

UN/SCEGHS/6/INF.9

**Sub-Committee of Experts
on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals
(Sixth session, 10-12 December 2003)
(agenda item 3)**

**Report of the meeting of the Correspondence Group on Precautionary Statements
Lead Country: Germany**

1. The correspondence group on Precautionary Statements at its informal meeting on 10 December discussed the actual status of work as set out in document UN/SCEGHS/6/INF.2. There was an agreement on the working principles reflected in para. 3.
 2. ICCA presents a new draft of the table section summarizing all the interim deliberations as exchanged within the group until now. The proposal includes a system allowing for suggested, open and optional text in order to facilitate flexibility as deemed appropriate.
 3. Furthermore, a group of experts in physico-chemical hazards quite recently offered a proposal as to how to address those hazards by precautionary statements in form of condensed core information.
 4. A point of concern are concurrent hazards not necessarily stated as GHS hazards, i.e. effect of substances on human health due to certain physico-chemical properties, which prevail the hazard assessment (for example peroxides).
 5. Some systems use other properties, such as volatility, which are not defined per se in the GHS system. The IPCS system provides an inner logic, which takes such properties as conditions for the assignment of precaution phrases into account.
 6. WHO offered a close collaboration with experts in the IPCS/ICSC project to the effect that GHS precautionary statements and IPCS are being developed convergently on the GHS basis. The strict dependence of the harmonized precautionary statements on the GHS hazard statements are to be maintained.
 7. A hierarchy of precautionary statements, as proposed by Austria, seems only applicable in the health hazard section. More exercise on examples to check the system's workability may open a wider scope.
 8. In summary, the group has elaborated modules in agreement, which have to be compiled to give the final proposal for the 7th UN SCEGHS session.
 9. It was concluded, that a preamble to the table section will be required independent from the decision as to whether the GHS precautionary statement system should be an alone standing document or a revision of GHS Annex 3.
 10. The preamble should provide a general guidance for application of the system under different legal frameworks. In particular, the relationship between standardized core phrases and the corresponding supplemental information has to be explained in this context.
 11. It should be considered that the precautionary statement system will certainly prove to be a self-learning system subject to the need of further refinement and higher user friendliness.
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