

**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**

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Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Globally Harmonized System

Introduction

The Strategic Approach is being developed in the context of previous international chemicals management initiatives, including relevant parts of the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Bahia Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Strategic Approach aims to achieve the Johannesburg goal that by 2020 chemicals are and produced in ways that lead to minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

The Strategic Approach is composed of three documents: a High Level Declaration, an Overarching Policy Strategy and a Global Plan of Action. After three sessions of a Preparatory Committee during 2003-2005, the Strategic Approach is expected to be adopted at International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai from 4 to the 6 February 2006.

The High Level Declaration will express a political commitment to the Strategic Approach, from which will flow the scope, needs, objectives and other matters contained in the Overarching Policy. These documents are supplemented by a detailed Global Plan of Action setting out a broad menu of possible work areas and associated activities that countries and other stakeholders might use to achieve the aim of the Strategic Approach

The work areas and associated activities in the Global Plan of Action are divided according to the following 5 objectives established in the Overarching Policy Strategy:

1. Risk reduction
2. Knowledge and information
3. Governance
4. Capacity building and technical cooperation
5. Illegal international traffic

Globally Harmonized System.

The Globally Harmonized System is an important aspect of the Strategic Approach and it has its own work area on "Implementation of the Globally Harmonized System" in the Global Plan of Action.

Activities on implementation of the Globally Harmonized System are found under the first four of the abovementioned five objectives and consist of the following proposals:

1. Risk Reduction
 - Establish roles and responsibilities of employers, employees, chemical suppliers and Governments in the implementation of GHS.
2. Knowledge and Information
 - Establish information management systems for hazard information
 - Prepare safety data sheets and labels
 - Complete GHS awareness-raising and capacity-building guidance and training materials (including GHS action plan development guidance, national situation analysis guidance and other training tools) and make them available to countries
3. Governance
 - Review national legislation and align with GHS requirements
4. Capacity building and technical cooperation
 - Establish accredited testing facilities to undertake testing of hazard characteristics of chemicals for classification and verification of label information
 - Promote training in hazard classification
 - Make available sufficient financial and technical resources to support national and regional GHS capacity-building projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The Global Harmonized System is also referred to under the work area “Information management and dissemination” where the following activity is proposed:

- Establish procedures to ensure that any hazardous material put into circulation is accompanied, at a minimum, by appropriate and reliable safety data sheets which provide information that is easy to access, read and understand, taking into account GHS.

And the work area on “Education and training (public awareness) where the following activity is proposed:

- Incorporate chemical safety and especially understanding of the labeling system of GHS into school and university curricula.

Further information

Further information on the Strategic Approach can be found at www.chem.unep.ch/SAICM

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