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**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT
OF DANGEROUS GOODS**

(Twenty-first session,
4-13 December 2000,
agenda item 4 (a)(iv))

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Global harmonization of systems of classification and labelling of chemicals

Labelling and hazard communication systems

**Draft report of the fifth meeting of the International Labour Office (ILO) Working Group
for the Harmonization of Chemical Hazard Communication
(ILO, Geneva, 22-25 May 2000)**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat reproduces hereunder the draft report of the fifth meeting of the ILO Working Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Hazard Communication, as transmitted by ILO. This draft report will be submitted to the ILO Working Group for adoption at its sixth meeting (Rome, 30 October-2 November 2000).

**INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR
THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS****ILO/HC5/00.4
20.07.2000****Global Harmonization of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals****FIFTH MEETING OF THE ILO WORKING GROUP FOR THE
HARMONIZATION OF CHEMICAL HAZARD COMMUNICATION
ILO Geneva, 22-25 May 2000****DRAFT RECORD****Opening, adoption of agenda and record of the fourth meeting**

1. Dr. Jukka Takala, Director of the ILO's SafeWork Programme welcomed the participants. He highlighted the importance of occupational health and safety to the ILO, explaining that the SafeWork Programme accounted for 10% of all technical activities undertaken. Furthermore chemical safety remained a major concern. Of the 1.2 million fatalities caused by work, 340,000 were attributable to chemicals and hazardous substances. As part of its response to the problem, the ILO had developed a number of conventions, codes of practice and guidance material for countries to use in raising standards of protection. He explained that SafeWork was currently spearheading a campaign to improve the ratification of conventions and asked participants to work with ILO to improve the ratification rate of the Chemicals Convention 170. He wished participants every success in reaching a tripartite consensus on the important issue of chemical hazard communication. Dr Pratt thanked Dr Takala for opening the meeting and his good wishes to the participants. (A list of participants is at Annex I).

2. Dr Pratt welcomed the new participants to the meeting; Mr. Andrew Fasey UK Health and Safety Executive; Ms. Marie-Nöelle Blaude, Belgium, Public Health and Environment Department; Ms. Francesca Bernadini, UN CETDG Secretariat; and Mr. Jose Antonio Galves, representative of Brazilian Chemical Industry.

3. Dr Pratt introduced the agenda and outlined the meeting documents. In addition to those given in the list of meeting documents, **IOMC/ILO/HC5/00.Inf.1**, further room documents were available. These had been assigned numbers as follows:

Room Document 1 – Thought Starter from IOE on the means for providing label information to different target audiences

Room Document 2 – Comments from Mr Oberreuter on Part B of the Step 2A Document (metal corrosivity)

Room Document 3 – Comments from Mr Oberreuter on Part A of the Step 2A Document (risk/hazard)

4. The amended record of the third meeting held in Dublin, June 1999 (**IOMC/ILO/HC3/99.9.Rev.1**) was agreed and the following amendments requested to the record of the fourth meeting held in Washington, November 1999 (**IOMC/ILO/HC4/99.21**):

- Discussion of the Paper on Use of the Classification Criteria

- The term 'identification of hazard' used to describe target audience requirements for information should be replaced with the term 'communication of hazard';
- It should be clarified that transport does not label for eye irritation or eye corrosion.
- Discussion of the Paper on Risk Communication
- The sentence 'during the discussion there was general agreement that the issue was of relevance to consumer labelling' could be construed by some as implying general support for risk based labelling for consumers. It should be clarified that there was agreement not to consider risk based labelling for workplaces, transport and emergency responders and that further discussions should continue in respect of consumer labelling.

In addition the USA had some minor textual clarifications which it agreed to send directly to the secretariat. Also Mr Machin's name had not appeared in the list of participants and should be added. There were no further issues and the agenda was adopted.

