



SAICM/ICCM.2/INF/47



Strategic Approach
to International
Chemicals Management

Distr.: General
6 May 2009

English and Spanish only

International Conference on Chemicals Management

Second session

Geneva, 11–15 May 2009

Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International
Chemicals Management: strengthening of national
chemicals management capacities**

**Submission on principles and general guidelines for the
promotion of the sound management of chemicals in the
workplace**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the principles and general guidelines for the promotion of the sound management of chemicals in the workplace prepared at the International Conference on Safe and Sound Management of Chemicals held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 14 to 16 April 2009. The submission is being circulated as received, without formal editing, and is provided for the information of the Conference.

* SAICM/ICCM.2/1.

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Annex

Principles and General Guidelines for the promotion of the Sound Management of chemicals in the workplace

We, the participants of the International Conference on Safe and Management of Chemicals – Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management – SAICM, held in Sao Paulo from April 14th to 16th, 2009, in the scope of the project “Facilitate SAICM implementation for workers in the workplace”, supported by QSP Trust Fund resources and endorsed by National Focal Points for SAICM of Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, come through this letter, in the first place, show our gratitude and recognition:

- To ICEM, Sustainlabour Foundation, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Trade Union Confederation of Americas (CSA/TUCA) directions for the initiative of the Project and this Conference which internalizes and spreads SAICM goals, structure and activities in our countries;
- To SAICM Focal Points of Brazil, Chile and Uruguay for the endorsement to the Project which made feasible the accomplishment of the conference;
- To SAICM Secretariat for the acceptance of the Project and for the availability of funds and necessary resources for its accomplishment, including, in private, the accomplishment of this Conference which contributes to the development of SAICM activities in our countries;
- To SAICM Regional Focal Point for the presence and message directed to the public attending the Conference;
- To the Ministry of Labor and Employment of Brazil for the engagement applied to the accomplishment of this Conference;
- To the *Fundacentro*’s Executive Board, its researchers and employees, for the institutional and professional support and for the receptivity and attention applied to the participants;



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- To professionals from Regional, Federal and Municipal institutions who take part in this Conference with the commitment of strengthening safe and sound management of chemicals in their spheres of competence and within the communities in which they are active;
- To professionals and delegates of companies interested in improving their chemical safety management through the best practices and according to international norms and guidelines;
- To trade union leaders and advisors committed to workers health protection against the risks chemicals can represent to workers health, public health and the environment;
- To present Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) delegates whose activities help raising socio-environmental awareness among our societies and encourage full citizenship practice;
- To those who worked with professionalism for the organization and accomplishment of this Conference, our gratitude.

We, in the SAICM initiative context, also express our commitment to the principles and guidelines of safe and sound management of chemicals throughout its lifecycle, based on the main promotional and normative instruments listed below:

- The disposed in Agenda 21 Chapter 19 of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (Rio 92);
- The disposed in Paragraph 23 of the World Summit Implementation Plan on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) which agreed to take action to achieve the “2020 goal”, ensuring that by the year 2020, chemicals will be used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of adverse impacts on human health and the environment;
- Dubai Declaration on Chemicals Management at International Level (2006) which establishes the necessary mandate for the elaboration and application of this Strategic Approach (SAICM);
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 170 on the Use of Chemicals at Work and 174 on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents;



- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal;
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade;
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);
- The adoption of the new Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals;
- The private sector initiatives and volunteer agreements, which seek to complement or improve regulatory and normative marks, in private those involving partnerships and commitments with trade unions and other entities of civil society;
- The trade unions initiatives addressed to provide more information, better qualification and additional protection to workers exposed to the risk of chemicals from the workplace to national scope, materialized in the inclusion of terms of this nature in agreements and collective labour conventions or global projects with multinational companies.

Nevertheless these efforts and initiatives recognition, we verified deficiency in these policies, regulatory marks and institutional capacities to ensure that the strategic goals and the major SAICM goal for 2020 will be achieved in our countries.

For this reason, it is necessary that the responsible government authorities are warned with urgency concerning these deficiencies, so that they can, in reasonable time, present answers which transmit safety and reliability to civil society and the trade unions in private.

The needs of each Conference participant country, especially those felt by workers and their representatives, will be listed in attachment to this letter, as they arise from sector and national meetings from April 16th.

Sao Paulo, April 15th, 2009.

