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**Fourth Central and Eastern Europe regional meeting on the Strategic Approach
to International Chemicals Management**

Lodz, Poland, 27–29 June 2011

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of the Strategic Approach to
International Chemicals Management**

**Report of the third Central and Eastern European regional
meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals
Management**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the report of the third Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, held in Lodz, Poland, on 9 and 10 December 2009, for the information of participants at the current meeting.

* SAICM/RM/CEE.4/1.

Annex

Report of the third Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

I. Opening

1. The third Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was held at the Bureau for Chemical Substances and Preparations in Lodz, Poland.
2. The meeting was opened at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 9 December 2009, by Mr. Jerzy Majka, Inspector for Chemical Substances and Preparations, Bureau for Chemical Substances and Preparations, who welcomed participants to Poland and expressed his pleasure that the region was so broadly represented at the meeting.
3. He said that sound management of chemicals was an important issue for the entire region and close cooperation among all countries was essential to enhance safety. He said that recent successes in the field of chemical safety at the international level and Poland's commitment to the sound management of chemicals formed a sound basis for regional cooperation. Activities in the region were being and should continue to be harmonized with global goals and efforts. He noted that 2011 had been declared the International Year of Chemistry by the United Nations, which was of particular significance for Poland as it celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize for chemistry being awarded to Ms. Marie Skłodowska-Curie who had been of Polish descent. He drew attention to Polish chemicals-related work within the framework of the European Union, including activities within the Eastern Partnership initiative and those aimed at assisting countries that were not part of the European Union. He concluded by expressing the hope that the countries of the region would engage in further fruitful cooperation.
4. In his opening statement, Mr. Matthew Gubb, Coordinator of the Strategic Approach secretariat, expressed his gratitude to the Government of Poland for hosting the meeting. Welcoming the participants, he said that the meeting was being held at an important juncture in the Strategic Approach process. The regional coordination group for Central and Eastern Europe had met in Brno, Czech Republic, on 6 September 2009, and again on Sunday, 6 December 2009. The current meeting provided an opportunity to inform participants about chemicals-related issues and activities in the region and prepare for upcoming activities related to the Strategic Approach.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

5. Mr. Irakli Legashvili (Georgia) and Mr. Jerzy Majka (Poland) were elected as co-chairs of the meeting. Ms. Katerina Sebkova (Czech Republic) agreed to serve as rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda

6. The agenda was adopted as amended on the basis of the draft agenda set forth in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/1.

C. Organization of work

7. The participants agreed to meet from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 9 December, and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, 10 December.

D. Attendance

8. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
9. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: International Labour Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, World Health Organization.
10. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended the meeting: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, Eco-Accord, Centre for Environmental

Solutions, Georgian Environmental and Biological Monitoring Association, Georgian Association of Preventive Toxicologists and International Council of Chemical Associations.

III. Outcomes of the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management and follow-up action

11. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat said that the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in May 2009, had provided an opportunity to review progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach since its adoption in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in February 2006. He said that the second session of the Conference had been successful, being well attended and concluding its business, and recalled that the Conference had elected its President, Mr. Ivan Eržen from Slovenia, from the Central and Eastern European region. Mr. Eržen continued to be keenly involved in the Strategic Approach process through the activities of the Bureau. At the second session, practical institutional issues had been dealt with, such as the adoption of the rules of procedure and the establishment of a bureau on a permanent basis. In addition, an intersessional open-ended working group had been established, modalities for reporting and key indicators to report against had been developed and a procedure for updating the Strategic Approach Global Plan of Action had been discussed.

12. As one of its most important functions, the Conference had considered emerging policy issues. Four issues had been considered: nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials, chemicals in products, hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products and lead in paint. The Conference had agreed on follow-up action for all four issues, including by requesting intergovernmental organizations to take up the relevant issues in their work programmes. Perfluorinated chemicals had been considered by the Conference and cooperative action agreed on in that regard. The Conference had also agreed on procedures for the nomination of emerging policy issues for consideration at future sessions of the Conference. He noted that the workshop on nanotechnology, organized jointly by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), in association with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), would be held directly following the current meeting.

13. The Conference had adopted a number of significant resolutions to set the scene for the coming period. By resolution II/7 on the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Conference had recognized that chemicals would be included in the Commission's work cycle for 2010–2011; resolution II/3 on financial and technical resources for implementation stressed the importance of secure financing for the implementation of the Strategic Approach; resolution II/8 on the health aspects of the sound management of chemicals requested the Strategic Approach secretariat to develop, in consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO), a strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in Strategic Approach implementation.

14. The second session of the Conference had been very productive and established a solid foundation for proceeding with the following phase of Strategic Approach implementation and the development of specific activities. Follow-up activities included regional meetings of the African core group in Nairobi on 20 and 21 August 2009, the Latin American and Caribbean coordinating group in Santiago on 15 and 16 November 2009 and the aforementioned meetings of the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group. A meeting for the Asian and Pacific region had been held in Beijing on 23 and 24 November 2009. The third African regional meeting was scheduled to take place in January 2010 in Côte d'Ivoire and the Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting in March 2010. The Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management had held two teleconferences, on 22 June 2009 and 10 November 2009, the main purpose of which had been to discuss the scheduling of the third session of the Conference. He stressed the importance that the President of the Bureau attached to multisector engagement in the Strategic Approach. Lastly, he reported on the eighth meeting of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee, which had taken place in Washington, D.C., on 15 and 16 October 2009 to consider the seventh round of applications.

