

UN/SCEGHS/8/INF.31

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally
Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals

Eighth session, 7-9 December 2004
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Activities of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme and UNITAR/ILO/OECD WSSD Global GHS Partnership

Transmitted by UNITAR

1. This document provides an update regarding activities in the UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme and the UNITAR/ILO/OECD WSSD Global GHS Partnership for the period July – December 2004.

UNITAR/ILO Capacity Building Programme Activities

Country-based Activities

2. Through contributions to the global UNITAR/ILO trust fund for GHS capacity building, Thailand and Senegal are expected to initiate new country-based pilot projects early in 2005, with resources provided by the Government of Switzerland. Two additional pilot countries can be funded in 2005, most probably in Africa.
3. With support of the European Commission, two additional ASEAN countries are expected to initiate country-based pilot projects early in 2005.
4. The UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme Advisory Group (PAG) continues to meet to review programme documents, ensure complementarity with other chemical hazard communication initiatives and provide overall guidance regarding Programme implementation.

Regional Activities

5. With support of GTZ, the US Department of State, the Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC), and hosted by the Government of Brazil, the second in the series of UNITAR/ILO regional GHS workshops took place from 29 November – 2

December 2004 in Sao Paulo. Over 45 representatives from ten countries of the Mercosur and Andean Community regions, along with other stakeholders participated and developed recommendations for action towards GHS implementation at the national and regional levels. A report of the workshop will be available in advance of the next session of the SCEGHS.

6. Subject to the provision of resources, proposals to host regional workshops in 2005-2006 in ECOWAS (West Africa) and the Central and East European regions have also been received and are under consideration. In the context of the contribution of the European Commission and Switzerland, at least one regional workshop for ASEAN countries is also planned for 2005.
7. UNITAR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, undertook a survey related to GHS implementation and capacity needs in countries of the Asia-Pacific region during the second half of 2004. Based on responses received to date from 17 countries, preliminary results indicate that:
 - many countries have existing chemical classification and hazard communication systems, though most often in the agriculture chemicals and industrial chemicals sectors;
 - almost all countries indicated at this point that they intend to introduce the GHS into their national chemical management systems;
 - most countries cited lack of GHS awareness and lack of capacities/resources as the main obstacles to GHS implementation.

It is expected that a final report of the survey will be ready early in 2005.

Development of Guidance and Training Materials

8. UNITAR/ILO have initiated a process to update the guidance methodology used in pilot projects (originally developed in 2001) and a preliminary framework was discussed at the December 2004 PAG meeting. An update on progress made will be provided at the July 2005 session of the Subcommittee.

Supporting Services

9. The GHS Action Plan adopted by IFCS Forum IV in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2003 requested UNITAR/ILO, as the focal point for capacity building in the UN SCEGHS, and in collaboration with the Sub-committee, to develop a roster of GHS experts who can provide support on training and capacity building activities on the application of GHS classification, labelling, and safety data sheets by the end of 2004. A draft roster has been developed and is made available to the SCEGHS as INF paper 32. Further nominations to the roster are welcome.
10. A *Global Thematic Workshop on Capacity Building to Implement the GHS* is tentatively planned for the last quarter of 2005. Further details will be available at the next session of the Subcommittee.

WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS

11. Due to the substantially increasing number of GHS-related events and activities, the GHS Partnership Secretariat (UNITAR) has developed a calendar of events page to coordinate and improve access to information about ongoing events at <www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership/events.htm>. The calendar includes global, regional and national events. Events for inclusion in the calendar should be submitted to UNITAR.
12. The second meeting of the WSSD Global GHS Partners is planned for late 2005. Further details will be available at the next session of the Subcommittee.
13. In addition to 2004 contributions from the Government of Switzerland and the US State Department for financial support to UNITAR/ILO implemented Partnership activities, including the Partnership Secretariat and national GHS implementation projects, UNITAR is pleased to acknowledge the 2004-05 financial support of the European Commission and the Society for Chemical Hazard Communication (SCHC).
14. GHS capacity building activities organized by UNITAR/ILO continue to be funded by extra-budgetary resources. UNITAR/ILO welcome suggestions and proposals from the SCEGHS regarding how to realize this objective of ensuring sustainable core funding both to support Partnership activities and to provide the functions of the Partnership Secretariat.
15. UNITAR will continue to update the SCEGHS on these activities over the course of the next year.