

Resolution on the establishment of an Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety

The International Conference on Chemical Safety,

Having met in Stockholm, at the invitation of the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden, from 25 to 29 April 1994 at a Conference convened by the Executive Heads of the International Labour Office, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization,

Being aware that a substantial use of chemicals is essential to meet the social and economic goals of the world community and of the need to achieve sustainable development,

Aware also of the potentially harmful impact on human health and the environment that adverse effects of chemicals may cause,

Mindful of the relevant and fruitful work which has been carried out at the national level, and by a great number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to promote chemical safety,

Having regard to the recommendations of the Meeting of Government-designated Experts held in London, 16-19 December 1991 to discuss draft proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for chemical risk assessment and management,

Having regard to the invitation by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in paragraph 76 of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 to further consider the recommendations of the London Meeting and initiate action on them, as appropriate,

Determined to promote environmentally sound management of chemicals to ensure that chemicals be used with the highest degree of safety,

Convinced that a strengthened direct cooperation between all those concerned in the field of chemical safety would offer new opportunities to provide policy guidance, identify priorities and develop strategies in a coordinated and integrated manner, and provide the required political support and foster understanding of the issues,

Noting with appreciation the generous offer of the Director-General of the World Health Organization to offer the Organization's facilities and provide an interim Secretariat for the Forum,

1. *Decides* to establish the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and to adopt the terms of reference as given in Annex I.

2. ***Invites*** the Executive Heads of the International Labour Office, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization, as well as of other intergovernmental organizations that may participate as cooperating organizations in a strengthened International Programme on Chemical Safety, to make the necessary interim and longer term arrangements, for a cost-effective Secretariat for the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, bearing in mind the offer made by the Director-General of the World Health Organization and as permitted by resources.

3. ***Recommends*** with respect to the above that the Secretariat for the Forum should be within, but functionally distinct from, the Secretariat for a strengthened International Programme on Chemical Safety and that its work should not jeopardize the scientific and technical work carried out within the framework of the International Programme on Chemical Safety.

4. ***Considers*** that the administrative and financial estimates contained in Annex II provide a reasonable basis for the interim and longer term arrangements for the Forum.

5. ***Invites*** the Director-General of the World Health Organization, in consultation with the Executive Heads of the cooperating organizations, to provide for the establishment of a Trust Fund for voluntary contributions that will finance the costs related to the Forum including those activities of the Secretariat related to the Forum.

6. ***Recommends*** that the Forum conduct a full review of the organizational, administrative and financial aspects of the Forum, as well as an assessment of its effectiveness, for consideration by the third session of the Forum.

7. ***Declares*** that, for the purpose of commencing the work of the Forum, this Conference shall, at its completion, be considered as though it were the first session of the Forum.

ANNEX I

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY

Terms of Reference

1. - Purpose and Aims

1.1 The Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (hereinafter called 'the Forum') is a non-institutional arrangement whereby representatives of governments meet, in accordance with paragraph 3, to consider and to provide advice and, where appropriate, make recommendations to governments, international organizations, intergovernmental bodies and nongovernmental organizations involved in chemical safety on aspects of chemical risk assessment and environmentally sound management of chemicals.

1.2 The purpose of the Forum is to provide policy guidance with emphasis on regional and sub-regional co-operation, develop strategies in a coordinated and integrated manner and foster understanding of the issues, and to promote the required policy support needed to discharge these functions.

1.3 The Forum will seek consensus amongst decision makers representing governments on the development of strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, Chapter 19 (Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products) and undertake periodic review of such strategies.

1.4 The Forum shall provide:

- (a) clear and consistent advice for cost-effective, integrated risk assessment and management of chemicals using environmentally sound and generally accepted principles, including advice on alternatives to banned or severely restricted chemicals;
- (b) improved delineation and mutual understanding of roles, initiatives and activities both within and among governments and international organizations having responsibilities for chemical safety.

2 - Functions

The functions of the Forum shall be to:

- (a) identify priorities for cooperative action on chemical safety, advise and, where appropriate, recommend concerted international strategies for hazard identification and risk assessment of chemicals, including occupational exposure, and for environmentally sound management of chemicals, including risk reduction programmes and risk communication, particularly taking into account the special needs of developing countries;
- (b) assist in securing the collaboration, through governments, of national, regional and international bodies active in the field of chemical safety, and avoid any duplication of effort in this area;

- (c) promote the strengthening of national coordinating mechanisms and of national capabilities and capacities for chemicals management, especially in relation to infrastructure building, training, education, research and monitoring, and provision of information;
- (d) promote international agreements and commitments on harmonized classification and labelling of chemicals;
- (e) assist in identifying gaps in scientific knowledge and promote information exchange and scientific and technical co-operation, including training, and education and technology transfer;
- (f) review periodically the effectiveness of relevant ongoing activities to implement recommended international strategies concerning chemical safety and make recommendations for further activities and, where necessary, advise on the strengthening or establishing the necessary follow-up mechanisms;
- (g) advise governments in their work on chemical safety with particular reference to legislative aspects, promote cooperation among governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and encourage the appropriate distribution of work among organizations and other bodies within and outside the United Nations system in as clear and consistent a way as possible;
- (h) promote the strengthening of national programmes and international cooperation for the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to chemical accidents including major industrial accidents;
- (i) promote the strengthening of programmes for the prevention of and response to poisoning by chemicals; and
- (j) perform other functions in pursuance of the purposes and aims of the Forum, as agreed by the Government Participants.