15. The co-chair, speaking as the regional focal point for the Central and Eastern European region, drew attention to activities undertaken since the conclusion of the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. A letter sent to countries in the region with an inactive or no Strategic Approach focal point encouraging their active participation had met with some success. In conjunction with the President of the Conference, a letter had been sent by the secretariat to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to elicit funding for Strategic Approach activities. Labour and industry organizations had been contacted and encouraged to nominate regional representatives to participate in

the regional coordination group. The group had been very supportive of the regional focal point's work. The regional focal point for the Central and Eastern European region had given a keynote speech on chemicals at the fourth Regional Implementation Meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe held on 1 and 2 December 2009 in Geneva. At the meeting it had been suggested by the representative of Slovenia that the issue of obsolete pesticides should be included on the agenda of the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to be held in May 2010 in New York.

16. The regional focal point was commended for the work undertaken since the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

IV. Strategic Approach health sector strategy

17. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/12, on strengthening the engagement of the health sector in Strategic Approach implementation and to resolution II/8 on health aspects of the sound management of chemicals. She said that the World Health Assembly had given consideration to the Strategic Approach in 2003, during its development, and again in 2006, when it was adopted. She recalled that the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management had been convened back-to-back with the sixty-second World Health Assembly to allow for focus at the session on health issues and the health sector. Although other pressing matters had precluded consideration of the Strategic Approach at that meeting, the issue would be taken up by the WHO Executive Board at its 126th meeting, in January 2010. The five countries of the region that were members of the Executive Board – Estonia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Serbia – might wish to convey to other Board members the importance of strengthening the engagement of the health sector in Strategic Approach implementation.

18. A meeting was scheduled to take place on 4 and 5 February 2010 in Ljubljana to define the 2020 vision for health sector engagement in the Strategic Approach and to initiate development of the health sector strategy. The meeting was intended to be small and focused; two experts from the Central and Eastern European region (Belarus and Slovenia) had been invited to participate and non-governmental organizations would be well represented. As part of the preparation process for the meeting a questionnaire had been developed to seek information on how the Strategic Approach was viewed by the health sector, to agree on who constituted a member of the health sector and how the sector's engagement could be strengthened.

19. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Slovenia conveyed the strong commitment of the President of the Bureau to the Strategic Approach process and the development of a health strategy. She said that Slovenia was looking forward to hosting the above-mentioned meeting.

20. The representative of WHO said that a report on the Strategic Approach that reiterated the importance of chemicals management to environmental and human health had been prepared for consideration by the WHO Executive Board and was available on the WHO website.¹ Participants in the current meeting with representatives on the Executive Board were encouraged to make contact with their health ministries to discuss preparations for the WHO Executive Board meeting. WHO had 145 country offices covering 159 of its member States. As part of workplans agreed on cooperatively with country offices, ministries of health could identify specific chemicals issues on which they wished to collaborate. She noted that the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Parma, Italy, in March 2010, would focus on children's environmental health. The meeting would provide a further opportunity to draw attention to the Strategic Approach and the development of the health strategy.

21. In response to a request for clarification, the representative of the secretariat said that document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/18, on the role of health systems in chemical safety in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia countries, was a submission by WHO describing a meeting that had been organized to review the capacity of health systems of those countries in the field of chemical safety and to identify needs for international support for national and subregional priority actions in strengthening the role of health systems, especially in preparedness for and response to chemical emergencies. In that respect it was relevant to the development of the Strategic Approach health sector strategy and to discussion of regional needs and priorities at the present meeting.

22. Several participants sought clarification and expressed concerns relating to their national experiences in working with the health sector and on issues related to the Strategic Approach. Some

1 http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB126/B126_20-en.pdf.

participants highlighted the difficulty of correlating health issues with environmental degradation and pollution, suggesting that insufficient means were available to connect the history of a given patient with the environmental conditions at his or her place of work or home. The representative of WHO said that members of the medical community often lacked a thorough understanding of toxicology and awareness of the importance of environmental exposures. At the global level, WHO was working on a number of relevant capacity-building activities in the areas of toxicology and strengthening the role of poison control centres. Guidelines had been developed for taking narrative patient histories or verbal autopsies, including some work in the area of paediatric exposures to environmental hazards.

23. Other views raised by participants included that Strategic Approach work could not be separated from human health and environment issues and that it must be strongly linked to waste management and disposal methods.

24. The representative of the Czech Republic said that a national register of types of environmental pollution and their links to diseases, in particular cancer, was being developed at the National Centre for Persistent Organic Pollutants in cooperation with the Research Centre on Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology, Masaryk University, Brno, and would be finalized once access to medical databases was authorized. The Global Environment Assessment and Information System (GENASIS) database, a system for the assessment of environmental contamination by persistent organic pollutants, would be available to Czech decision makers by 2012 and would serve as a mapping tool, including a geographic information system component, to provide data on sources of industrial and other pollution.

25. In response to a question on the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, the representative of the secretariat said that participants at the meeting would prepare a declaration on children's health, providing another opportunity to raise the profile of chemicals management, the Strategic Approach and links to the health sector. Several participants stressed that careful attention should be paid at the regional level to the ministerial declaration, emphasizing that ministers should be encouraged to include specific support for the Strategic Approach therein. Several participants underscored the importance of engaging the health sector in issues related to the Strategic Approach issues, especially in the field of public health and safety. One participant called for the outcome of the Ljubljana meeting to be brought to the attention of participants at the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. Participants were encouraged to communicate the outcome of the current meeting to their national ministerial participants at the Parma conference to promote the link between environment and health and Strategic Approach implementation. Responding to a request for a copy of the draft declaration, the representative of WHO said that it was not yet available as it had been submitted to the ministers for their consideration. He noted that contact with relevant officers in ministries of health would be useful to promote discussion of chemical issues at the Parma conference.

