

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forum III agreed action items and recommendations

Priorities for Action beyond 2000

At its first meeting in Stockholm in 1994, the Forum adopted recommendations on some 40 Priorities for Action. Six years later considerable progress has been made towards these goals while new challenges have appeared. Forum III considered and adopted new Priorities for Action beyond 2000. The new Priorities update objectives in earlier areas of work and set goals in several new areas. These include targets relating to:

- data on inherent hazards in geographical areas other than temperate climatic regions;
- ensuring that relevant hazard data become available in the shortest possible time;
- ensuring that information on hazards related to export of hazardous chemicals is available;
- management of stocks of pesticides and other chemicals which are no longer in use;
- global measures against persistent organic pollutants;
- poisonings of users of toxic pesticides;
- national plans of action to address hazardous chemicals;
- taking action against illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products; and
- promoting assistance to enable all countries to work in all of the Forum's programme areas.

The Priorities for Action beyond 2000 are listed in full in Annex 6.

Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products

Forum III recognized that there is global concern for illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products. It noted that despite the diversity of problems in the different regions, there are common issues as well as potential and possible solutions. The Forum unanimously adopted several recommendations as part of the Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (Annex 6).

Barriers to Information Exchange

There are many barriers to timely and effective information exchange. Forum III recognized that resolution of communication gaps must assume a very high priority in the near term.

Forum III:

- Agreed to support a global effort to assure that government officials responsible for the sound management of chemicals have access to the Internet (email and Web) in the near term (e.g. 1-2 years), and the training to make effective use of it;
- Requested that IFCS participants assist in finding the needed funding and implementation mechanisms, following the roles outlined below; and

- Requested that one of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) participating organizations take the lead for such an effort.

The targets for a Forum-sponsored effort are the following:

- Designated National Authorities for implementation of the Rotterdam Convention;
- National Focal Points for the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS);
- Focal Points for a future convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- Other relevant focal points and national competent authorities designated by countries on related issues.

IFCS participants should play the following roles:

- One IOMC participating organization should take the lead for coordinating fundraising and implementation efforts for a global project that would seek to assure that all government officials responsible for the sound management of chemicals have Internet access and other related information tools and training in their use. The designated organization should prepare and circulate a questionnaire designed to identify national requirements for Internet access and form a workgroup of interested parties who want to assist with this effort, including other IOMC participating organizations.
- Potential donors should accord priority to funding this project, either in the form of bilateral support to individual countries or as support for the lead IOMC organization.
- IFCS participants from developing countries should take a leadership role in mobilizing support within their own countries for this effort, and should serve as liaisons with the lead IOMC organization.
- Companies and organizations representing the chemical industry should provide in-kind services and they are encouraged to consider funding, as well as to investigate other financial resources, for such a project.
- All parties should encourage the participation of private charitable trust funds, particularly those established by the technology sector, which may be interested in providing resources for such projects.

Information Exchange for Chemical Production Decision Making

Forum III agreed that a mechanism is needed by which government officials, industry, and other relevant organizations in less developed countries can be provided with information about 'best practices' in the design and development of new facilities that would minimize health and safety problems and environmental risks associated with the manufacture of chemicals.

Forum III:

- Recommended that the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) participating organizations take into account the information needed for decision-making aimed at preventing adverse human health and environmental impacts related to the production of chemicals, to foster timely and effective exchange of such information, and to develop and promote the mechanisms for implementation. These could include development of a chapter in the chemical management toolbox, establishment of a coordination mechanism to put government

and industry in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in contact with knowledgeable officials in government and industry in developed countries, and establishment of a repository to capture and make readily available to other users information on “best practices”, clean technologies, and impacts on human health and environmental quality, involving all stakeholders under this programme.

- Requested the chemical industry, where it has not already done so, to commit to provide advance notification about new or expanded production facilities to officials, employees, customers, and the public in the country involved, in conformity with: national laws and regulations, principles of sound management of chemicals as established by international agreements and guidelines, and product stewardship programmes and initiatives including Responsible Care[®]. The advance notification should include information on chemical-related health or environmental hazards and recommended preventative measures.
- Urged chemical companies that operate in a global environment to apply their corporate health, safety and environmental principles, standards, and “best practices” in all stages of design, construction, operations, and decommissioning, in all countries, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to comply with local laws, regulations, and requirements. Chemical industry associations are requested to encourage their members in this respect.
- Requested IFCS National Focal Points to take a leadership role in mobilizing the means to use the information available to ensure that all appropriate measures are in place to protect workers, communities, and the environment, including contingency planning for emergencies.

