

Resolution

1999/65

Reconfiguration of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods into a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1995/6 of 19 July 1995 on the role of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods in the development of a harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals for implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development contained in chapter 19 of Agenda 21,¹

Recalling also its resolution 1997/3 B of 18 July 1997 whereby global harmonization of systems of classification and labelling of chemicals, *inter alia*, was given priority in the work programme of the Committee for the biennium 1997-1998,

Noting with satisfaction that the Committee, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, has completed the elaboration of proposals for classification criteria concerning physical hazards,² except for the flammability of aerosols, on which work will continue into the next biennium,

Aware that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, as focal point for health hazards and hazards to the environment, has also completed most of its tasks with respect to the classification criteria and has established a working group for criteria on mixtures, and that the International Labour Organization has established a working group for harmonization of chemical hazard communication systems,

Aware also that the Committee, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, as focal points designated by the Coordinating Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, are expected to make available, through their cooperative efforts, by the year 2000, a globally harmonized hazard classification and compatible labelling system, including material safety data sheets and easily understandable symbols, in accordance with the objectives of paragraph 19.27 of chapter 19 of Agenda 21,

Noting that the Coordinating Group has prepared proposals for the implementation of the globally harmonized system,³ consisting in reconfiguring the present Committee of Experts and extending its mandate to cover not only transport of dangerous goods but also implementation and updating of the globally harmonized system,

Noting also that those proposals were endorsed by the Inter-sessional Group of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, at its third meeting (Yokohama, Japan, 1-4 December 1998), which requested the Coordinating Group to develop draft terms of reference, in cooperation with the Committee,

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution I, annex II.*

² See ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/28/Add.3.

³ See ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51.

Noting further that the Committee agreed to the proposals of the Coordinating Group, subject to certain conditions,⁴ and that draft terms of reference have been developed, accordingly, by the Coordinating Group,

Recognizing that reconfiguring the Committee in accordance with those proposals would be the most cost-effective and efficient option⁵ for the implementation of the globally harmonized system, ensuring at the same time cooperation between various authorities and organizations concerned with the sound management of chemicals, harmonization between various regulatory systems and facilitation of trade,

1. *Decides* to reconfigure, as from 2001, the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and its Subcommittee into a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with one Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and a second Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, with terms of reference and arrangements as described in the annex below, and provided that the total meeting time does not exceed that currently allocated to the work of the Committee in a biennium;

2. *Invites* the reconfigured Committee and the Subcommittee on the Globally Harmonized System to endeavour, whenever possible, to work on a consensus basis;

3. *Invites* Member States interested in participating in the Subcommittee on the Globally Harmonized System to apply for membership at the latest by the end of 2000 so that the composition of the Subcommittee and of the reconfigured Committee may be decided at the organizational session for 2001 of the Economic and Social Council;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide, not later than 1 January 2001, adequate resources to the Transport Division of the Economic Commission for Europe and plan sessions of the Subcommittees and the reconfigured Committee for 2001 and 2002, as appropriate, in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the annex below.

Annex

Draft terms of reference and working arrangements for 2001-2002 of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and its Subcommittees

1. Draft terms of reference

1.1 Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The reconfigured Committee shall deal with strategic issues rather than technical issues. It is not envisaged that it will review, change or revisit technical recommendations of the Subcommittees. Accordingly, its main functions shall be to:

- (a) Approve the work programmes for the Subcommittees in the light of available resources;
- (b) Coordinate strategic and policy directions in areas of shared interests and overlap;

⁴ See E/1999/43, para. 21.

⁵ See ST/SG/AC.10/1998/51, annex, for various institutional options envisaged.

- (c) Give formal endorsement to the recommendations of the Subcommittees and provide the mechanism for channelling them to the Economic and Social Council;
- (d) Facilitate and coordinate the smooth running of the Subcommittees.

1.2 Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The functions of the Subcommittee shall be to:

- (a) Act as custodian of the globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals, managing and giving direction to the harmonization process;
- (b) Keep the system up to date, as necessary, considering the need to introduce changes to ensure its continued relevance and practical utility, and determining the need for and timing of the updating of technical criteria, while working with existing bodies, as appropriate;
- (c) Promote understanding and use of the system and encourage feedback;
- (d) Make the system available for worldwide use and application;
- (e) Make guidance available on the application of the system, and on the interpretation and use of technical criteria to support consistency of application;
- (f) Prepare work programmes and submit recommendations to the Committee.

1.3 Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

The Subcommittee replaces the existing Committee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and its Subcommittee with the same terms of reference.⁶

2. Working arrangements for 2001-2002

The total number of meeting days shall not exceed that currently allocated to the Committee of Experts and its Subcommittee, namely, thirty-eight, with a maximum of three days for the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods/Globally Harmonized System and ten days for the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System (to be arranged by the secretariat after consultation with the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods/Globally Harmonized System and the Coordinating Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals).

*48th plenary meeting
26 October 1999*

⁶ E/1996/97, paras. 166-175.