26. The participants agreed that the Strategic Approach regional representative, in collaboration with the president of the Bureau and with the assistance of the secretariat, would send a letter to the WHO Regional Office for Europe outlining their strong support for the ministerial declaration and the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Parma.

V. Reporting guidelines

27. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/13, providing an update on the development of arrangements for reporting on progress in Strategic Approach implementation. She said that, at its second session, the Conference had agreed on a set of 20 indicators on various elements from the Overarching Policy Strategy to report against and track progress to 2020. The indicators were included in annex III to the report of the Conference on the work of its second session (reproduced as document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/1). A baseline report would be prepared by the secretariat by March 2010 with a first progress report covering the period 2009–2011 being prepared subsequently. Both reports would be considered by the Conference at its third session. The secretariat had been tasked by the Conference with developing an electronic data collection system or tool to simplify the reporting procedure, provide numerical data and facilitate the aggregation of data on a regional basis. Countries would be requested to provide data on the indicators using the electronic tool; explanatory notes and guidelines had been developed for using the tool. Countries of the region were encouraged to test the electronic tool and provide feedback to the secretariat on their experience.

28. In response to a request for clarification, the representative of the secretariat confirmed that the baseline report would be prepared using existing information and that countries could, but were not obliged to, submit information for that report. For subsequent progress reports countries would be expected to submit updated information on the indicators. The representative of the International

Council of Chemical Associations described the reporting procedure used by the Council's constituents, which covered 50 indicators. A working spreadsheet on its application was available on the website of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. He said that the Association was committed to reporting systematically against the 20 indicators identified by the Conference by country or by region. He stressed the importance of elaborating a credible reporting system to measure the success of the Strategic Approach in 2020.

VI. Emerging policy issues

A. Past issues

29. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/14, which contained an overview of progress made in implementing resolutions II/4 on emerging policy issues and II/5 on managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives. He said that the second session of the Conference had provided the first opportunity for it to perform its important function of tackling emerging policy issues, including adoption of a future procedure for nominations of such issues. A formal procedure to select emerging issues had not been established and the approximately 30 proposals submitted had been narrowed down to four with some difficulty. In each of the four cases the Conference had requested follow-up action by intergovernmental organizations, thus while the Strategic Approach secretariat was not directly involved in work on each issue it was following progress and providing updates thereon.

1. Chemicals in products

30. The Government of Sweden had maintained an interest in the issue of chemicals in products and continued to support the improvement of information systems to raise stakeholders' awareness of products that could contain hazardous chemicals. The Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics had taken the lead on that activity and Sweden, with the support of other Governments, had convened a workshop on chemicals in products in February 2009. The Conference had agreed to continue work on the topic and had called for a steering group to be established to guide a project on the topic. A meeting to define the scope of the project organized by the Chemicals Branch had been scheduled for 17 and 18 December 2009 in Geneva.

31. In the ensuing discussion, members of the steering group for the chemicals in products project said that considerable progress had been made. There had been substantial response to a questionnaire on the issue and a workshop was planned for mid-2010. Steering group members would update participants at regional meetings on progress made. It was noted that the task was huge and focus was essential to ensure any measure of success. One participant expressed his gratitude to the Government of Belarus for translating the questionnaire into Russian thereby facilitating its completion by some countries.

2. Lead in paint

32. With regard to lead in paint, the Conference had endorsed the establishment of a global partnership to promote the phasing out of the use of lead in paints. UNEP and WHO would jointly serve as the secretariat for the partnership. Planning and fund-raising activities were under way and a meeting was scheduled for February 2010 to consult stakeholders and agree on a global framework for a new partnership.

33. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of WHO endorsed the work of the lead in paint partnership. She said that the successful phasing out of lead in gasoline had greatly reduced the disease burden. WHO was developing guidance on reducing children's exposure to lead and there would be a re-evaluation of lead as a contaminant in food. One participant provided information on a national study undertaken on lead in household paints as a contribution to the global partnership on the issue.

3. Nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials

34. With regard to nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials, follow-up action was primarily centred on awareness-raising activities. Work was under way under the auspices of OECD, which had requested UNITAR to assist with raising awareness in developing countries. A series of workshops on nanotechnology had been planned in conjunction with Strategic Approach regional meetings and the workshop for Central and Eastern Europe would take place on Friday, 11 December, immediately following the current meeting. The representative of UNITAR added that, to date, few IOMC participating organizations had active programmes to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition with the issue and countries receiving nanomaterials had limited capacity to handle them. The workshop would be a first step in raising awareness.

35. The representative of WHO said that the organization was actively engaging in work on this issue, which, it had been agreed, would be added to the list of priorities set out in the WHO global plan of action on workers' health.

36. In the ensuing discussion, several participants welcomed the convening of the workshop as a means to raise awareness on the issue.

4. Hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products

37. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants were preparing a workshop to be held back-to-back with the seventh session of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention, scheduled for May 2010, to consider issues related to hazardous substances in the life cycle of electrical and electronic products. Other IOMC participating organizations would also be following the issue. At the workshop, a series of options and recommendations for future work, through existing mechanisms where possible, would be developed for submission to the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its first meeting in preparation for the third session of the Conference. The issue had been discussed in some detail at the Strategic Approach Asian and Pacific regional meeting and recommendations had been prepared for consideration by participants at the workshop.