Step 1 Detailed Review Document on the Similarities and Divergences in Chemical Hazard Communication Systems

5. Ms Wyeth highlighted the changes made to the document (**IOMC/ILO/HC5/002a/b/c**) following the discussion in Washington. These concerned technical amendments to the tables summarising the current use of classification information for hazard communication, expansion of information to describe the Japanese, South African and Norwegian systems and clarification of discussions on risk communication and data sheets. The revised text was endorsed for publication although the USA wished to provide further text to describe how the USA transport regulations differed from the UN RTDG. The secretariat agreed to consult the USA before publishing the document.

Step 2A Document, Towards Harmonisation of Chemical Hazard Communication

6. Ms Wyeth presented the Step 2A Document (**IOMC/ILO/HC5/00.3A/B/C**). She explained that the document was the first stage of the Step 2 process and explained the objectives of the three sections – Part A, General Principles, Part B, Labelling issues, Part C, Data Sheets. As had been agreed in Washington, the document reflected options for harmonisation of the priority areas for labelling and data sheets that had been previously identified in discussions. The document at this stage appeared somewhat complex and it had proved difficult to provide a holistic view of the emerging labelling system because of the large number of options for discussion on discrete label elements. Nevertheless the feedback from the Working Group consultation suggested that the document did provide a good starting point for the week's discussions. Ms Wyeth then thanked the members of the Drafting Group who had assisted in the development of the document and all who had provided advice, comment and feedback.

7. Dr Pratt thanked Ms Wyeth for her presentation and for preparing the document. She recalled the final discussion in Washington where the secretariat had prepared a summary of priority issues for harmonisation in the Step 2A document. At that time it was agreed not to eliminate any options before the Working Group discussed them. She hoped that progress could be made in reducing the number of options and identifying the issues that the Working Group would need to develop further towards consensus. There were no points arising from the presentation and the Working Group therefore began its consideration of each section of the document.

Introduction, Objectives and Scope

8. There was a request for clarification as to whether cosmetics were included in the GHS, or treated in a similar fashion as described for pharmaceuticals. Dr Pratt confirmed that cosmetics would not require labelling when used as a consumer product but would require labelling in other settings such as the workplace. The description in paragraph 9 for pharmaceuticals should therefore also be applied to cosmetics.

Building Block Approach

9. There was general support for the description of the building block approach as it applied to hazard communication. However it was recognised that whilst the description in paragraph 11 was very clear, further examples could be useful to illustrate what impact the GHS would have on existing systems. This would be particularly useful in respect of providing guidance on the degree of optionality within the GHS given the existing variation in both the labelling of hazard classes and levels and use of labelling elements within end-use settings.

Terminology and Working Definitions

10. Dr Pratt thanked Mr Machin, Ms Kahler-Jenett and IOE for their contributions to the initial work on terminology. Some of the detailed work on over-arching GHS terminology had been passed to the IOMC Implementation Drafting Group. As a result the working definitions in Annex I were specific to hazard communication. Mr. Oberreuter voiced some concern about the definitions of Product Identifier and Common Name. In his opinion, a trade name or brand name could not be indicated as a product identifier, and he had problems with the examples provided in the definition of Common Name. The secretariat undertook to re-examine these definitions. Dr Pratt believed that further issues might be identified during the discussion of Parts B and C.

Hazard and Risk

11. Mr Oberreuter presented room document 3 which highlighted his concerns about the definition of hazard and risk in paragraph 15 as applied to physical hazards. The secretariat explained that the document reflected exactly the IOMC discussions on hazard and risk. There was some discussion of the complexities of defining hazard and risk as it applied to all situations. In the context of the GHS it was emphasised that the issue of hazard and risk required elaboration specifically in relation to consumer labelling, and it was agreed that the concepts should be stated broadly and simply for that reason.

Target audiences

12. Mr Nuessler presented his document (**IOMC/ILO/HC5/00.Inf 2a/b**) outlining the issues which the CTIF had identified as priorities for emergency responders. These re-emphasised the need for information about physical state, hazard level and, for acute toxicity, the route of exposure. During the discussion the information needs of medical personnel involved in emergency responses were also highlighted.

