the health and environmental impacts of chemicals (para 20).

The *Overarching Policy Strategy* is comprised of five objectives, two of which emphasize the importance of availability to all stakeholders of information on chemicals throughout their life cycle (para 15) and a strengthened governance mechanisms (para 16) for achieving sound chemicals management through “appropriate national, regional and international mechanisms that are multi-sectoral, comprehensive, effective, efficient, transparent, coherent and inclusive and ensure accountability, taking into account the circumstances and needs of countries” (para 16.a). Stakeholder participation is identified as key to achieving the SAICM objectives, including through a transparent and open implementation process with public participation in decision-making and a strengthened role for women (para 16.g & 16.h).

The *Global Plan of Action* (GPA) provides guidance for achieving sound chemicals management by identifying specific work areas supporting SAICM. The GPA defines 273 activities in 36 work areas, being categorized in accordance with the five OPS objectives, which together

provide broad coverage of chemicals related issues. Of relevance to the Kiev Protocol of the Aarhus Convention is the inclusion of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) as one of the GPA work areas.

Without stakeholder involvement and effective governance structures in place at the national level, reaching the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management will be difficult. Many of the goals and objectives of SAICM (e.g. linking chemicals management to development planning) depend on systematic and sustained communication and information exchange between key actors working on chemicals management issues and those that set overall national development priorities. Having an effective multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral governance structure in place can assist with making such links, and lend strength and credibility to chemicals management efforts at the national level.

The *Quick Start Programme* (QSP) and its trust fund were established by SAICM's governing body, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), to support SAICM implementation. The QSP trust fund provides seed money to support initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing states and countries with economies in transition. Currently, fifty-seven (57) projects involving sixty-three (63) countries have been approved and are being/going to be implemented under the financial assistance of QSP trust fund. Eligible countries are welcome to submit project proposals. The current application round for QSP trust fund is open until 29 August 2008.