38. In the ensuing discussion, several participants referred to European Union legislation on waste electrical and electronic equipment, noting that it might be of interest to non-European Union member countries in managing such waste. The European Union was currently negotiating a restructuring of that legislation. A conference room paper containing draft recommendations on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products had been submitted for consideration by participants at the current meeting. One participant said that, at a recent OECD meeting on sustainable materials management, the issue of electronic and electrical waste, which was the fastest growing in the waste sector, had been linked to producer responsibility. That responsibility should, she said, extend to provision of information on hazardous substances in electronic and electrical waste and action on contaminated sites. The export of such waste to developing countries and countries with economies in transition should be prohibited and capacity-building to deal with end-of life products was essential. Several participants voiced strongly support for the statement.

39. Participants agreed on recommendations on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products for consideration at the forthcoming workshop. They are reproduced in annex I to the present report, without formal editing.

5. Perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives

40. OECD, in association with other IOMC participating organizations, was leading follow-up work on perfluorinated chemicals to develop, facilitate and promote national and international product stewardship programmes and regulatory approaches. The programmes and approaches were principally voluntary, encouraging industry to phase out the use of such chemicals.

B. Future issues, i.e., nominations

41. Future modalities for identifying and prioritizing emerging policy issues had been agreed upon by the Conference at its second session as set out in resolution II/4. A copy of the nomination form for new issues was available on the Conference website with a diagrammatic form describing steps in and the time frame for the process. Nominations for emerging issues to be considered by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session should be submitted to the secretariat by 30 November 2010. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/15, which contained the nominations questionnaire, noting that nominations could be made by an individual country or a region. Such nominations and comments on the questionnaire should be submitted to the secretariat.

42. It was agreed that activities should focus on follow-up work in relation to the four emerging policy issues already identified. It was also agreed that the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group might be the most appropriate platform to circulate proposals on new issues as and when they arose.

VII. Regional implementation meeting for the Commission on Sustainable Development

43. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to documents SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/2–4. He said that, in accordance with its programme of work, the Commission on Sustainable Development would consider chemicals at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, in 2010 and 2011, respectively. At the time of the adoption of its programme of work, the Strategic Approach had not yet been adopted. While welcoming the Commission's interest in chemicals management, he emphasized that it should be mindful of the existence of the Strategic Approach and its activities. It was to be hoped that those would be brought to the Commission's attention through Strategic Approach stakeholder participation in its work. At its second session, the Conference had recognized the work on chemicals to be undertaken by the Commission and had adopted resolution II/7 on the Commission on Sustainable Development, encouraging Strategic Approach stakeholder participation in its work on chemicals, including through the regional preparatory process. The main preparatory work for the Commission's 2010 session was taking place at the regional level through the United Nations regional economic commissions. The regional implementation meeting for Europe and North America had been held on 1 and 2 December 2009 in Geneva. The Strategic Approach secretariat had assisted in preparations for the forthcoming eighteenth session of the Commission, including through the submission of papers and attendance at most of the regional meetings alongside the regional focal points. He highlighted the proposal made by Slovenia at the regional implementation meeting for Europe and North America that obsolete pesticides should be included as an issue of concern.

44. In the ensuing discussion, it was recalled that obsolete pesticides had been proposed as a regional issue of concern; the President of the Conference would be requested to make a keynote speech on that issue at the eighteenth session of the Commission. The Commission had been requested to ensure a coordinated approach with intergovernmental organizations to their work on chemicals and to develop means to disseminate chemicals issues to a wider audience. At the regional implementation meeting for Europe and North America, the Commission had been reminded by the Central and Eastern Europe regional focal point in a keynote speech that the origins of the Strategic Approach lay in the need to link the sound management of chemicals to sustainable development and for universal mainstreaming of chemicals into national development strategies. The importance of the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals in that respect and the need for long-term financial resources for the region had also been stressed. Participants were encouraged to work with national representatives who would attend the eighteenth session and to be more proactive in the preparatory work for that meeting.

45. The Strategic Approach secretariat would seek to facilitate the participation of a number of Strategic Approach stakeholders at the session. A side event on the Strategic Approach was envisaged at the session in collaboration with IOMC participating organizations.

VIII. Regional priorities

46. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the second Central and Eastern European regional meeting held in Bucharest in September 2008 and the list of regional priorities for possible Quick Start Programme projects developed at the meeting as set out in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/17. Participants also had before them document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/16, which contained additions to the regional list of priorities suggested by the regional coordination group at its first meeting in September 2009.

47. The representative of WHO said participants at the current meeting might also wish to consider the conclusions and recommendations highlighting priorities for the region as contained in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/18. The representative of the International Council of Chemical Associations reiterated the private sector's commitment to the Strategic Approach. He said that, as highlighted at the second session of the Conference, industry was continuing to explore ways of offering in kind contributions in the form of technical expertise for specific projects and partnerships.

48. Several participants expressed the view that mainstreaming the sound management of chemicals into development policies was a means to broaden the donor base. All stakeholders were encouraged to join the donor base of the Strategic Approach, including by making a symbolic donation or in kind contribution that would emphasize their commitment to the process. Such donations might trigger discussion at the national level and raise awareness among decision makers. Among the priority regional concerns highlighted by participants were obsolete pesticides, remediation of contaminated areas, sound disposal of hazardous wastes, and surveillance and monitoring.

49. Participants agreed that adherence to the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals was important for the mainstreaming of chemicals management into national development strategies. The system was one of the main tools to ensure that chemicals were handled safely. Regional and national cooperation on chemicals issues began with standardized classification and labelling. The harmonized system also enhanced trade between countries by providing standardized hazard communication for the protection of end-users. While the system's introduction had been anticipated in 2008, it had still not been implemented in many countries of the region. The inclusion of the system as a future additional priority in the regional action plan was widely supported, as was an increase in related activities wherever possible.