Comprehensibility

13. Dr Pratt reminded participants of the comprehensibility seminar at the Washington meeting which had consisted of a presentation by Bruce Lippy, co-author of the University of Maryland study (**IOMC/ILO/HC5/00.Inf.3**) and a discussion around the comprehensibility key issue paper

(IOMC/ILO/HC4/99.5). The conclusion of the discussion was reflected in paragraphs 22 – 29 of the Step 2A document. The ILO had agreed to provide financial resources for a consultant to develop a testing methodology for the Working Group, and the secretariat would be issuing invitations to them to provide a project outline. The secretariat wished to identify Working Group members to volunteer for a small project team to assist the secretariat and consultant in the developmental work.

14. During the discussion a number of points were made concerning the need to ensure:
- i. there was a single methodology used to avoid different results through inconsistent testing standards
 - ii. training expectations and developing country expectations were taken into account
 - iii. the testing results could be clearly interpreted and the implications for hazard communication options identified.

Mr Jonai indicated that Japan wished to undertake some comprehensibility testing and the secretariat would approach ILO's technical expertise in this area to identify what assistance could be provided. Mr Puiatti volunteered to be part of the project team. Dr Pratt asked for further volunteers to approach the secretariat which would arrange a workplan for the project team when the consultant was identified.

Standardisation

15. The basic approach for developing standardised information was endorsed. However there was a request from IOE to clarify that the section referring to non-standardised information meant non-standardised GHS (Globally Harmonised System) information. There was a consensus in favour of option 1 concerning the use of non-standardised information. In addition option 2, which was not incompatible with option 1 and therefore would be combined with option 1 in the next draft, was identified as an issue for further discussion concerning label appearance as it was concerned with the placement of supplemental hazard information. This was important because of the implication of providing information about hazards not included within the scope of GHS on the same label.

Updating Information

A. Responding to new information

16. Participants wished to indicate in the harmonised system how suppliers should respond to new and significant information, particularly where this had led to reclassification. A number of participants expressed some concern about how this approach could be applied in circumstances where a chemical was subject to regulatory classifications such as the Dangerous Goods list used in the UN RTDG. There was some discussion of what was meant by 'new and significant information' and how systems currently responded to developments. There was no consensus identified for removing options at this stage but a clear indication that further elaboration of the meaning of 'new and significant' information was required in addition to discussion of any practical problems concerning regulatory classifications.

B. General Review of Information

17. A number of participants voiced some concern about the indication of a need for a periodic review of information in the GHS believing that an indication of how suppliers should respond to new information to be sufficient. However, there were a number of systems that included periodic reviews and some participants felt the benefits of this approach should be further explored either as guidance or as part of the harmonised approach to updating information.

Confidential Business Information

18. Mr Robson presented the IOE/Labour paper detailed in Annex A2. He explained that it identified the key issues both groups wished to resolve in developing harmonised arrangements for the treatment of CBI. He added that IOE and Labour had not attempted to identify a resolution for the different options believing that it was necessary to involve governments before taking this forward. Finally he suggested the following four key issues for further development for the next meeting:

- Scope of substance classification for which CBI can be claimed.
- Criteria for valid CBI claims.
- Whether/how governments should be involved in some form of claim notification.
- CBI identity disclosure in medical emergency or for non-emergency health and safety reasons.

19. Dr Pratt thanked the IOE and Labour Groups for their work on the issue. A number of participants believed that further work should be undertaken to explore whether and how the issues could be resolved. There was general support for the IOE/Labour working party to be expanded to include government representation and be supported by the secretariat. Australia, the USA and the EU volunteered to be part of the working party and Canada would participate as an observer.

Training

20. It was noted that work on training would be progressed through the IOMC Co-ordinating Group which had set up a Drafting Group to consider implementation guidance.

Part B – Labelling

Target Audience Requirements for Identifying the Nature and Severity of Hazard

21. Dr Pratt began the discussions on this section of the document by drawing participants' attention to Annex B2, which summarized the discussions at earlier meetings on target audience requirements for identifying the nature and severity of hazard. The Labour Group requested amendment of Annex B2 to clarify that it did not believe the differentiation in the level of hazard for carcinogens, germ cell mutagens and reproductive toxins was possible. It also wished to make a similar statement in relation to skin and respiratory irritation. Finally it believed the analysis for emergency responders gave the impression it included medical personnel, when it should be clarified it related to CTIF. Further amendments were suggested – consumers should be aware of the severity of flammable hazards, transport did not need to identify eye corrosion at present and both transport and emergency responders needed information about the severity of hazard for substances, which in contact with water, emit flammable gases. The secretariat undertook to make the necessary changes.

