

UNECE comment¹ on the

Draft document setting out possible cooperative actions on nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials

[Resolution on co-operative actions on nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials]

of 3 February 2009, prepared by Switzerland and the USA

There is a recognized need to ensure that the use of manufactured nanomaterials contributes to sustainable development and pollution prevention. International efforts to identify the potential environmental, health and safety risks of manufactured nanomaterials are currently expanding. Another key measure is raising of awareness of the ethical and social issues associated with nanomaterials. Intergovernmental and international organizations can foster public dialogue on the potential benefits and risks posed by nanomaterials by making this information readily accessible to the public. Clearinghouse mechanisms employing ICT² substantially facilitate the useful sharing of national and international information in an efficient, simple and well-structured manner. A publicly accessible Web portal providing access to information on nanotechnology research and policymaking may serve to promote informed decision-making and community acceptance of policy outcomes. UNECE can share its experience with providing access to information in support of informed decision-making through the development of online clearinghouse mechanisms.³

¹ Submitted by Michael Stanley-Jones, Environmental Information Management Officer, Secretariat to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland. Contact: michael.stanley-jones@unece.org.

² Information and communications technology.

³ See e.g. Transport Health and Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP) Clearinghouse: <http://www.thepep.org/CHWebSite/>; Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy: <http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org>.