

Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee

Summary Record of the Eighth Meeting

The eighth meeting of the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOCC) of the IOMC was held 4-5 December 1997 at ILO, Geneva. The members and other participants were welcomed by Dr. R. Visser, Chair.

The Secretariat reported that the official agreement had been received by all Participating Organizations (PO) to formally extend an invitation to UNITAR to become an IOMC Participating Organization. It was anticipated that the effective date would be 1 January 1998.

The IOCC reviewed a revised draft of the report Review and Analysis of Capacity Building Activities of IOMC Participating Organizations Supporting the Programme Areas of Chapter 19, Agenda 21 prepared by Mr Jan W. Huismans, Consultant. The report will be finalized for distribution for the third meeting of the Intersessional Group (ISG3) of the IFCS. In addition the IOCC agreed to develop an issues paper concerning capacity building to 1) further their discussions and work, and 2) to serve as a discussion paper at the ISG3 thematic session on capacity building.

To aid in understanding the manner in which each PO worked at each level and in order to improve collaboration and coordination, it was agreed that a basic list of information on the Regional and subregional structure of each IOMC PO would be compiled.

The UNEP representative provided information on the work being done by UNEP as "immediate actions" on POPs referring to the draft work plan sent by UNEP to IOCC members in June 1997. A number of questions and issues were raised concerning the work, in particular the work to develop an interactive database on alternatives including information on experts for specific alternatives. UNEP agreed to arrange bilateral discussions to determine ways the organizations may collaborate in the work. If it is determined through the discussions that a more "organized" approach was needed, e.g. meeting involving a number of organizations, the Secretariat will be informed so that all members have the opportunity to participate.

Proposals for establishing coordinating groups for activities on PRTRs and chemical accidents were presented and discussed. Terms of Reference were adopted for each; OECD will serve as the secretariat for the coordinating groups. The 1st meeting of the PRTR Coordinating Group will be held the week of 9 February 1998 in conjunction with the OECD Joint Meetings.

The UNEP representative informed the meeting that resources were still need to develop the Report Outlining Options for Enhanced Coherence and Efficiency Among International Activities Related to Chemicals as requested by the UNEP Governing Council. Work would begin when funds were available. IOCC members raised questions concerning the process and scope of the work (interpretation of UNEP GC decision). At the next IOCC meeting a work plan or short outline would be provided.

The UNITAR representative presented a background paper on Guidelines for Chemicals Management Legislation: Existing Documents and Possible IOMC Action in Light of IFCS Recommendations. Several of the participates informed the meeting on their past experiences and cautioned against undertaking any work to develop a model system or guiding countries towards comprehensive legislation. Given the uncertainty concerning the intent of the IFCS Priority for Action and recommendation during Forum II, the IOCC decided the paper should be further developed for ISG3 and the question put back to the Forum for clarification and resolution.

The FAO representative provided brief information on the status of its efforts in the area of obsolete pesticides in Africa and the Near East and informed the meeting on an informal meeting held with UNEP and UNIDO to better understand on-going and planned work. FAO agreed to contribute a paper for ISG3. The Chair will speak with the Director, UNEP Chemicals on the possibility of UNEP providing a paper on issues for disposal of obsolete chemicals for ISG3; it was suggested that the paper might focus on the work UNEP is undertaking on POPs.

The ILO representative provided an overview of the status of work of the coordinating group on Harmonization of Classification and Labelling and schedule of planned meetings as well as papers to be prepared for ISG3.

UNITAR briefed the meeting on the recent activities in the UNITAR/IOMC Pilot Capacity Building Programme noting in particular issues raised at the recent meetings of the Informal Network for Capacity Building and the Project Task Force. It was noted that several of the issues raised would be beneficial for the issues paper to be developed for the next IOCC meeting.

The Chair gave a brief report on the Forum Standing Committee meeting held in October 1997. The requests for ISG3 meeting papers, both discussion/decision and information papers, were reviewed. The Chair informed the meeting on the side meeting held with NGOs to discuss the provision of chemicals information issues. It was agreed that NGOs will be invited to attend the IOMC Coordinating Group on Chemicals Information Exchange to work on specific issues. The issue of MSDS will be addressed through the on-going work of the ILO classification group.

The WHO representative introduced a proposal for an IOMC "advisory body" meeting on the coordination of international pesticide assessments, noting the

importance of the use of IOMC for this coordination issue and the importance of ensuring that governments were fully supportive. The IOCC agreed to the proposal.

A question concerning the public availability of the IOCC meeting papers and records had been raised at the Forum Standing Committee meeting in October 1997. It was agreed that, after approval by the IOCC, meeting agendas and a short summary of the key outcomes of meetings would be posted on the Internet.

The next IOCC meeting will be held 27-29 April 1998 at UNITAR and organized with 1 day on general IOCC matters and 1 day "brainstorming" on capacity building.