

**Summary Report on IFCS Asia-Pacific Steering Group Session:
Capacity Building in connection to IFCS Activities
With IPCS/The 8th GINC Tokyo Meeting
9 July 2002, 9:30 - 15:45, c/o Diamond Hotel**

- 1 The IFCS Asia-Pacific Steering Session was opened by Mr Tsutomu Matsuda, IFCS Vice President, Director, Office of Chemical Safety, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). The session was chaired by Mr Jun Yoshida, Deputy Director, Office of Chemical Safety, MHLW, and attended by representatives from China, India, the Islam Republic of Iran, Korea, PNG, Thailand and Japan.

Schedule for 2002 IFCS Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting and determination of main theme

- 2 The preliminary agenda for 2002 IFCS Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting was presented by the chairperson. The meeting would be hosted by MHLW and held during 7 – 10 October 2002 in Tokyo. Advanced announcement had been made last month. The letter of invitation with further details would be sent out shortly.
- 3 It was suggested that the invitation should be sent out very soon and if possible, the next week, in order for provisional participants to proceed with formalities in their countries. The letter should have clear statement on funding policy such as whether travel expenses of participants must be paid by themselves. It was also advised that the letter would be sent to WHO or UNEP regional offices because they usually had their own fund for supporting provisional participants in such a meeting as this. It would help them seek funding support. It was further requested that the letter would be sent to both IFCS National Focal Point and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in some countries because it would be necessary to disseminate information among all the ministries concerned.
- 4 It was recognized that the objectives of the meeting should be clearly described in the invitation to define what provisional participants needed from them. It was advised that a few specific issues to be discussed at the Regional Meeting should be selected in advance by the Steering Group because of the broadness of chemical safety issues.

- 5 Priorities for Action beyond 2000: IFCS Regional Group Targets (IFCS/FSC/01.59) and Analysis of National Priority Survey for Asia-Pacific Capacity Building (IFCS/FSC/01.60) were considered. D-7 (Establishment and strengthening of Poison Centers) and E-1 (National Profiles, Focal Points, and Coordination) were first selected on consensus because these priorities were not only due in 2002 but also ranked highest in the region. E-3 (Mobilizing resources and International co-operation for capacity building) was also selected because this priority must be the very one recipient countries usually seek for. D-4 (Major Accidents and emergency preparedness preventive system) would also be due in 2002, but selection was hesitated because this priority was thought to involve much of industry initiatives. It was also suggested that, at the Regional Meeting, preliminary evaluation of Asia-Pacific Group existing and target number of countries would be presented before the selected priorities were discussed.
- 6 It was agreed that the title of 2002 IFCS Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting would carry a sub-title as a comprehensive theme throughout the meeting. The purpose would be to convey clear message to all the stakeholders, especially those who would provide assistance/co-operation for those who would seek it in their capacity building activities on chemical safety. Accordingly, the sub-title was determined "Co-operation for Capacity Building on Chemical Safety."

Initial thoughts on election for IFCS Vice-President and FSC Asia-Pacific members

- 7 The IFCS Terms of Reference (IFCS/FORUM III/23w; Annex 1) was first presented. The descriptions under "6. Officers" and "12. Decisions" were cited for the preparation. As Thailand, a Forum IV host country, will definitely preside over the next term of IFCS, it was noted that four IFCS Officers - one Vice President and three representatives to FSC - and three alternates would be nominated from Asia-Pacific countries except Thailand.
- 8 Frank views were requested and it was proposed to consider the three principles. Firstly, nomination of representatives would be geographically balanced taking into three sub-regions into consideration (Geographically-balanced sub-regional representation). Sub-regions of IOMC organizations such as WHO, UNEP and ILO would be referred to. Secondly, Vice President would be in a position to provide capacity building for developing countries and support for relevant meetings

(Responsibility of Vice president). Thirdly, replacement of representatives by taking turns as well as by taking account of the continuity of IFCS activities within the sub-region would be sought to promote the participation of more countries in the region (Replacement and Continuity). For example, if replacement takes place, an alternate may turn to be a new representative to FSC in the respect of continuity.

- 9 These principles were agreed within the Steering Group, but the feasibility should be considered in the future practice. Furthermore, a sort of willingness of commitment for POPs Convention, etc. was thought to be an additional principle. It was agreed that these proposals would be further discussed at the Regional Meeting. It was also advised that a geographic picture of sub-regions would be distributed to facilitate discussions.

Regional capacity building: collaboration on A3: Hazard Data Generation and Availability

- 10 Priority A-3 (Hazard Data Generation and Availability) was first cited from Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety and Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (IFCS/FORUM III/23w, Annex 6). It was noted that FSC should develop a proposal for an additional Priority for Action to be discussed at Forum IV.
- 11 IFCS Working Group on Priority for Action A3: Hazard Data Generation and Availability: Project Plan (IFCS/FSC/02INF5) was then presented. Progress on work was briefed on by Ms Pornpit Silkavute (Thailand), who participated in the Working Group. It was recognized that IFCS Regional Groups were being requested to discuss the draft text of proposal and to make necessary inputs to it.
- 12 As the new draft would be available at the FSC face-to-face meeting late November, it would make great contributions if the Regional Meeting would compile recommendations to the draft document. Therefore, Thailand was requested to kindly make the latest documents available from the secured website as soon as possible. Japan would then sent out a copy to provisional participants in the Regional Meeting in advance, so that they would be able to make preparations before the meeting.