3 - Participation

3.1 All Member States of the United Nations, of its Specialized Agencies and of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) shall be invited to participate in the Forum ("Government Participants"). Associate Members of any of the Specialized Agencies shall also be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the Forum.

3.2 Relevant United Nations bodies and Specialized Agencies, as well as intergovernmental organizations representing regional geographic, political and economic groups of countries involved in the field of chemical safety ("Intergovernmental Participants"), shall be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the Forum.

3.3 International nongovernmental organizations concerned with health, workers' interests, the environment, consumers and industry, involved in the field of chemical safety and having official relations or consultative status with any of the Intergovernmental Participants shall be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the Forum ("Nongovernmental Participants").

3.4 The term "participants" in these Terms of Reference refers to all of the above governments, Associate Members and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

4 - Government Representation

The representative of each government should be a senior official concerned with chemical safety, including health and environmental issues. Each representative may be accompanied by advisers as appropriate. It is expected that governments would ensure that their delegations reflect the full range of national interests.

5 - Sessions

Subject to the availability of funds, it is expected that after its inaugural session, subsequent sessions of the Forum will be held: a session to review progress on chemical safety prior to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 1997 concerning implementation of Agenda 21, and a session by the year 2000, *inter alia*, to review progress on Chapter 19. The need for further sessions would be reviewed at that time.

6 - Officers

At each session, the Forum shall elect, from among the representatives of the Government Participants, Officers consisting of a President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur. They shall hold office until their successors are elected.

7 - Intersessional Group

7.1 There shall be an Intersessional Group of the Forum.

7.2 The Intersessional Group shall consist of the Officers of the Forum and not more than 26 Government Participants elected by each session of the Forum taking into account equitable regional and geographical representation. Other participants shall be entitled to participate, without the right to vote, in meetings of the Intersessional Group.

7.3 The Intersessional Group shall meet between sessions of the Forum in order to provide advice to the cooperating organizations of the International Programme on Chemical Safety and to deal with the work of the Forum between meetings. In particular, the Intersessional Group may make recommendations to the Forum, study special problems, and advise on the implementation of strategies and programmes as approved by the Forum.

7.4 Sessions of the Intersessional Group may be convened by the President in consultation with the Officers of the Forum as often as necessary and appropriate. The Intersessional Group shall normally meet immediately prior to and following each session of the Forum.

8 - Ad hoc Working Groups

Subject to the availability of funds, the Forum or the Intersessional Group may establish *ad hoc* Working Groups of Government and other agreed Participants for a set period of time to undertake specific tasks. Other participants shall, in accordance with the decisions of the Forum or the Intersessional Group establishing the *ad hoc* Working Group concerned, participate, without the right to vote, in meetings of the *ad hoc* Working Groups.

9 - Secretariat

The Forum, the Intersessional Group and *ad hoc* Working Groups shall be served by a Secretariat provided by a strengthened IPCS in a manner to be agreed.

10 - Decisions

10.1 The Forum, the Intersessional Group and *ad hoc* Working Groups shall proceed by consensus among the Government Participants. If consensus cannot be reached on administrative and procedural matters, a vote may be taken. Each Government Participant shall have one vote. Such decisions shall be taken by a majority of those Government Participants present and voting. For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, the phrase "Government Participants present and voting" means Government Participants casting a valid affirmative or negative vote. Government Participants abstaining from voting are considered as not voting.

10.2 Elections of Officers of the Forum shall be decided by consensus; where consensus cannot be achieved, the election shall be decided by secret ballot.

11 - Procedures

The Forum shall adopt, and may, at any session, amend its own rules of procedure. The Intersessional Group and the *ad hoc* Working Groups shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure adopted by the Forum.

12 - Agenda

The Secretariat, in consultation with and under the guidance of the President of the Forum, shall prepare a Provisional Agenda for each session of the Forum. Any participant in the Forum may request the Secretariat to include specific items in the Provisional Agenda prior to its distribution. The Provisional Agenda shall be communicated to all participants in the Forum at least two months before the opening of the session. After the communication of the Provisional Agenda and before the adoption of the Agenda by the Forum, only items of an important and urgent nature may be proposed by participants.

13 - Budget and Expenses

13.1 The Intersessional Group shall prepare for consideration by each session of the Forum an estimate of expenditure related to the Forum, the Intersessional Group, *ad hoc* Working Groups established by the Forum and a Secretariat, together with information concerning expenditures for the period since the last Forum. This estimate, with such modifications as may be considered appropriate by the Forum in the light of potential funding, shall subsequently be considered in the budget of the Forum.

13.2 Any types of expenses related to participation in the Forum, the Intersessional Group or *ad hoc* Working Groups that are to be borne by participants shall be specified by the Forum.

14 - Reports

The Forum and the Intersessional Group shall consider and adopt a report at each of their sessions embodying the recommendations adopted. A statement summarizing minority views will be included in the reports, when appropriate. The reports will be circulated to all

participants in the Forum and, through appropriate channels, communicated to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

15 - Languages

The working languages of the Forum shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The working languages of the Intersessional Group and *ad hoc* Working Groups shall be determined by the Officers of the Forum.