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

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

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Global harmonization of systems of classification and labelling of chemicals

**Draft report on the sixteenth consultation of the Inter-Organization Programme for the
Second Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Coordinating Group for Harmonization of
Chemical Classification System (ILO, Geneva, 25-26 May 2000)**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat reproduces hereunder the draft report on the sixteenth consultation of the IOMC Coordinating Group as transmitted by the International Labour Office (ILO). This draft report will be submitted to the IOMC Coordinating Group for adoption at its seventeenth consultation (Roma, 2-3 November 2000).

Global Harmonization of Chemical Classification and Labelling Systems**16th Consultation of the IOMC Coordinating Group for
the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems
ILO, Geneva, 25-26 May 2000****Draft Record****Adoption of the provisional agenda and record of the 14th and 15th Consultations**

1. The Provisional Agenda was adopted without modification. The provisional Record of the 14th Consultation (Dublin, June 1999), was adopted as amended. The record of the 15th Consultation was adopted after a number of technical amendments proposed by the USA were accepted. The list of participants is provided in **Annex**.

Status of the technical workClassification criteria

2. **Mixtures:** The ongoing work on health hazards was presented by Dr. Headrick (Canada) and Dr. Koeter (OECD). Following the last meeting of the OECD Expert Group in Washington, agreement was reached on sensitization and consensus on acute toxicity was very close. More work was needed to reach agreement on the other end points, including skin and eye irritation/corrosion, CMRs and target organ toxicity. Concerning aquatic environmental hazards, all the recognized issues would be included in an Approaches paper destined to serve as basis for input in the revised Step 2 Document. In order to move forward completion of the Document, five drafting groups have been created to work on finalizing proposals for acute toxicity, skin and eye irritation/corrosion, target organ/systemic toxicity, aquatic environmental hazards, and revision of the Step 2 proposal.

3. **Aquatic environmental hazards:** Chapters 1, 2 and 6 of the Guidance Document on Aquatic Environmental Hazards have been adopted. More work is needed to reach consensus on Acute toxicity (chapter 3) bio-accumulation (chapter 5) and classification of metals and metal compounds (chapter 7). The revised draft will be circulated by the end of June and considered by the Task Force on HCL on 7-8 September 2000.

4. **Other classification end points:** Work on target organ/systemic toxicity was now very close to completion following agreement to have criteria for multiple and single exposure. and A task force led by the UK was planning a meeting to start work on respiratory irritation. Canada agreed to take the lead and plan work on water-activated toxicity. Work on narcotic effects and defatting agents had received support from Sweden but work was still at the planning stages. Canada was preparing a paper on aspiration hazards.

5. **OECD Task Force on HCL:** At its 9th Meeting in February 2000, the Task Force elected Dr. A. Sundquist (Finland) as Chairperson. The meeting agreed on a time schedule to complete the outstanding work in time for adoption by the 31st Joint Meeting in November 2000.

Hazard Communication

6. Progress made by the ILO Working Group was summarized by Dr. Pratt as follows:
- S agreement on prioritization of the work elements was reached at the Washington meeting;
 - S A wide scope Step 2 document had been discussed in Washington and presented options were narrowed down successfully and a narrow scope Step 2B document will be ready for discussion at the Rome meeting in November;
 - S agreement was reached on selecting for MSDSs the standard 16-heading format as the only option;
 - S A more precise definition of the building block concept was considered and agreed and the need to develop a decision logic for the selection of labelling elements was recognized;
 - S it was agreed that a number of issues such as the periodicity of review of currency of label and MSDS were recognized to be guidance elements rather than part of the standard;
 - S the revised Step 2B document should be circulated before the end of June or early in July.

Physical hazards

7. Mr. Oberreuter informed the Group that the classification of aerosols was the only outstanding issue. No progress was made in December 1999 due to lack of consensus between the EU and US industry concerning criteria and levels. However, agreement had been reached on test methods. In answering a question raised by the Chair, he confirmed that criteria for compressed gases would also be considered by the CETDG at their July 2000 meeting. Concerning aerosols, discussions were also planned for July and December if necessary.