50. It was suggested that donor countries of the region with experience of implementing the system could be requested to provide technical support and that UNITAR might also provide assistance. The representative of UNITAR said that, while a joint capacity-building programme existed with the International Labour Organization (ILO), there were currently no projects in the Central and Eastern European region. It was suggested that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe could be contacted to explore possibilities for translating the 500-page document on the system and that the Quick Start Programme and other entities might be in a position to assist in the implementation of the system at the national level. The representative of Poland said that his country could possibly provide in kind technical assistance in as it had experience in implementation. He suggested that the region might consider convening a workshop on the issue.

51. The representative of WHO drew attention to the WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard that was widely used by developing countries. The forthcoming update of the document would include classification under the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for acute toxicity. Information was also included in the International Chemical Safety Cards produced jointly by WHO and ILO and available on the International Programme on Chemical Safety INCHEM website² and the ILO International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre website.³

52. Several participants expressed their appreciation to the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for organizing courses on strategies for chemicals management. Some participants suggested that the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals laid the foundation for sound legislation. Some countries of the region were according priority to accession to the European Union and, in that respect, were focusing on translating and applying the European Union's system for classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals.

53. The representative of the Czech Republic drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/9, which contained a statement adopted by participants at the tenth International HCH and Pesticides Forum held in Brno in September 2009, on specific actions to respond to the issues of obsolete pesticides and related clean-up measures. Intergovernmental organizations would be contacted to provide technical assistance and resources for the disposal of obsolete pesticides. The statement included a set of actions to help Governments solve related problems at the national level. Participants were urged to bring the outcome of the forum to the attention of national decision makers. The representative of WHO said that she would contact the appropriate officers for information so that a number of factual errors in the document could be corrected.

54. Participants expressed support for the statement set forth in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/9.

IX. Strategic Approach implementation

A. Sharing experience, including on use of guidance documents

55. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/6, which contained the pilot edition of guidance for developing implementation plans for the Strategic Approach. He recalled that, while the Strategic Approach was entirely voluntary, the implementation section of the Overarching Policy Strategy suggested that Governments and organizations should develop plans as a first step to implementing it. Several Governments had sought guidance on the development of such plans. UNITAR and the Strategic

2 www.inchem.org.

3 www.ilocus.org.

Approach secretariat had developed the pilot edition of the guidance in consultation with IOMC participating organizations.

56. The representative of UNITAR provided an overview of the guidance document, noting that it reflected comments received during and since the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. It had been based on previous guidance documents on the sound management of chemicals and restructured to meet the demands of the Strategic Approach and its implementation. He welcomed additional comments on ways to improve the guidance. The guidance document had been submitted to the regional coordinating committee of the Latin American and Caribbean group and, at its suggestion, would be renamed the “2009 edition” as it no longer represented a pilot edition. The document had drawn on broad experience in integrated chemicals management. Countries had also examined the guidance during implementation of Quick Start Programme projects. The guidance was submitted for use on a voluntary basis and was being translated into the six official languages of the United Nations as in kind contribution from the IOMC participating organizations.

57. A number of participants provided information regarding national and regional implementation plans. The guidance was broadly praised and recommended for use by countries in the region in developing national implementation plans.

B. Regional workplan

58. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that a workplan spanning the previous few months had been developed at the first meeting of the regional coordination group for the Central and Eastern European region, in September 2009. The workplan had been discussed and modified at the second meeting held on 6 December 2009.

59. In the ensuing discussion, the regional focal point provided an overview of activities listed in the workplan. The workplan would be continuously updated and modified as activities were completed and new issues taken up. The most recent items included in the workplan were: to request the regional coordination group to assist the regional focal point to prepare and present a regional position to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth session; to assist in preparing the regional position for the negotiations on a legally binding instrument on mercury to begin in June 2010; to support and coordinate representation from the region at the meetings of the WHO Executive Board and the World Health Assembly in January and May 2010 respectively; and to support and coordinate regional representation at the meeting of European health and environment ministers in March 2009.

60. The workplan was amended to include the provision of information to ministers attending the meeting of European health and environment ministers. The workplan for the Central and Eastern European region was adopted as set out in annex II to the present report. It was agreed that the workplan would be updated by the Central and Eastern Europe regional coordination group, as necessary, and that a column would be added to the table in future versions of the workplan to show activities that had completed.

X. Quick Start Programme

A. Status of approved projects and applications in the regions

61. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the report of the secretariat on the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund set out in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/5. He said that the Trust Fund had received support from 22 donors as listed in annex 1 to the report. Providing an update on the financial situation, he said that recent new pledges had included an additional \$2 million from the Government of Sweden. He noted that the 92 projects approved for a budget of approximately \$20 million represented a substantial portfolio of implementation projects. In the Central and Eastern European region, however, only five countries had taken the opportunity to undertake a project and there had been only one multi-country project. The document provided a breakdown of approved projects for the region. He reiterated that the Strategic Approach secretariat stood ready to assist countries in preparing their applications to ensure they met the necessary requirements. IOMC participating organizations were available to work with countries that preferred to implement projects through an executing agency.

62. In response to a request for clarification, the representative of the secretariat said that the current rules of the Quick Start Programme allowed countries to put forward one national project, one multi-country project and one non-governmental organization project. Countries that had submitted proposals for relatively small amounts during the first four rounds of applications prior to the establishment of the above-mentioned rule were entitled to submit a second project proposal.

63. Six or seven application rounds remained and, as the end of the Quick Start Programme mandate approached in 2013, less funding would be available and only projects of short duration would receive approval. Countries were encouraged, therefore, to prepare project proposals for early submission. Several participants stressed the importance of implementing the Globally Harmonized System in their countries. The representative of the secretariat confirmed that, in the light of precedents, it should be possible to convene a workshop on the Globally Harmonized System using Quick Start Programme Trust Fund resources.