Symbols

22. Ms Wyeth presented the symbol options using graphic illustrations to demonstrate how the options for grouping hazard classes and levels together related to the options for using individual symbols and restricting the use of symbols. There was a detailed exchange of views on the options for allocating and using symbols. Considerable progress was made in identifying the architecture for the allocation of symbols for physical hazards and defining the framework for continuing discussion of criteria for allocating symbols to the health and environmental hazard classes/levels. Dr Pratt summarised the progress as follows:

i. Physical hazards

Consensus

Use 3 symbol groups to cover flammability, oxidising and explosivity. Metal corrosion would be grouped with the health corrosion hazards and be allocated a corrosion symbol which had yet to be determined.

The possibility of a separate symbol for metal corrosivity was raised by Mr. Oberreuter (**Room Document 2**), but was not felt to be appropriate by the majority of participants.

Issues for further discussion

Corrosion: It was recognised that the use of the same symbol for metal, eye and skin corrosion might lead to circumstances where substances which could corrode metal but not skin or eyes may be incorrectly identified as skin corrosives. The extent of concerns and possibilities for resolving them would be explored further.

Allocation of symbols: The flame, flame over circle and exploding bomb were identified as possibilities for use. However it was noted that the use of the flame over circle was required for transport but concerns comprehensibility remained about its use for consumers. The extent to which it would be used in consumer products could be further examined. There were currently 4 different symbols used for corrosivity and further discussion to identify which should be used would be required.

ii. Health hazards

Consensus

Skin and eye corrosion to share a symbol with corrosive to metals, although the possibility of a separate symbol for metal corrosion was also discussed. There was considerable divergence of opinion about the use of symbols beyond these hazard levels, although current use of skull and crossbones for acute classes 1 – 3 only was stressed.

Issues for further discussion

Use of symbols to attract attention as a general warning: The WG had divided opinions on the merit of using symbols such as the St Andrew's Cross, Stylised 'T' and ISO exclamation mark to convey a general hazard alert. Those not in favour wished to use only symbols that conveyed the meaning of the hazard concerned and felt that no symbol adequately reflected this.

Use of the skull and crossbones: Some participants believed that the skull and crossbones could be used more widely than for the hazard levels 1 – 3 for acute toxicity, although there were some reservations as to the impact on the UN RTDG.

CMRs: There was divided opinion on whether a symbol should be used at all, for hazard levels 1A and 1B only, different symbols for levels 1 and 2 or the same symbol used for all CMRs which would differentiate them from other hazards. The possible need for a new symbol for these hazard classes was discussed.

Sensitisers: The Labour Group was strongly in favour of using a symbol to identify respiratory and skin sensitisers.

Acute toxicity: A number of participants from EU member States wished to use different symbols to differentiate acute toxicity hazard levels as currently used in that system.

Restricting the use of symbols: The WG had divided opinions about restricting the use of symbols. Those not in favour wished to use symbols as a means of reinforcing the hazard warning.

iii. Environmental hazards

Consensus

Although the harmonized classification criteria make a distinction between the acute hazard and the chronic hazard, it may be difficult to make a division for labelling purposes. The Working Group supported an approach of allocating a symbol on the basis of hazard level rather than hazard class. One symbol only would be used, but not necessarily for all hazard levels.

Issues for further discussion

Choice of symbol: There was divided opinion on the merits of both symbols. Some participants preferred the warning about effects on the aquatic environment conveyed by the fish in water symbol. Others felt this could be misleading and cause comprehensibility problems. There was also some concern expressed about the implications for IMO if this symbol was not selected, and participants were asked to consult with their colleagues involved with sea transport.