Time lines

8. Discussion on this item was based on two papers presented by Dr. Headrick (Canada). Mr. Benassai would have preferred to discuss the SC/GHS plans of work first. He felt that the 2001 or 2002 completion date for the Guidance document was not precise enough and thought that updating of the Time line tables and preparation of the Guidance Document should now be the main tasks of the Coordinating Group. Ms. Silk confirmed that the deadline for the guidance document was the end of 2001. Following a question raised by Dr. Holland on inclusion of the GHS work in the Rio +10 preparations, Dr. Stober (IFCS Executive Secretary) indicated that a brief summary on the status of the GHS work would be included by the Task Manager (UNEP on behalf of the IOMC) expected Report on Agenda 21 Chapter 19. In addition, reports from countries and from IFCS would also be prepared for the Rio +10 Conference.

9. Dr. Holland felt that the path for endorsement of the GHS was not clearly shown in the table. Dr. Stober indicated that endorsement by IOMC organizations was not needed. The IOMC Chair would simply transmit the Guidance Document to ECOSOC when it is completed. Referred to the ECOSOC resolution on the SC/GHS, Mr. Benassai explained that, according to ECOSOC rules, the Guidance document would receive formal approval by the SC/GHS and the Parent Committee in December 2002 before being transmitted to ECOSOC for final endorsement and authorization to publish. Mr. Obadia (ILO) pointed out that formal endorsement of the Guidance document by the governing bodies of individual organizations would be useful in promoting the standard. Following these discussions, the two time line tables were accepted by the Group as amended.

GHS Implementation

10. Ms. Silk stated that it was becoming urgent to send to countries the letters of invitation to participate. Ms. Bernardini (CETDG Secretariat) informed the Group that Mr. Kervella was planning to send a draft of the letter to the ECOSOC Secretariat for its approval and transmission within the next two weeks. Mr. Benassai pointed out that the Resolution itself was already a call to countries to indicate their interest in becoming members of the SC/GHS. Ms. Silk hoped that the draft would be made available to the CG Secretariat for comments before it was sent. A number of participants stated that it was important to have an idea of the level of interest in participation in the SC as soon as possible and expressed hope that the letter would be sent shortly.

11. The next point of discussion was the composition of the SC/GHS and Parent Committee. Ms Lowe (USA) restated her government's preference for a wide SC/GHS participation and a narrow one for the parent committee. There was a general consensus on a wide SC/GHS participation but opinions on the composition and size of the parent committee diverged significantly. However there was general agreement that the committee should limit itself to administrative work, work plans and transmission of reports to the ECOSOC. Other issues raised and discussed inconclusively included:

- S the need to have coordinated country positions in areas where the two SCs overlapped;
- S the fact that the CETDG current membership of 24 voting countries did not have seemingly sufficient developing country representation;
- S the fact that in addition to administrative work the parent committee may be brought to arbitrate budget issues as well as differences of opinion on technical issues;
- S the need to ensure developing country participation in the process by informing them through all available channels.

SC/GHS Programme of Work

12. The Room document prepared on the subject by Mr. Obadia (ILO) was used as a basis for discussion. In response to a question by Dr.Holland, Mr. Benassai explained that Sub-Committee work plans will normally be decided by the parent committee and approved for each biennium. Mr. Oberreuter pointed out that the substantial work of the SC/GHS would begin in 2002 and therefore it was important to consider in detail what the SC would be doing during 2001. Mr. Obadia reminded the Group that the number of days available for SC/GHS work were only 6 for the whole year and two of those would have to be used for approval of records of meetings. There was general agreement that the paper presented by Mr. Obadia was a good basis for developing a full SC/GHS work plan for 2001 and that it should be transmitted to Mr. Kervella for consideration.

Guidance Document

13. Dr. Headrick presented a revised outline. She noted that participation in the teleconference on the subject was low and that the paper was based on consensus of a very small group. However, the paper received wide support by the CG. Key points raised during the discussion included the need to:

- S develop extensive guidance in the Document to ensure proper labelling;
- S have a communications specialist edit the final draft and look at an optimum layout at some point before it is published;
- S decide who will use the document (governments, Industry, labour? All of them?);
- S to keep the level of repetition of TDG requirements (Orange Book) in the Purple Book@;
- S evaluate the resources and time required for translation of the Document;
- S to consider how Part B would have to be presented in the document.