64. The representative of the secretariat said that there were guidelines for the approval of non-governmental organization projects and that approximately 1 in 10 projects approved were from non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations could submit project proposals on their own or working closely with Governments or, in some instances, they could assume the role of executing agency, which afforded a higher chance of acceptance of the proposal.

65. In the ensuing discussion, several participants described their experiences in implementing projects under the Quick Start Programme and expressed concerns related to projects that had not been approved.

B. Preparation for the Quick Start Programme evaluation

66. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that resolution II/3 on financial and technical resources for implementation had included a request to the Executive Board to undertake an evaluation of the Quick Start Programme. The aim of the Programme had been to enable small projects to be endorsed and financed swiftly. An evaluation would analyse its successes and shortcomings and determine whether its mandate should be extended after 2013. A proposed outline for the draft terms of reference for the evaluation was contained in document SAIM/RM/CEE.3/INF/5 and on the Strategic Approach website and would be discussed in detail by the Executive Board at its fifth meeting on 19 and 20 April 2010. Comments on the terms of reference should be submitted to the secretariat by 31 January 2010.

67. In the ensuing discussion, participants said they would provide comments on the draft terms of reference to the regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, namely, the representatives of Armenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

C. Fifth meeting of the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme

68. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat said that new Board members elected by the Conference at its second session would take their places at the fifth meeting of the Executive Board, in April 2010. The main agenda item for the meeting would be to agree on terms of reference for the above-mentioned evaluation of the Quick Start Programme. There would also be an update on fund-raising and a call for increased donations in response to the decline in financial support in 2009. Policy issues for consideration at the meeting would include the increasing trend among donors to earmark their funding. Given that over 80 countries had taken advantage of the Quick Start Programme, including over 40 projects in least developed countries and small island developing States, a policy discussion might take place on whether to revisit the eligibility rules for access to the Trust Fund.

69. Several participants called for increased flexibility to allow countries that had finalized a first project to propose subsequent ones so as not to hinder work by countries active on the sound management of chemicals. A system of prioritization could be established to allow countries submitting a first project proposal to be given priority over countries submitting a second one. Looking ahead to the sixth meeting of the Executive Board, the representative of the secretariat noted that in addition to the two regional representatives on the Executive Board the region was also represented by four donor countries, thus ensuring a strong regional presence to support new proposals.

70. Several participants called for greater support for regional and subregional projects under the Quick Start Programme. The representative of the secretariat said that although the International Conference on Chemicals Management had set a limit of \$250,000 per project, regardless of whether they were national or multi-country projects, countries could consider submitting similar national projects in parallel with a view to implementing them on a coordinated regional or subregional basis. Countries whose projects had been declined were encouraged to redraft and resubmit proposals.

XI. Information clearing house

71. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that it had been assigned the official function of establishing an information clearing house. Financial constraints had prevented the

task from being undertaken before the second session of the Conference. The secretariat was expecting to launch the clearing house by mid-December 2009 and it was intended to supplement the Strategic Approach website and offer an entry point to chemicals-related information from a broad range of sources. It would also include a section for national and regional pages where countries could, on a voluntary basis, share information on relevant activities being undertaken. Countries would be able to provide links to relevant websites or key documents such as national implementation plans and policy and legislative documentation. Pages would also be developed for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

72. The secretariat had been examining the possibility of developing password-restricted regional pages to permit regions to discuss documents under development and to use the site as a forum to develop regional positions in the lead up to Strategic Approach meetings. The development of a chat room or bulletin board to share views was also being considered. Initially, the site would be available in English only with French and Spanish translations envisaged for introductory material. Country pages had no language restrictions and information would be welcome in any language. Submitters would, however, be encouraged to provide summaries of documentation in English. Comments on the information clearing-house website would be welcome as soon as it was launched. Lastly, he demonstrated the pilot version of the information clearing house and its current contents.

73. Participants commended the secretariat on its development of the information clearing house and welcomed its intention to provide links to existing information and not duplicate documentation available on other websites. One participant suggested examining the information clearing house of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which had functioned very well to date. Some participants suggested adding links to other websites, such as the EUR-Lex site providing access to European Union laws and the European Chemicals Agency website.

XII. Central and Eastern European regional coordination group terms of reference

74. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the report of the first meeting of the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group (SAICM/CEE.3/INF/16), including annex II to the document containing a proposed amendment to the group's terms of reference. The proposed amendment to the terms of reference allowed for the inclusion of the regional representative on the Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management as a member of the regional coordination group. It was also noted that a nomination had been received for the industry seat in the group.

75. The terms of reference of the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group were adopted as set out in annex III to the present report.

XIII. Preparations for the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

76. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to an update on preparations for the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention, to be held from 22 to 24 February 2010, in Bali, Indonesia, as set out in document SAICM/RM/CEE.3/INF/17. The meetings represented the culmination of several years of working on recommendations to increase cooperation and avoid duplication of effort between the three conventions. It was expected that some interim functions, such as joint administrative services, would be formalized at the meeting. The Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions had also called for greater cooperation between the three conventions and the Strategic Approach in relation to implementation of the conventions and the Strategic Approach, exchange of information between technical and scientific bodies of the conventions and the Strategic Approach secretariat, and consideration of the Strategic Approach by the convention secretariats in their work programmes in the areas of technology transfer and capacity-building.