*Participants of the International Conference on Safe and Sound Management of Chemicals
– Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management – SAICM.*



Principles and General Guidelines for the promotion of the Sound Management of chemicals in the workplace



ANNEX OF BRAZIL

After recognizing and reaffirming positive experiences developed in the country concerning subjects involving the SAICM, especially those of tripartite nature which gather government, employers and workers efforts, the Brazilian participants identified the existent deficiencies and the needs and proposals which seek overcoming them, such as:

- 1 There must be a norms harmonization effort among countries of the region (e.g.: inflammables, GHS), mainly in Mercosur scope; with this goal, options and ways to support technical cooperation projects are going to be searched;
- 2 The need for a Chemical Safety National Policy – PNSQ which defines objectives, people in charge, duties, actions chronogram etc. is identified; this must be a state policy, not a government policy, which promotes the strengthening of the institutions responsible for this policy implementation;
- 3 There must be a reinforcement of implementation actions in national scope of the international conventions concerning themes dealt at this Conference, especially in the working relations field;
- 4 The urgent need to overcome traditional coordination and integration difficulty among the different institutions which act in the chemical safety field at the three State levels;
- 5 The participants enhanced the need to improve the SAICM subjects national coordination, so as to make possible the effective participation of all interested parties;



- 6 The workers representatives commit themselves to identify 3 companies with the interest to constitute Networkers from Brazil, Chile and Uruguay;
- 7 It is identified the need for the creation of a National Agency for the Chemical Safety Management in the country, with the objective of unifying and empower the Brazilian State capacity on this theme;
- 8 Need for the strengthening of research institutions, particularly those concerning chemical safety subjects;
- 9 Reinforce the need for a govern policy due to the increasing use of nanomaterials in productive processes, especially concerning the obligation to inform workers and consumers about the use of these materials, the risks they represent and the necessary protection measures;
- 10 The need to revise entirely the CONASQ, so that the trade unions commit to promote the elaboration of trade union movement proposal consulting the involved ministries before heading them to the Civil Service;
- 11 Support to the initiative to perform public competition for Fundacentro functional staff, to strengthen the institution research capacity in the chemical safety sector, among others;
- 12 The need for an approach which privileges Small and Medium Enterprises due to their difficulty in developing capacities for safe and sound management of chemicals.



Principles and General Guidelines for the promotion of the Sound Management of chemicals in the workplace



ANEXX OF CHILE

Sao Paulo, April 14th to 16th, 2009

According to the work performed by the Chilean delegation at the "International Conference on Safe and Sound Management of Chemicals" – Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management – SAICM, of which the specific goal intends to strengthen and develop tripartite alliances to promote safe and sound management of chemicals, follows that:

1. In the face of the specific goal #1: "Improve the sound management of chemicals in different productive sectors":
 - a) Chile counts on a "National Policy of Chemical Safety (from now on NPCS), of which the major objective is to reduce risks associated with the handling of chemical substances, throughout its entire lifecycle, in order to protect human health and the environment.
 - b) Therefore, the NPCS proposes the application of a risk approach to the safe and reasonable management of chemical substances, recognizing its importance for our quality of life and that, for the sustainable development, it is necessary to count on an integrative approach of the productive needs with the people protection needs and the prevention from environment deterioration.
 - c) The NPCS implementation will be performed based on its specific objectives and associated activities, at medium and short term, including the current year until 2013.
 - d) To accomplish NPCS implementation, work will be performed in an intersectorial and decentralized manner throughout the entire country. This, through operating committees which count on the presence of all actors related to the sound management of chemicals in the country (public and private sectors, trade unions, universities, NGOs, etc.).
 - e) Specifically, for the work to be performed on the project "Facilitate SAICM implementation for workers in the workplace", the Chilean delegation shows its concern with the deficient regulation in the agricultural productive sector, where the work conditions and the use of pesticides surveillance show the need for the implementation of measures to improve chemicals management in the aforesaid sector.



