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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
Transport of Dangerous Goods
(Twentieth session, 3-12 December 2001,
agenda item 12)

OTHER BUSINESS

Application by the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA)

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat reproduces below information received from ABSA requesting consultative status as a non-governmental organization for participation in the work of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

November 20, 2001

Olivier Kervella, Secretariat
UN/ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods
UN/ECE
Transport Division
Room 414
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Kervella,

The American Biological Safety Association (ABSA) respectfully requests permission to participate in the deliberations of the United Nations Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG Subcommittee) as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) starting in December 2001.

Known as one of the world's foremost resources on biological safety, ABSA is an international professional organization with a membership drawn from more than 20 countries around the globe. After holding annual biological safety conferences for 27 years, the charter members formally organized ABSA in 1984. ABSA has been dedicated to expanding biological safety awareness, and preventing adverse occupational and environmental impacts from biological hazards since its inception. A summary about ABSA, its membership, and its activities is attached as an Appendix to this letter.

Individual ABSA members have been actively involved in the development and harmonization of national and international regulations and guidelines relevant to biological safety. As an organization, ABSA has provided guidance in response to a variety of proposed biological safety-related regulations and guidelines.

ABSA is aware that the Expert from Canada is coordinating a complete review of Section 6.2 of the UN Model Regulations in the 2001 - 2002 biennium.

ABSA is using its expertise and leadership position to help the Expert from Canada bring information about this important work to the attention of other stakeholders around the globe, and to promote the exchange of information among these stakeholders.

ABSA seeks to extend its current leadership position, and expand the participation and representation of the global biological safety community by providing support for the revision and development of transportation regulations as an NGO in the TDG Subcommittee, and coordinating stakeholder input back into the program.

If ABSA's request for consultative status is approved, ABSA plans to actively participate in meetings and work programs of the TDG Subcommittee, and has designated Penny H. Holeman to be ABSA's lead representative for this initiative.

ABSA respectfully submits the following documents as evidence of its competence:

ABSA Bylaws (Located at the back of the 2001 Membership Directory)

1. Policies and Procedures of ABSA
2. 2001 Membership Directory
3. The most recent copy of the ABSA Newsletter
4. The most recent copy of ABSA's journal Applied Biosafety
5. The 44th Annual Biological Safety Conference Program
6. Report on Audit of Financial Statements Year Ended December 31, 2000, and
7. A listing of the members of the ABSA Council and their countries of nationality.

Thank you in advance for your kind attention to our request. Please contact me if you have any questions, or require additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Maureen Best, RBP
President, American Biological Safety Association

Address: Maureen Best, RBP
Director, Office of Biosafety
HPB Bldg#7 PL 0700A1
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON
Canada, ON K1A0L2

Phone: (613) 957-1771
Fax: (613) 941-0596
E-mail: maureen_best@hc-sc.gc.ca

Appendix

American Biological Safety Association

Founded in 1984, the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA) is an international organization with over 800 individual members and 47 corporate members. ABSA membership is open to any one or any organization with an interest in biological safety. Over 10% of ABSA's membership is drawn from more than 20 nations outside the United States of America including:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In recent years, about 20 people from the newly emerging states (following the collapse of the former Soviet Union) are attending and presenting at ABSA's annual biological safety conference. A few organizations in these countries are in the process of submitting applications to ABSA for corporate membership.

ABSA is governed by a Council of 9 members which are elected by ABSA members in good standing. ABSA's current President is Canadian, and another member of the Council is a German citizen who works and resides in Canada. Some of the other Council members have international work responsibilities even though they reside within the United States of America.

ABSA's members are employed by a variety of organizations: 30% university and research institutions, 23% pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, 12% testing and control technology companies, 9% hospitals and medical schools, 7% governmental agencies, and 15% have other affiliations.

An example of ABSA's on-going activities include:

1. publication of a quarterly journal entitled Applied Biosafety, and a quarterly newsletter for members
 2. publication of four biological safety Anthologies which address the topics of laboratory design, facility design considerations, application of biological safety principles, and public health issues
 3. developing and offering training courses and symposia, and co-sponsoring conferences with other organizations interested in biological safety
 4. sponsoring annual biological safety conferences
 5. participating in the development of proposed regulations and guidelines relevant to biological safety
 6. maintaining a registration program for Biological Safety Professionals based upon education and experience
 7. maintaining a certification program for Biological Safety Professionals based upon education, experience, and successful completion of a written exam
 8. maintaining a web site at www.absa.org
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