Restricting the use of a symbol: Whilst this was supported as a principle there were some concerns for further discussion about the hazard levels which should not have a symbol allocated to them.

iv. Developing a symbol set

It was agreed to try and integrate the table with the appropriate options in the Step 2B paper for allocation of a symbol.

v. Restricting the use of symbols

The options for not using a symbol would be clarified in the Step 2B Paper and integrated with the appropriate options for determining which symbols to use.

Signal Words

23. There was considerable discussion about the purpose of using signal words and how they could be used in the GHS. A number of differing views were expressed on the merits of signal words. A number of systems use signal words but with considerable variation in the words used. Those who had concerns about their use raised comprehensibility and translation as issues. It was agreed that the EU indications of danger would not be considered as signal words and the relationship between these and hazard statements explored in more detail. It was agreed that the potential use of signal words should be explored further as follows:

Consensus

There was no clear consensus on the use of no, one or multiple signal words. The Working Group wished to further explore the use of two different signal words to convey hazard severity as indicated in option 3, paragraph 71, and also the possibility of using a signal word only when no symbol has been assigned (option 6). However, the possibility of using more than 2 different words e.g. as in option 4, remained open at this stage.

Issues for further discussion

Restricting the use of signal words: There was some support for restricting the use of signal words to instances when symbols may not be used. This was recognized as a novel use of signal words which may lead to difficulties in systems which use them as a gateway to the hazard warning.

Allocating signal words to hazard classes/levels: The WG wished to consider simplified options for a decision-logic on when to use specific signal words. There was some doubt expressed as to whether this could be harmonised and the implications of this should be explored further.

Not using signal words: Whilst the WG was content to consider the use of signal words further, a number of participants believed the option of using them as supplemental information should remain open.

Product identifiers

Substances

24. There was some concern to introduce sufficient flexibility to address specific target audience requirements. It was accepted that a clear decision-logic would be required to determine when and which product identifiers should be used. Participants felt that options 1 and 4 were not sufficiently flexible but the use of chemical names and numerical codes should be explored further in developing options 2 and 3. It was agreed that further work was also required to clarify the definitions, in particular to give greater emphasis to the purpose of the product identifier.

Mixtures

25. During this discussion participants again highlighted concerns to ensure there was sufficient flexibility in the system to accommodate different target audience requirements for information. However, it was not felt appropriate to leave this entirely to labeller discretion as outlined in option 1, paragraph 91. Rather participants believed a decision-logic should specify which product identifiers were appropriate to which target audiences. It was noted that whilst the trade name would always be on the label it was not clear that it should be used as a product identifier in the same way as a chemical, common or other specialised term. The options for the identification of ingredients would remain open for further discussion whilst work on the classification of mixtures continued with the exception of options 1, 2, 7 9C 10 and 11. It was felt the issues addressed in these options could be taken forward within the remaining options.

Consensus

Explore the use of product identifiers for substances as outlined in paragraph 86, options 2 and 3. Develop the definition of product identifier further to emphasise its purpose. For the identification of ingredients in mixtures explore options 3, 4, 6, 8, 9A and 9B in paragraph 91 further.

Issues for further discussion

Labeller discretion: The WG wished to consider further the extent to which labeller discretion to select a product identifier would be required as a decision-logic developed.

Concentration: Determining whether an ingredient should be identified based on its concentration should be further explored as the mixtures work develops.

Trade name/brand name: The WG wished to clarify how they should be used.

Flexibility for target audiences: The WG wished to consider what flexibility was required to take account of target audience requirements, particularly for consumers. Some members of the WG felt that option 9 need not be specific to pesticides. These issues would need to be taken fully into account in developing a decision-logic.

Hazard Statements

26. The Working Group wished to consider options 1 – 4 in paragraph 95 further with the appropriate hazard statements obtained from the trawl of existing regulatory statements and industry/international standards and databases. It agreed that option 5 could be removed. It was felt unnecessary to identify physical state in a hazard statement.

Precautionary Statements

27. The Working Group wished to include pictograms to be considered further as part of the options presented for precautionary information.