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- f) Concerning the subject mentioned above, the minimum actions to be implemented will be all those related to enabling, at pilot level in a critical zone, workers representatives regarding "Sound and Safe Handling of Chemicals". In the same manner, the best efforts will be applied through the identification of the lifecycle of the most toxic products of the sector chosen as pilot.
2. In the face of the specific goal #2: "Qualify unionists responsible for workers health and safety for the trade union action in chemical safety area":
- a) It is recognized the effort applied by the "International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development – SUSTAINLABOUR" with relation to its management for the development of the project "Facilitate SAICM implementation for workers in the workplace" in Chile, and its convocation for the team work with several trade union representatives of unionist productive sectors present in the entire country.
 - b) At proper time, it is identified the need to **convoke** other trade union representatives from sectors as mining, paper, metallurgy, among others, in order to benefit from the requirement to enable trade unions for the reduction of chemical risks in the most important sectors of the country.
 - c) Besides CUT (*Central Unica de los Trabajadores*), new ways to identify trade unions as well as civil society interested in the project will be searched.
 - d) At last, and in order to identify the agricultural sector unprovided with sound and efficient management of chemicals, it is proposed the representative participation of its workers in monitoring the improvement of chemical safety management in the workplace. This, through the development of the project "Facilitate SAICM implementation for workers in the workplace" in Chile.
3. In the face of the specific goal #3: "Place resources and tools for trade union action concerning sound management of chemicals":
- a) NPCS implementation regards, among its several specific goals, "Strengthen the application of existent instruments associated with chemical safety in the workplace".
 - b) According to the above mentioned, three lines of action will be performed, seeking the accomplishment of the aforesaid specific goal. Those are:
 - i. Promote the reasonable handling of chemical substances in the workplace.
 - ii. Strengthen and apply safety standards related to chemical substances and health at work.
 - iii. Establish programmes to enable Labour Inspectors, industry and workers.



- c) Also, the activities related to the lines of action aforesaid will be developed in the same regional work tables which will count on the active participation of trade union representatives related to each of them.
- d) Therefore, according to the guidelines brought by the NPCS and the implementation of its objectives, specifically #5, tools will be available for the trade unions actions with relation to the sound management of chemicals in the country.
- e) Concerning financial support, NPCS approval does not assure their existence. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen the alliance with international organizations to obtain technical and financial resources, as in the project with SUSTAINLABOUR.
4. In the face of the specific goal #4: "Motivate the alliances constitution between societies and governments to promote sound management of chemicals".
- a) It is recognized that chemicals heterogeneity and its several uses have as an effect the need to count on the participation of multiple state and social institutions for its proper management.
- b) Also, the chemicals management must incorporate the active participation of the productive sector, consumers and the community in general in the policies and strategies definitions in order to legitimate the process and improve its execution.
- c) For this reason, and through its NPCS, Chile incorporates to its guidelines on chemical issues environmental management, the active participation of all social actors, particularly union representatives of those sectors and of the government inside its work operating committees.
- d) Besides that, the execution of several projects which accomplish the guidelines brought by the SAICM many alliances have been generated between social actors and the government, as in the project "Regional Campaign for the Minimization of Mercury Domestic Sources with Intervention in the Community for Women and Children Health Protection in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Peru". The Pediatric Chilean Society - SOCHIPE, the National Commission for the Environment - CONAMA, the Argentinean Association of Doctors for the Environment - AAMMA, among others, take part on this project.



Regarding the specific project "Facilitate SAICM implementation for workers in the workplace", the Chilean delegation discussed about the strengthening of trade union capacity in chemical risk reduction in the workplace, identifying a range of needs and strengths in several productive sectors present throughout the entire country. Mainly, the agricultural sector was identified as one of the sectors most **unprovided** with information related to the risks associated with its industry.

At last, it was agreed to establish a sustainable communication between the project participants to canalize the needs identified by the trade unions and develop this project successfully.

Sao Paulo, April 16th, 2009.

The Chilean delegation participant on this conference, composed by government representatives, through SAICM Focal Point (CONAMA), as well as by union institutions through the Oil Workers National Federation (FENATRAPECH) and the Agricultural Workers Confederation (CONAGRO).



Principles and General Guidelines for the promotion of the Sound Management of chemicals in the workplace



ANEXX OF URUGUAI

- 1 Approval of the Decree Project on Workers Health and Safety Protection against risks related to chemical agents during work.
- 2 Real articulation and strengthening of the National Council on Health and Safety at Work (CONASSAT tripartite organization related to occupational health).
- 3 Empower CONASSAT to implement control and chemicals handling policies.
- 4 Application of effective norms related to health and the environment (e.g.: Decree 406/88; Order 337/004 from the Ministry of Public Health).
- 5 Immediate application at national level and by sectors of activity of Decrees 306/005 and 291/007 (LIO Convention 155 Regulation, tripartite creation).
- 6 Convention 170 application (Convention on Chemicals) and 174 (on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents).
- 7
 - A. Implementation throughout SAICM network with companies which have branches in the three countries (Brazil, Chile and Uruguay).
 - B. Their identification.
- 8 Dissemination, formation and information through environmental and chemical hazard manuals in the entire production process.
E.g.: cellulose industry, reforestation, agrotoxics.
- 9 Coordination and exchange of information among government authorities, competent technicians, social organizations and PIT – CNT.



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