77. The representative of the Czech Republic provided additional information on the second meeting of the advisory committee on the extraordinary meetings held in Bangkok on 24 October 2009. Each of the three conventions had nominated a focal point on synergies: Chile for the Basel Convention, Finland for the Rotterdam Convention and Switzerland for the Stockholm Convention.

Relevant documents and information would be made available on a dedicated website for the extraordinary meeting.⁴

78. With regard to attendance at the meeting, it was expected that the participation of two representatives for each eligible country would be funded. Invitation letters had been sent through the usual UNEP channels. She stressed that timely submission of requests for funding and indications of participation were essential given the large numbers of participants expected at the meeting.

XIV. Other matters

79. The representative of the Czech Republic reported on preparations for the eleventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 24 to 26 February 2010, immediately following the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions. She said that a ministerial lunch focusing on chemicals would be organized during the meeting. Several issues pertaining to chemicals would be discussed at the meeting, including the forthcoming negotiations to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, continued sound management of chemicals and financing of the chemicals and wastes cluster. The consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes had been launched by the UNEP Executive Director in recognition of the need for adequate resources in the field of chemicals and wastes management. The outcomes of the consultative process would be submitted to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session for its consideration.

XV. Date and venue of the following meeting

80. It was agreed that a meeting for the Central and Eastern European region would be held prior to the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, to be held in 2011. It was also agreed that the regional coordination group for the Central and Eastern European region would meet in late 2010.

XVI. Adoption of the report

81. The present report was adopted on the basis of the draft circulated during the meeting on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be entrusted to the rapporteur, working in collaboration with the co-chairs and the Strategic Approach secretariat.

XVII. Closure of the meeting

82. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 4.25 p.m. on Thursday, 10 December 2009.

Annex I

Recommendations on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products

Participants in the Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM),

Mindful that preventing harm to human health and the environment from wastes containing harmful substances or wastes that lead to the formation of harmful substances is an important element in achieving the 2020 goal of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM);⁵

Recognizing that near-end-of-life and end-of-life electrical and electronic products are a growing concern as a result of dumping in developing countries, which results in the illegal transboundary movement of their hazardous constituents such as heavy metals and brominated flame retardants;⁶

Further recognizing that the increasing amount of electronic waste due to domestic consumption will have an impact on health and the environment unless soundly managed;

Aware that there is a lack of capacity to handle electronic waste in an environmentally sound manner in almost all developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially least developed countries and small island developing States, leading to the release of hazardous substances causing harm to human health and the environment;⁷

Recalling that it is important to consider product stewardship and extended producer responsibility aspects in the life-cycle management of electronic and electrical products;⁸

Noting with appreciation the plan for a workshop on electronic waste to be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal scheduled for May 2010,⁹

Welcoming the agreed objectives for the workshop, including identifying and assessing where issues relating to the sound management of chemicals arise during the lifespan of electrical and electronic products, including the design of such products, green chemistry, recycling and disposal, in particular in the context of the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm conventions,¹⁰

1. *Request* that the workshop cover both the manufacture of electrical and electronic products and the repair and disposal of near-end-of-life and end-of-life electrical and electronic products and take into account relevant Rio Principles;
2. *Encourage* workshop recommendations on
 - (a) green design and the phase-out of, where feasible, those harmful substances contained in electrical and electronic products;
 - (b) extended producer responsibility, including for the provision of information on hazardous substances contained in electrical and electronic equipment;
 - (c) protecting worker health throughout the life cycle of electrical and electronic products from manufacture to recycling and disposal;

5 SAICM/RM/AP.1/3 Annex V

www.saicm.org/documents/meeting/asiapacific/may%2007/documents/AP1%203%20report.pdf

6 SAICM II/4 Emerging policy issues

English:

www.saicm.org/documents/iccm/ICCM2/ICCM2%20Report/ICCM2%2015%20FINAL%20REPORT%20E.pdf

Chinese:

www.saicm.org/documents/iccm/ICCM2/ICCM2%20Report/ICCM2%2015%20FINAL%20REPORT%20C.pdf

7 SAICM II/4 Emerging policy issues

8 SAICM II/4 Emerging policy issues

9 SAICM II/4 Emerging policy issues

10 SAICM II/4 Emerging policy issues

- (d) developing shared standards in classifying or identifying near-end-of-life and end-of-life electrical and electronic products and better cooperation and strengthening of bodies working to enforce illegal traffic including customs officials and others;
- (e) actions needed to address contaminated sites;
- (f) ensuring environmentally unsound technologies and products that are prohibited or controlled in developed countries are not transferred to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- (g) ensuring national capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially least developed countries, for the disposal or recycling of near-end-of life and end-of-life electrical and electronic products through international cooperation, including transfer of technology for disposal or recycling of those materials;
- (h) strengthening the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially least developed countries, to deal in an environmentally sound manner with electrical and electronic waste generated domestically and from illegal transboundary movements;
- (i) strengthening the control of transboundary movements of electrical and electronic waste through Basel Convention mechanisms;
- (j) the provision of future training workshops, including for workers in repair, dismantling and junk facilities, on the identification of hazardous and toxic components in electrical and electronic equipment, including components that are recyclable;
- (k) building on past programmes addressing electrical and electronic waste; and
- (l) demonstration projects.

3. *Encourage* the workshop to set up a small multi-stakeholder working group with representation from all United Nations regions to prepare recommendations for the SAICM Open-ended Working Group, and the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session;

4. *Encourage* synergies with the chemicals in products project being undertaken by UNEP as follow-up to the second session of the Conference so that information about hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products is made available;

5. *Invite* Governments and organizations in a position to do so to provide financial and in-kind resources for the workshop;

6. *Invite* consideration of the recommendations of the workshop by the SAICM Open-ended Working Group and the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session.