Multiple Hazards

28. Dr Pratt explained that the options had been identified for two discrete areas – a general precedence of hazard and how this might be applied to the label. During the discussion it became clear that the application of the precedence was required for the number of and order in which symbols should appear, and additionally for the order in which other information such as hazard statements should appear. It was agreed that the options should more clearly reflect this. On the options identifying a hierarchy, there was a divergence of opinion as to whether hazard levels should have an influence. It was noted that in transport the hierarchy applies to the classification process and acute toxicity can precede flammability in some cases. In all cases although a common symbol should not be used more than once, in the UN RTDG all hazards appear on the label. It was noted that the precedence might be used to determine what information should appear on small labels. It was agreed that the issues should be explored further with the implications for harmonisation of labelling clearly established.

Consensus

Need to specify options for symbols separately from options for the order in which information should appear. The options for the hierarchy need revisiting to see how they could accommodate both situations.

Issues for further consideration

Addressing hazard level: Different views were expressed on the merits of addressing hazard level. The Labour Group was not in favour of distinguishing between levels of hazard for the CMRs.

Flexibility: A number of participants were concerned that there should be sufficient flexibility to accommodate different target audiences.

Symbols: Should be a clear hierarchy for symbols but more work required to clarify the options for this. It should also be clarified that if a common symbol was used for hazard classes it should not be used more than once.

Colour

29. A number of participants expressed concern about the economic consequences of using colour where the benefits of its use could not be clearly identified. In transport the use of colour to convey specific hazard warnings was well established and divergences would require considerable training effort. Whilst it was recognised that the existing colours in the UN RTDG worked well in transport where information needed to be captured from a distance, there was concern about using these colours for the supply of chemicals to other target audiences. Some participants favoured the simplified use of colour in these situations either as eye-catchers or to convey messages to medical emergency personnel.

It was agreed to eliminate option 1 in paragraph 109 and to continue discussions on whether to use colour outside of transport.

Consensus

Continue to discuss options for the use of colour in transport and supply situations.

Issues for further discussion

Economic consequences: Identify what benefits exist for the use of colour outside transport and what flexibility there might be to take account of economic concerns.

Existing use of colour outside transport: Currently used as an eye-catcher in some systems and in others to convey information about the severity of hazard. Need to give some further consideration to how these uses can be accommodated.

Not using colour outside transport: Recognised as an option which should be included in further discussions. Could possibly be linked to the building block approach.

Pictograms for precautionary information: Need to consider how to distinguish these from hazard warning pictograms. The use of different colours was recognised as a possibility.

Background Patterns

30. The issues concerning the use of background patterns were identified as being inextricably linked to the use of colour. Background patterns were used in transport together with colour to convey specific hazard warning information. It was agreed that options 1 and 3 in paragraph 110 could be removed, as background patterns would still be required for use in transport. There was no support for using background patterns in supply. However, emergency responders were concerned to continue discussion on the use of an additional symbol to identify physical state.

Consensus

Continue discussions on the use of background patterns.

Issues for further discussion

Physical State: The options developed by CTIF for conveying physical state should be considered further as options for background patterns.

Pictogram Frame

31. There was a consensus for developing a uniform shape for the pictogram frame. It was agreed to leave the options for other shapes open at this stage.

Small containers

32. Opinion was divided on the merits of developing harmonised arrangements for small containers. Some participants believed there were implications for harmonisation where modified labelling led to a reduction in the information provided on the labels of small containers. Other felt that the issue could adequately be addressed through the development of guidance or left to regulatory authorities to determine the appropriate arrangements. The example of very small containers and small packagings stored as inner packagings was discussed to elaborate the difference in interpretation between transport and supply situations. It was agreed that a working definition was required for a small container and that the implications for harmonisation should be further explored.

Bulk packages

33. As with small containers there were some differences of opinion on the merits of specifying requirements for bulk packaging. It was noted that in transport dealt routinely with bulk packages which were specifically defined according to the type of container e.g. those above three cubic metres. In many of these situations placards were used. In other use-settings such arrangements were less common and there was no consensus in favour of developing harmonised arrangements for placarding. There was some support for considering whether guidance may be required. It was agreed that a working definition should be developed by the secretariat for bulk packagings and the implications for harmonisation further explored.

