

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

Transmitted by UNITAR

1. This document provides an update regarding activities in the UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme and the UNITAR/ILO/OECD WSSD GHS Partnership for the period January–July 2005.

UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme Activities

Country-based Activities

2. Nigeria, Senegal, Slovenia and The Gambia initiated country-based pilot projects in early 2005, with resources provided by the Government of Switzerland to the global UNITAR/ILO trust fund for GHS capacity building. National Planning meetings took place as follows: Nigeria, 22 March 2005; Senegal, 14 March 2005; Slovenia, 11 March 2005; and The Gambia, 11 March 2005.
3. In the ASEAN region, a project to facilitate implementation of the GHS commenced in 2005 with support of the European Union and Switzerland. The project includes both a national and regional dimension (see also below). Indonesia, The Philippines and Thailand were selected as ASEAN pilot countries to develop national GHS implementation strategies. National Planning meetings took place as follows: Indonesia, 22 June 2005; The Philippines, 24 June 2005; and Thailand, 8 April 2005.
4. The UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme Advisory Group (PAG) met on 6 December 2004 and will meet on 14 July 2005 to review programme documents, ensure complementarity with other chemical hazard communication initiatives and provide overall guidance regarding Programme implementation.

Regional Activities

5. The draft report of the South American Sub-regional Workshop on Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS Implementation (the second in the series of UNITAR/ILO regional GHS workshops), held 29 November–2 December 2004 in Sao Paulo, is available and has been sent to workshop participants for comments.
6. A regional workshop for ASEAN countries is scheduled to take place during October 2005. Proposals to host regional workshops in 2006 in ECOWAS (West Africa) and for Arabic speaking countries have been received from the governments of Nigeria and Egypt. Organization of these workshops is subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources.
7. A workshop for countries of central and eastern Europe, hosted by Slovenia and funded by the OPCW and Switzerland, is scheduled to take place in 2006.

8. UNITAR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, have finalized the report of the 2004 survey related to GHS implementation and capacity needs in countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Copies may be obtained from UNITAR or the Ministry.

Development of Guidance and Training Materials

9. UNITAR/ILO has refined the guidance methodology used in pilot projects (originally developed in 2001) and a preliminary framework was discussed at the December 2004 PAG meeting. A revised draft guidance document is available and it, along with other new materials, will be reviewed by the PAG, pilot countries and others at the planned Global Thematic GHS Workshop in November 2005 (see entry #11 below).

Supporting Services

10. The Government of Uruguay, in collaboration with UNITAR and with financial support from the Government of Switzerland, organized a side-event on the GHS during COP-1 of the Stockholm Convention in Punte del Este, Uruguay on 3 May 2005. The side event – attended by approximately 125 participants – briefed COP-1 delegates about the GHS, shared practical experience of GHS implementation in countries and among stakeholders, and facilitated a discussion regarding the ways in which the GHS can facilitate implementation of international agreements, such as the Stockholm Convention, and the development of national chemicals management systems. More information is available on the GHS Partnership website.
11. A *Global Thematic Workshop on Capacity Building to Implement the GHS* is planned for the November 2005, hosted in South Africa and with support from the Government of Switzerland and OPCW. The workshop, the ninth in a series of workshops on priority topics for national chemicals management capacity building organized by UNITAR, will be open to participants from developing countries, countries in economic transition, and developed country representatives, as well as representatives of intergovernmental organizations (including convention secretariats) and non-governmental organizations with experience in chemical classification, hazard communication and GHS implementation. The workshop will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences with GHS implementation, take stock of current activities and needs, and undertake a final review of guidance materials and methodology.

WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS

12. The Annual Report 2004 for the Partnership, which contains a review of 2004 activities and an outline of planned activities for 2005-2006, has been prepared with input from Partners and will be reviewed by the UNITAR/ILO Programme Advisory Group. The Report will be made available during August 2005.
13. The GHS Partnership calendar of events page, developed to coordinate and improve access to information about ongoing events

www.unitar.org/cwm/ghs_partnership/events.htm) is continually updated. The calendar includes global, regional and national events. Events for inclusion in the calendar should be submitted to UNITAR.

14. The second meeting of the WSSD Global GHS Partners is planned in mid-2006, in connection with the tenth meeting of the Programme Advisory Group (PAG).
15. UNITAR would like to acknowledge contributions from the Government of Switzerland and the European Commission for financial support to UNITAR/ILO implemented Partnership activities, including the Partnership Secretariat and national GHS implementation projects. UNITAR is also pleased to acknowledge the 2004-05 financial support of the Government of Canada in support of GHS guidance material development.
16. 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 ensure sustainable funding to meet the growing demand for GHS capacity building activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
17. UNITAR will continue to update the SCEGHS on these activities over the course of the next year.