Annex II

Workplan of the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

<i>No</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Lead actors¹¹ to support the regional focal point</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Refs</i>
1	To prepare for the next CEE regional meeting, collect information on arrangements and possibilities for capacity-building to encourage preparation of submissions of project proposals, for example to QSP, and implementation of projects in CEE region.	CEE donor countries	Before CEE regional meeting	Enhanced information flow from EU via Presidency and European Commission to CEE regional meeting	ToR para. 6 (a) and (d)
2	To review, from time to time, the SAICM Global Plan of Action for the purpose of adapting it to national and regional priorities.	All		Input into CEE regional meeting	ToR para. 6 (c)
3	To prepare, in collaboration with the regional focal point, materials and agendas for regional meetings.	All	Before CEE regional meeting	Draft agenda for the CEE regional meeting	ToR para. 6 (d)
4	To assist the regional focal point in preparing and presenting draft regional position papers for submission to key regional and global meetings.	All	Before relevant meetings	Representation of regional position on chemicals at CSD/RIM	ToR para. 6 (d)
5	To facilitate reporting on SAICM implementation in CEE region.				ToR para. 6 (f)
6	To encourage Governments that have not yet done so to nominate national focal points.	Regional focal point in cooperation with CEE member of Bureau or President	October 2009	All focal points are nominated	ToR para. 2
7	To update information regarding existing national focal points and operability.	Regional focal point in cooperation with CEE member of the Bureau/ President	December 2009	All national focal points are active	ToR para. 2
8	To ensure active participation of the	RFP and	September	Letter to CEE GEF	ToR

11 Regional focal point will be involved in all activities as coordinator and adviser.

<i>No</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Lead actors¹¹ to support the regional focal point</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Refs</i>
	CEE region in negotiations concerning the fifth GEF replenishment.	CEE member of the Bureau or President in cooperation with the CZ	2009	Council Members	para. 6 (b)
9	To assist the regional focal point, regional coordination group member country representatives at the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.	All	Mid-April 2010	Presentation of regional position	ToR para.6
10	To assist the regional focal point and regional representatives at sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury.	All	End of May 2010	Regional position	ToR para 6
11	To provide support and coordination for CEE representatives attending WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly meetings (note: Slovenia to raise the issue of obsolete pesticides).	All	January and May 2010	Regional position	ToR Para 6 (d)
12	To provide support and coordination for CEE representatives attending the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Parma.	All	January 2010	Regional views and position	ToR Para 6 (d)

Annex III

Terms of reference for the Central and Eastern European regional coordination group on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

1. The Central and Eastern European regional coordination group for the Strategic Approach is established as a mechanism for consultation, dissemination and exchange of information, and to support, with the assistance of the Strategic Approach secretariat, the regional focal point and the region's representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board in the execution of their duties. The group was established in September 2008 at the second meeting of the Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the Strategic Approach held in Bucharest, Romania, from 8 to 11 September 2008.

Composition

2. The membership of the regional coordination group comprises:
- (a) Regional focal point, as chair and convenor;
 - (b) Regional representative in the Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management;
 - (c) Regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board;
 - (d) Two governmental representatives from each of the following groups of countries:
 - (i) Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia;
 - (ii) Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
 - (iii) Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Ukraine;
 - (iv) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania;
 - (e) One representative from a non-governmental organization in each of the following three sectors: industry, trade union and public interest;
 - (f) One representative of a key regional organization (for example, one that has region-wide responsibilities relevant to the sound management of chemicals) on a rotational basis;
 - (g) One representative from a participating organization of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals with a significant regional chemical safety programme;
 - (h) The immediate former Strategic Approach regional focal point.

Working procedures

3. The working procedures of the regional coordination group are:
- (a) To the extent possible, to undertake its work through correspondence, teleconferencing and face-to-face meetings where possible;
 - (b) To use English as the working language of the group. The provision of Russian interpretation during meetings shall be decided on a case-by-case basis, but where possible the language difficulties of the region shall be taken into account;
 - (c) To designate alternates or technical advisers to participate in meetings as required to ensure continuity and involvement.
4. Documents released by the group should be written in English and, where possible, in Russian.
5. The group will allow the participation of observers as appropriate.

Roles and responsibilities

6. The role of the regional coordination group is to support the regional focal point in the execution of his or her duties and to fulfil the following responsibilities:

- (a) To assist the regional focal point and regional representatives on the Quick Start Programme Executive Board in follow-up efforts intersessionally;
- (b) To encourage Central and Eastern European advocacy, through the region's GEF Council members, for the creation of a new GEF focal area for chemicals management;
- (c) To consider the Strategic Approach Global Plan of Action from time to time, and identify the need for amendments;
- (d) To assist the regional focal point in preparing, as appropriate, draft regional position papers for submission to the region, ministerial conferences and the International Conference on Chemicals Management, among others;
- (e) To serve as conduits for the views of subregions on Strategic Approach implementation and for the exchange of information;
- (f) To facilitate reporting on Strategic Approach implementation in Central and Eastern Europe and on the provision of resources to support such implementation;
- (g) To facilitate preparations for the development of regional or subregional action plans, as necessary, and to follow up on their establishment and implementation;
- (h) To provide assistance in the elaboration of regional and subregional project proposals as requested by the Central and Eastern European regional focal point.

Term of office

7. The regional coordination group shall carry out its mandate from the end of each session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management until the end of the subsequent session, commencing at the second session in 2009. The regional coordination group will function on an interim basis following the second Central and Eastern European regional meeting on the Strategic Approach until its formalization by the Central and Eastern European region at the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.
