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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
Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals
(Fourth session, 9-11 December 2002
agenda item 2)

GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION
AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS (GHS)

GHS Health Hazard Symbol

Submitted by the Chairperson
on the behalf of the GHS Correspondence Group on Pictograms

Background

1. In the context of the GHS, there was a need to design a pictogram which would express serious chronic health hazard (CMR, Target Organ Systemic Toxicity, respiratory sensitizer). Along its previous sessions, the Sub Committee on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals has worked at developing this pictogram. At its third session, two symbols were considered, the double exclamation mark symbol and "Symbol N°4" as proposed by Sweden. No consensus was reached on any of these proposals (See ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/6, report of the third session, paras 28 to 34 and alternatives 1 and 2 next page of this document). Consequently, the Sub Committee decided (i) to postpone its final decision to its next session; (ii) to keep the double exclamation mark symbol and symbol N°4 as two possible options; and (iii) to attempt to develop a third option for submission to the Sub Committee at its fourth session. At its fourth session, the Sub Committee must decide of a final choice amongst the three proposals so that the GHS document can be finalized for publication in early 2003.

Method of work

2. A correspondence Group, led by the Chairperson, Ms. Kim Headrick (Canada) was established with a view to work out this new third option. This informal group was set up during the third Sub Committee session, participation was unlimited and on a voluntary basis. The Group was made of members of the Sub-Committee from all regions, as follows: Brazil, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America and Zambia. Additional delegations were kept informed of the work in the course of its development (i.e. Argentina, Austria, China, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and FIPBM (NGO)). Communication was ensured through a series of teleconferences and emails which took place between July and September 2002.

Terms of reference for the new alternative health hazard symbol

3. The new proposal had to be built upon prerequisites that have been agreed upon during the third session of the Sub-Committee, i.e:

- (a) The alternative symbol should draw attention;
- (b) The alternative symbol should show a human shape.

4. The Group was very active: about 30 proposals were screened in a first round, further refined in a dozen of further options, finally resumed to 3 improved alternatives submitted for selection to the member of the Group. The Group has demonstrated fair flexibility all along the procedure. Sufficient agreement was reached on a proposal that is presented here below as alternative N°3.

Results

5. The following three options are proposed to the Sub-Committee for final decision:

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Alternative 3