Regional capacity building: co-operation of GINC with INFOCAP, or Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals, enhancing co-operations among countries and organizations

- 13 Priority E-4 (Development of INFOCAP) was first cited from Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety and Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (IFCS/FORUM III/23w, Annex 6). An INFOCAP brochure and a printout from the INFOCAP Homepage were presented. Progress on the development of INFOCAP was explained by Dr Jun Sekizawa (Japan), an INFOCAP Steering Group member. It was noted that the goal of INFOCAP was to facilitate the systematic exchange and public accessibility of information and experiences which are relevant to planning, implementing, evaluating and coordinating capacity building projects for the sound management of chemicals.
- 14 Similarities and differences between INFOCAP and GINC were recognized. Both systems were of website activities and provide a site of information exchange on the sound management of chemicals, but the objectives were apparently different from each other. INFOCAP is still under development and provides capacity building project information services specified in the Network Terms of References. However, GINC will be seemingly modified to provide the following three websites: news and events, a forum of electronic discussions, and database. Supervision would be sought to provide credit for information available from INFOCAP and GINC.
- 15 Accordingly, it was recognized that co-operation of GINC with INFOCAP would be possible and that linked website would be the easiest way of co-operation to each other. As the objectives appear to be different from each other, it was agreed to envisage how INFOCAP and GINC would be developed and to seek suitable ways of co-operation.

Gap between regional priorities and IFCS Priority for Action beyond 2000

- 16 Priorities for Action beyond 2000: IFCS Regional Group Targets (IFCS/FSC/01.59) and Analysis of National Priority Survey for Asia-Pacific Capacity Building (IFCS/FSC/01.60) were again briefed on.

- 17 The former had indicated special concerns about D-4 (Major Accidents and emergency preparedness preventive systems), D-7 (Establishment and strengthening of Poison Centers) and E-1 (National Profiles, Focal Points and Coordination), which were all due in 2002. However, from the results of the latter survey, highest attention should be reportedly given to: B-1 (Implementation of GHS system), C-1 (Overcome barriers to information exchange on chemicals), D-2 (Action Plans for safe management of obsolete stocks of pesticides and other chemicals), D-5 (Acute pesticide poisoning and risk reduction), D-7 (Establishment and strengthening of Poison Centers), E-1 (National Profiles, Focal Points and Coordination), E-2 (National policies and Action Plans) and E-3 (Mobilizing resources and International co-operation for capacity building).
- 18 As for priorities highest attention should reportedly be given to, it was proposed to first consider whether existing systems such as GINC and INFOCAP would be able to work enough to strengthen efforts to attain the regional targets. As far as D-5 is concerned, modified GINC system appeared to work enough to gather information. It was agreed that systems such as GINC and INFOCAP would be starting tools for elaboration.
- 19 The analysis of national priority survey also indicated that ten countries had potential of providing assistance/co-operation for those seeking it. As the Regional Meeting planned to have breakout group sessions, these ten countries were considered as a modulator for each breakout group.

Other emerging issues in the region

- 20 Comprehensive Waste Management was raised as an emerging issue partly because waste including obsolete and other chemicals of concerns usually moved trans-boundary and partly because the Basel Convention was reportedly found unsatisfactory due to the absence of funding mechanism. Endocrine Disruptive Chemicals were also raised because of reported certain findings in the ecosystem. As these proposals were supported by consensus, they would be included in the agenda for the Regional Meeting.

Sub-regional issues

21 There was no particular information.

IFCS/FSC face-to-face meeting, Bangkok 26-29 November 2002, and Forum IV, Bangkok 1 – 7 November 2003

22 Both meetings would be being hosted by Thai Ministry of Health's Food and Drug Administration. Tentative schedules for both meetings were briefed. As for FSC meeting in November 2002, the invitation letter would be sent out to FSC members early August. The latest Working draft of Forum IV Plenary Agenda and Program (IFCS/FSC/02-09) was presented.

Other business

23 Japanese Ministry of Environment informed the participants of disseminating a questionnaire on POPs Convention. They would request them to complete and return it by the end of September so that an analysis report on the questionnaire would be made available at the Regional Meeting. It was recognized that the report would be one of the materials for discussions on E-3 (Mobilizing resources and International co-operation for capacity building).

Closing

24 Summary report on the session would be drafted and distributed by the chairperson in the morning of the next day prior to the plenary. The participants would be kindly asked to review it and inform the chairperson of any comments or amendments later.

25 The outcome of this session would be briefly reported at the plenary. It would be discussed together with that of session A. Joint recommendations for the future activities of GINC may be elaborated.

(Adjourn)

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