Supplemental information and the presentation of information on the label

34. Dr Pratt explained that two thought starters had been prepared to develop the preliminary options identified in the Step 2 paper. The first was from IOE (**Room Document 1**) and would be introduced by Mr Robson. The second was from Mr Oberreuter and Mr Haas (**IOMC/ILO/HC5/00.Inf.4**) and would be introduced by Mr Oberreuter.

i. IOE Paper

35. Mr. Robson introduced the paper on behalf of IOE. He explained that it was intended to clarify the options in the document with practical examples of the implications for chemical labels. He illustrated the options for placement of information using examples of product labels. In examining these options he believed that the priorities for the Working Group were to consider:

whether or all target audiences required all GHS information;
how the presentation of information could be modified depending on the type of product as well as target audience requirements;
how a decision-logic may be developed to determine what information to provide and when e.g. for small containers

ii. Paper from Mr Haas and Mr Oberreuter

36. Mr. Oberreuter introduced the paper again using practical examples to illustrate how the appearance of a harmonized label could be used to accommodate target-audience requirements. He believed the Working Group needed to consider how labels could be used to capture information from a distance and specify how areas of the label could be used for certain types of information. In his opinion the package size was a key consideration.

Discussion

37. Dr Pratt thanked Mr Robson and Mr Oberreuter. She explained that the Step 2 document had outlined only general approaches in line with the discussion at the previous meeting. However, there would need to be more detailed consideration of the issues covered in the presentations in the revised paper. During the discussion a number of participants spoke of the difficulties of providing all information relevant to all target audiences on a single label. The development of a decision-logic for determining when to provide information would be necessary. In relation to the use of supplemental information participants wished to consider further the type of information that would be considered as being supplemental. It was agreed that the implications of the issues arising from the papers and presentations would be further discussed and developed in the revised Step 2 paper.

Special Workplace Labelling Considerations

38. A number of participants wished to give further consideration to the special warning statement 'immediately dangerous to life' in the revised Step 2 paper. Participants felt its use as a hazard statement could be explored further, particularly if the criteria for its assignment in the GHS could be clearly identified. The IOE believed the statement should be considered supplemental information. There was considerable discussion on the possibility of using harmonised labels for certain workplace containers. Participants considered that workplace containers should be labelled with the agreed harmonised label elements. This could be addressed via guidance. As a recommendation to national authorities to make provision for a system for identifying containers in the workplace. However, there were certain circumstances where alternative arrangements were made in regulatory frameworks. These were intended to cover circumstances where chemicals were decanted from the original container and used immediately. It was agreed to elaborate the issues further and explore the implications for harmonisation in the Step 2 B document.

Consumer Product Labelling Based on Hazard and the Likelihood of Injury

39. Ms Hilgers presented the paper detailed at Annex B1 on behalf of IOE. She used practical examples of detergents and laundry products to demonstrate the difficulties for consumers to accurately conceptualise risk, when provided with hazard information alone. IOE had developed a general outline of how likelihood of injury could be used to provide consumers with information relevant to the circumstances in which they will use the product. Likelihood of injury would be assessed by evaluation of the hazard, together with detailed evaluation of likely exposure during normal use. During the discussion, a number of participants raised concerns about the potential for either prolonged exposure to the product e.g. if used professionally, or for individuals to be exposed to a chemical in other products e.g. potential for sensitisation. In response to concerns about the basis for assessing likelihood of risk, IOE undertook to illustrate this by further developing the methodology for the exposure assessments and criteria which might be applied by suppliers.

Part C – (Material) Safety Data Sheets

Role of the (M)SDS

40. It was agreed to expand paragraph 126 to explain how the (M)SDS is used to provide environmental information.

When the (M)SDS is Required

41. The discussion focussed on whether the (M)SDS would be required for all chemicals classified as hazardous under the GHS, and the merits of harmonizing arrangements. It was agreed that the options should be clarified and the implications for harmonisation discussed further.