It was agreed that the next step would be to have the Drafting Group prepare proposals for input to have a more extended version of the outline for the November meeting.

Capacity building

14. Mr. Halpaap (UNITAR) presented the Thought Starter prepared in collaboration with ILO and informed the Group that, following its discussion, a revised version would be distributed at Forum III as a Room document. The paper was generally well received by the Group and was considered as a good basis for developing a GHS capacity building programme. Mr. Green (ICEM) welcomed the fact that the paper referred to the need for a few pilot projects to test the GHS in real conditions and that UNITAR had already identified a few countries interested in the projects. Mr. Lu (China), expressed the interest of his country in being one of the pilot countries. Mr. Lu, Mr. Puiatti (Brazil), Mr. Jonai (Japan) and several of the participants were of the opinion that, in addition to the need for extensive government support, the role of industry and the level of its support to the implementation process were critical to the success of the GHS.

15. Mr. Haas (Employers) stated that industry supported a wide use of the GHS but that it would take time to reach this goal. Mr. Green (Workers), referring to the ongoing joint industry/labour approach to Responsible Care, suggested that the GHS implementation could be linked to this successful activity and make use of its channels for worldwide awareness raising and training. It was generally agreed that industry would have to be a key player in promoting the GHS.

Preparations for Forum III

16. Ms. Silk informed the Group that the GHS Lunchtime presentation programmed for IFCS III had been moved to Plenary following a decision of the Forum Standing Committee (FSC) that the GHS was a very important subject requiring high visibility. This was confirmed by Dr. Stober. Ms Silk will make a 15 minute audiovisual presentation which will be followed by a 30 minute fielding of questions from plenary to a panel composed of members of the GHS Group being present at the Forum Meeting. Further participation of available CG Group members to Regional Group meetings to answer specific questions related to implementation of the GHS was also planned.

17. Referring to Annex II of paper Inf .3 "Forum III - IFCS Priorities for Action beyond 2000" which set 2008 as a goal for full worldwide adoption and implementation of the GHS, Dr. Stober informed the Group that after Forum III the FSC will transmit the recommendations to the ECOSOC for further consideration. Mr. Benassai (Chair CETDG), felt that the deadline was very ambitious in view of the time it will take for modal transport systems to integrate the GHS and the fact that a common ECOSOC adoption of both GHS and TDG sub-committee recommendations will not occur until 2004. This could lead to sectoral confusion in terms of GHS implementation and use. Other participants were of the opinion that the GHS was not binding and that although it was arbitrary, it was useful to set such a deadline in relation to the ECOSOC process and to promote speedy implementation.

18. It arose from the ensuing discussion that the development of an accepted implementation path for the GHS was becoming a critical issue. In response to a suggestion that the IFCS should endorse the completed part of the GHS, Dr. Stober pointed out that previous progress had already been endorsed in 1988 and that further endorsement of technical work was not needed at this point. Mr. Wright (Workers) also felt that although IFCS did not have political capability for endorsement of the GHS, its awareness raising actions were very important and Annex II was a good way to do this.

19. Dr. Köeter (OECD) requested that parts of Paper Inf. 4 A Progress Report to Forum III on the GHS be modified to reflect more accurately the work carried out by the OECD. This was agreed after Dr. Stober indicated there was still time to provide a revised version of the paper.

Other business

20. Mr. Oberreuter (Germany) informed the Group that the Secretariat of the Basel Convention was developing classification criteria for chemical wastes which were significantly different from those in the GHS. He proposed to contact the Secretariat to see what could be done to solve this problem.

Date and location of the next meeting

21. Following Mr. Benassais offer on behalf of ANPA, the next meeting was set for 2-3 November 2000 in Rome. Mr. Oberreuter conveyed Germany's offer to host the May 2001 meeting in Berlin. Another offer to host the meetings was also made by Dr. Fasey on behalf of the UK.

Annex

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