

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

Summary Record of the Ninth Meeting

The ninth meeting of the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOCC) of the IOMC was held 27-29 April, at UNITAR, Geneva. Mr M. Boissard, Executive Director, UNITAR, welcomed the participants stating that UNITAR was very happy to have officially joined the IOMC as a Participating Organization.

The Chairman gave a brief overview of the recent work of the Forum Standing Committee (FSC) on preparations for the Third meeting of the Intersessional Group of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (ISG3). The IOCC reviewed and reported on progress on the papers to be prepared for ISG3 by members. IOMC members were preparing two types of papers for ISG3: IOMC consensus papers and papers reporting on technical work of members. UNEP reported that the resources required to prepare the Report Outlining Options for Enhanced Coherence and Efficiency Among International Activities Related to Chemicals had not yet been obtained; if circumstances change a status report will be provided at ISG3. With respect to the thematic session on obsolete chemicals and pesticides, UNEP plans to convene a meeting to develop a joint project proposal with FAO, UNIDO, and WHO on obsolete chemicals and pesticides; the outcome of the meeting will be reported to ISG3.

UNEP raised the issue of the potential conflict or competing interests concerning the recommendations of the IFCS to the IOMC PO's and the responsibilities and mandates given to the PO's by their respective Governing Bodies. In the discussion it was noted that the capacities of the organizations to follow through on the IFCS recommendations was limited and that it was important for the IFCS government participants to build working relationships with their national representatives to the Governing Bodies of the IOMC member organizations. UNEP proposed and it was agreed to request the IFCS clarify its linkages and reporting relationships with the Governing Bodies of the IOMC member organizations; the issue might initially be raised at ISG3 then carried forward to Forum III. The Chairman will write a letter to the IFCS President on the matter and suggest that it be put on the agenda of an upcoming FSC meeting.

A draft outline for the ISG3 paper "Capacity Building for the Environmentally Sound Management of Chemicals, IOMC Contribution to Discussions at ISG3" was prepared and will be finalized by correspondence and teleconferences over the next month. Direct dialogue and provision of timely advance exchange of sufficient information prior to implementation was seen as a vital element in "coordination". On policy issues contact is to be made among IOCC designated

representatives; at the implementation level, contact points in each organization would be assigned for different topic areas.

The IOCC agreed that the Internet based IOMC Interactive Information System which would include the Calendar of Events and the Inventory Activity Profiles would be the basic mechanism for sharing information on activities; there was no need for a separate database on capacity building activities. The annotated list of available training materials compiled by UNITAR will be posted on the IOMC Internet site and linked to the Inventory of Information Sources on Chemicals on UNEP's Internet site.

Members suggested a number of areas where joint activities might be developed. As a means to identifying possible joint projects, each organization will review their activities and those of the other organizations as listed in the Inventory Summary Report and compile a "raw" list of proposed joint projects.

It was recognized that the IOMC Coordinating Groups (CG) were different in structure (membership) and function. This was due to the different type and nature of the activities concerned. The efforts of the CG's were to basically cover the activities of the IOMC PO's, but in some areas, e.g. PRTRs, countries often may take the lead role in providing input into the work. Concerning membership, it was recognized that flexibility was needed in order to strengthen the implementation of activities and receive added value.

ILO distributed a report on the work prepared for the ILO Governing Body (GB.271/STM/7/1) which presented a summary of the efforts of the IOMC coordinating group on classification and labelling (CG/HCCS) to date. The ILO GB had endorsed the establishment of a Working Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Hazard Communication under the leadership of the ILO and within the framework of the IOMC CG/HCCS. The success of the work of the CG/HCCS to date at the technical level was due to the interest of countries, members participating with nationally coordinated positions, continuity of participation both within and across technical working groups, and a consensus building working procedure. The IOCC noted the good progress of the CG's efforts.

UNEP presented the report of the IOMC coordinating group on information exchange citing the need for feedback from the IOCC. The CG reported that there was a problem with the ability of members to follow through on decisions taken at meeting; this was due to a number of reasons including the administrative/management level of members in their respective organizations (e.g. not in position to allocate needed resources). Thus, endorsement at the level of the IOCC was required. It was recognized that information exchange is a part of each programme area of Chapter 19, Agenda 21, that the level of resources most likely would not be increasing, and there would be benefit to "coordinating" ongoing activities. It was agreed to devote a session at the next IOCC meeting to the topic. UNEP agreed to draft a revised Terms of Reference for the CG that would propose a concise mandate focusing on outputs and results expected. The paper for the IOCC meeting would also include information on the expected resources required from each of the PO.

OECD presented the report of the PRTR CG. It was noted that the group did not yet include representatives from developing countries. OECD presented the report on the Chemical Accidents CG. The report Overview of Major Intergovernmental Activities Related to Chemical Accident Prevention, Preparedness and Response will be distributed for ISG3 and posted on the IOMC Internet site.

The submitted criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the IOMC mechanism were briefly considered. A number of additional issues were identified in the discussions on capacity building activities; these would be reflected in the ISG3 issues paper. It was proposed and agreed that the matter be extensively discussed at the next IOCC meeting.

WHO reported on the outcome of the IOMC ad hoc advisory meeting on coordination of international pesticide assessments and the recommended follow-up consultation with broader participation. Informal discussions concerning the participation of developing countries in the planned consultation had taken place at a recent CCPR meeting. The consultation would be hosted and organized by a national government. A Steering Group has the responsibility for planning the consultation; WHO and OECD are members. No definite decisions concerning the organization of the consultation had been taken yet by the potential host country.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would compile a single directory listing of contacts in the headquarters and regional offices of the members for their internal use. The need for additional or revised information would be determined at a later date as the work of the IOCC progressed.

The process for drafting, reviewing and producing the 2nd edition of the IOMC Inventory of Activities - Summary Report was agreed. The 2nd edition will be distributed at ISG3. New activities proposed for designation under the framework of the IOMC will be reviewed and approved by correspondence.

The next meeting will be held 29-30 October 1998 at FAO, Rome.