

**Report on the Workshop on
Case Studies in the Sound Management of Chemicals**
(3-4 December 2009, Geneva)

1. The Workshop on Case Studies in the Sound Management of Chemicals was organized by the Division for Sustainable Development of UNDESA, the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention and the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) Chemicals Branch on 3-4 December 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. Experts and practitioners from different countries as well as representatives of relevant agencies of the United Nations system and the business sector attended the workshop.
2. Participants had rich discussions on salient features of sound management of chemicals, identified trends, challenges and lessons learned in the chemicals management, and shared their practices and experience in the management of persistent organic pollutants, pesticides and other chemicals of priority concern through their life cycle.
3. Participants reviewed the draft of the publication on case studies entitled “*Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals*”, which will be launched during the 18th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-18).
4. Two working groups of the workshop had discussions on “Obstacles, challenges and constraints in the sound management of chemicals” and “Scaling up knowledge and practices”.
5. It was highlighted in the workshop that chemicals touch on many aspects of development and affects drinking water, air and food quality, and their sound management is closely linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The sound management of chemicals is needed for healthy people, environment and ecosystems. It is central to sustainable human development.
6. It was recognized that significant progress on the sound management of chemicals has been made and many successful experiences have emerged all around the world that have reduced and prevented chemical risks through better practices in production, manufacturing, distribution, transport, use, storage and disposal of chemicals. Despite these achievements, the fact remains that the environment and human health continue to suffer from the negative impacts of improper management of chemicals.
7. It was emphasized that the sound management of chemicals is a comprehensive and complex issue, and no single agency or entity could handle it by itself. It needs to strengthen partnerships at all levels and to enhance coordination among relevant agencies, bodies, partners and stakeholders.

8. The following challenges were identified by participants as main barriers and obstacles to achieve the sound management of chemicals:
 - Lack of institutional and technical capacity, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
 - Lack of information, public awareness and knowledge of risks posed by chemicals;
 - Inadequate political commitments;
 - Lack of coherent legislation and inter-ministerial coordination;
 - Lack of financial resources;
 - Lack of access to best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP).
 - Inadequate management of activities and practices in the informal sector which can pose high risks to exposure to toxic chemicals;
 - Lack of coordination between varieties of existing Conventions, activities, and regulations.

9. Participants identified the following lessons learned from the case studies which are contained in the publication of “*Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals*”:
 - Increase understanding of the linkage between sound management of chemicals and the development goals;
 - Improve economic analyses on the sound management of chemicals and use of economic instruments;
 - Obtain adequate, scientific and reliable information and data, such as the information on chemicals contamination;
 - Create good awareness on risks posed by toxic chemicals;
 - Identify gaps in the environment legislation and enforcement;
 - Strengthen coordination among relevant Ministries, such as the Ministry of Health, Environment, Agriculture and Finance;
 - Combine voluntary and regulatory approaches, with the involvement of industry and the business sector;
 - Better coordination between central and local governments;
 - Strengthen market for organic products;
 - Empower local community, farmers and other practitioners;
 - Strengthen coordination and cooperation with other countries.

10. Participants emphasized that following various factors could contribute to better management of chemicals:
 - Take a full life-cycle approach when assessing and managing chemicals;
 - Make chemicals a priority in national development plan;
 - Use a more integrated, harmonized and multi-sectoral approach in programmes and mainstream the sound management of chemicals into the work plans of relevant agencies;

- Assess and quantify the benefits of sound management of chemicals, and communicate the positive effects of sound management of chemicals to all stakeholders and highlight how it can contribute to development;
- Involve stakeholders, strengthen partnerships and early clarify the roles of partners in chemicals management;
- Improve legislation and enforcement, and enhance related mechanisms;
- Strengthen capacity building on risk assessment and management, and promote knowledge and skills transfer in line with countries' needs;
- Share information and knowledge and enhance public awareness and education;
- Break down information and make them user friendly;
- Engage the business sector in development of innovative methodologies for identification of chemicals hazard and for risk assessment and management;
- Increase research on and promote alternatives, and make them more available and cost effective;
- Improve international cooperation and synergies among existing mechanisms on chemicals management;
- Consider to have unified standard and scale up best practices.

11. The key message on the sound management of chemicals from the workshop:

- Taking a life cycle approach;
- Enhancing awareness and sharing information;
- Mainstreaming chemicals management into development policies;
- Using a more integrated and multi-sectoral approaches and strengthening coordination;
- Ensuring broad stakeholder engagement.

12. Participants agreed that the co-organizers of the workshop would report to the CSD-18 about the discussions and wish to draw attention of the delegates of CSD-18 on the main views put forward by the workshop. Participants hope that the current cycle of CSD could provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to have better understanding of the sound management of chemicals and put it high in global sustainable development agenda.