Linkage with Information on a Label

42. It was agreed to eliminate options 1, 2 and 3 in paragraph 130, and the discussion would continue around option 4. The main issue of concern identified was the potential reproduction of symbols. A number of participants felt it would be economically unjustified to reproduce pictograms on the (M)SDS, particularly if colour was included. It was agreed that the benefits of reproducing pictograms should be elaborated and their use further considered. Other label elements would be included on the (M)SDS and options for their placement considered in the revised document.

Product Identifiers

43. It was agreed that the product identifier should be the same as that used on the label and that the choice of chemical or common names used to describe the ingredients should be consistent with those used on the label. There was some concern that option 2 in paragraph 134 did not accurately reflect the current EU system. Following an explanation of that system the phrase – ‘together with their concentration ranges present at levels greater than _’ was added. During the discussion a number of participants were concerned that physical hazards would be described in the (M)SDS but the identity of the chemicals causing the hazard withheld. The Labour Group believed all ingredients should be disclosed except those which were being withheld for CBI reasons. Other participants were concerned to ensure that all hazardous chemicals were identified and the concentration range of non-hazardous chemicals provided. It was agreed to elaborate the issues further and return to the issues of concentration when the work on mixtures had progressed further.

Standard Format

44. There was a clear consensus identified for using the 16 headings outlined in option 1 of paragraph 137. Representatives of countries using other standard formats indicated that they could also accept use of the 16 headers. It was also agreed that the IPCS Cards should maintain a separate format to that used for the (M)SDS. Some participants wished to ensure that using a standard format took account of comprehensibility concerns. Some feedback from SMEs suggested that specific hazard information was sometimes difficult to identify and the use of the standard headings should not impede easy access to this information.

Content

45. Participants spoke in favour of options 2 and 3 of paragraph 140 which allowed for the use of existing guidance and standards for the presentation of information in the (M)SDS. It was agreed that option 3 required further development and a core set of information for the GHS identified. Recommendations could then be developed further in the revised document which could be used as the basis of guidance. This would also take account of issues concerning the linkage with label information.

Access to (M)SDS

46. The Labour Group emphasised their support for including access to (M)SDS by workers and their representatives and explained the important contribution this arrangement brought to worker protection and the improvement of labour standards. Participants believed the recommendation for access to the (M)SDS should also include emergency responders and that guidance should explain this and deal with practical issues concerning the location of (M)SDS to facilitate access.

Preparation of the Step 2B Document ‘Further Towards Harmonisation of Hazard Communication’.

47. Dr Pratt explained that the main objective for the revised document was to elaborate the possible basis for resolving the issues identified during the meeting. She believed that the options which had been favoured during the meeting would provide the basic framework for further development of the Step 2 process. Issues arising from other options, which had not been resolved, would be identified in the paper as issues requiring further discussion and the possible means for resolving them elaborated for further discussion in Rome. Participants broadly endorsed this and agreed that a clear analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the remaining options be identified in the document. The IOE Group

undertook to assist the secretariat in developing a matrix illustrating the options for labelling. It was agreed that the Drafting Group should continue to develop the document. Mr Holland agreed to join the Drafting Group and it was noted that a replacement for Ms Berrgren of the EC would be notified in due course. It was also agreed that a Working Group consultation on the draft Step 2B document would be organised.

Other Business

47. Dr Pratt thanked all the participants for their contributions during the meeting. Mr Wright moved a vote of thanks on behalf of the meeting to Dr Pratt and the secretariat for the preparation of the meeting documents and efficient conduct of the meeting.

Date and Venue of Future Meetings

48. Dr Pratt announced that the next meeting would be in week commencing the 30 October 2000 in Rome. At this stage the length of the meeting had not been determined. She announced the 15 September 2000 as the closing date for receipt of papers for the meeting. There was some concern expressed about the close proximity of the two further meetings that had been identified as being necessary for the completion of the work in 2001. Dr Pratt acknowledged this and would review these meetings in the light of progress made in Rome. She explained that the venue of further meetings had yet to be established. However the North American participants were examining the possibility of hosting a meeting and offers were also received from Mr Oberreuter for Berlin and Mr Fasey and Ms Wyeth for London.

Annex

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