Emission Inventories

Forum III reiterated that Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)/emission inventories are effective tools to stimulate the reduction of risks from chemicals and the prevention and/or the reduction of emissions, and

- Encouraged countries without PRTR systems to take steps to initiate a process to design a national PRTR/emission inventory taking into account national circumstances and needs;
- Called for the establishment of a PRTR/emission inventory in at least two additional countries in each IFCS region by 2004;
- Called upon countries to involve all affected and interested parties in designing PRTRs/emission inventories and to ensure that all parties have the information and capacity to participate in an effective way;
- Urged countries to link reporting requirements under international agreements to national PRTRs/emissions inventories;
- Called upon the multi- and bi-lateral donor community to provide financial and

technical assistance in response to national requests for PRTR/emission inventory related assistance;

- Called upon UNEP and UNITAR to increase technical and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen national capacities and capabilities to design and implement national PRTRs/emission inventories;
- Requested ICCA to report to Forum IV on progress achieved in implementing ICCA policy on PRTRs/emission inventories, including possible interim voluntary public disclosure by ICCA members with facilities in countries without voluntary or regulatory PRTR/emission inventory systems; and
- Requested the IOMC PRTR Coordinating Group to:
 - 1) Prepare a report for Forum IV, summarizing the status and progress in developing PRTRs/emission inventories;
 - 2) Investigate opportunities to engage countries, which are not members of the OECD, in work of the Group;
 - 3) Prepare a report addressing the linking of reporting requirements under international agreements to national PRTRs/emission inventories; and
 - 4) Coordinate the action called for above and prepare a consolidated report for review and possible further action at Forum IV.

Awareness Raising

The Forum recognizes the need for high level political support in governments and international development agencies. Forum III agreed that IFCS should play a much more active role in advocating the importance of the sound management of chemicals at high political levels in governments and other organizations, especially those providing international aid (donors) and in potential recipient countries. To this end, Forum III:

- Requested governments and international development agencies to link the sound management of chemicals to other important health and environment topics, such as sustainable development, occupational health and safety, consumer safety, and water quality and biodiversity, as well as to other relevant development cooperation programmes in the fields of agriculture and industry.
- Recommended that each donor country should designate a contact point with respect to the management of chemicals, as agreed in the decision on an information exchange network for capacity building for the sound management of chemicals. The contact point should facilitate the exchange of information related to funding and associated issues between the donor and other donors and international organizations and programmes as well as partners in recipient countries to avoid duplication and to increase the synergistic effect of different projects.
- Recommended establishment of capacity building programmes needed by developing countries and countries with economies in transition leading to the development of strategies and procedures for information gathering and dissemination as part of the realization of national emissions inventories, and other tools such as Pollutant

Release and Transfer Registers.

- Urged the various Convention secretariats, Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) participating organizations, and donors to greatly increase coordination in capacity building programmes, and to develop new synergies and opportunities for coordination in the implementation of the conventions and other related areas of sound chemicals management with a view toward ensuring a comprehensive approach.
- Strongly recommended that worker safety remain an on-going major focus for Forum activities, in particular those aimed at providing support for national worker safety programmes such as education, training, and capacity building. The Forum further recommended the strengthening of cooperation between IFCS and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its tripartite partners (governments, industry, and labor) to ensure the highest levels of chemical safety at work.
- Emphasized that the creation and strengthening of national committees and institutions is essential for progress in further development of national profiles, awareness raising, and participation of all sectors.
- Recommended that all international organizations and donor agencies provide support to strengthen public interest non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the field of chemical safety. Since at present charitable foundations and other donor agencies these NGOs rely on often focus their efforts in other areas such as climate change and biodiversity, the Forum encourages higher priority be given to chemical safety activities. This should occur especially at the international level and for NGOs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- Urged representatives of major donor agencies and coordination groups, including the World Bank, regional development banks, Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), to actively participate in IFCS meetings and efforts.

Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals

Forum III supported the development of an Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals, adopted, as an interim measure, Provisional Terms of Reference for such a network as presented to Forum III, and made the following recommendations in order to initiate concrete action by Forum IV:

- Instructed the Forum Standing Committee to assist in establishing a Steering/Advisory Group for the Network, including adoption of final Terms of Reference for the Network;
- Recommended that the IFCS secretariat serve as the Central Coordinating Node for the Network during its start-up phase;
- Requested the IFCS secretariat, in consultation with the stakeholder groups

represented in the IFCS, and in coordination with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) participating organizations and the World Bank, to establish the Network taking into account work ongoing and planned in other fora;

- Encouraged countries and organizations to provide support for the start-up phase for the Network in accordance with the different options provided in section 10 of the provisionally adopted Terms of Reference;
- Requested countries and organizations to designate points of contact for the Network (in accordance with Section 9 of the provisionally adopted Terms of Reference) and to provide information relevant to implementing the objectives of the Network; and
- Requested that a report on progress made and lessons learned during the start-up phase of the Network be made available at Forum IV for consideration and possible further action.