

## Section 2 : Conservation and Management of Resources for Development

### **Chapter 19 : Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products**

Substantial use of chemicals is essential to meet the social and economic goals of the world community. It has been demonstrated that they can be used in a cost effective manner with a high degree of safety.

#### **A. Expanding and accelerating international assessment of chemical risks**

Assessing the risk that a chemical may pose to human and environmental health is a prerequisite to planning for its safe and beneficial use.

##### **Objectives**

To strengthen international risk assessment of chemicals.

To, for a greater number of toxic chemicals, provide guidelines for acceptable exposure distinguishing between health and environmentally based exposure limits.

##### **Activities**

Governments, through the cooperation of relevant organisation and industry should:

- encourage information exchange on the assessment of chemicals among organisations and countries
- improve methods for assessing chemicals
- increase research into safer alternatives to toxic chemicals that pose unreasonable risks to the environment or human health
- launch training and education programmes
- promote studies on the relationship between exposure to chemicals and the occurrence of certain diseases.

#### **B. Harmonisation of classification and labelling of chemicals**

##### **Objectives**

To provide a globally harmonised hazard classification and labelling system including easily understandable symbols, by the year 2000.

##### **Activities**

Governments should:

- launch training courses and information campaigns to enhance the understanding of any new classification and labelling system

- avoid creating trade barriers in implementing these systems.

### **C. Information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risk**

#### **Objectives**

To promote intensified exchange of information on chemical safety, use and emissions among all involved parties.

#### **Activities**

Governments, in cooperation with international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, should:

- create/strengthen national and international institutions responsible for information exchange on toxic chemicals
- improve databases and information systems on toxic chemicals
- provide data necessary to assess the risks to the health of humans and the environment of banned and severely restricted chemicals and assess possible alternatives to these
- establish a core of trained personnel within each participatory country.

### **D. Establishment of risk reduction programmes**

#### **Objectives**

To reduce and where unreasonable eliminate, risks of toxic chemicals.

#### **Activities**

Governments, in cooperation with international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, should:

- undertake activities to reduce risks of toxic chemicals e.g. education on use, use limitations bans and economic incentives, and promoting Integrated Pest Management
- adopt producer liability principles
- develop measures to prevent the export of banned and severely restricted chemicals.

### **E. Strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals**

#### **Objectives**

By the year 2000, all countries should have in place national systems for environmentally safe management of chemicals.

#### **Activities**

Governments with the assistance of relevant organisations, should:

- promote and support multidisciplinary approaches to chemical safety problems
- establish and improve relevant emergency response procedures
- gather and disseminate information to institutions and individuals.

## **F. Prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous chemicals**

There is currently no global international agreement on traffic in products which are banned, severely restricted, withdrawn or not approved for use or sale by Governments. International and regional cooperation is required to prevent this trade.

### **Objectives**

To reinforce national capacity to detect and halt any illegal trade in toxic and dangerous chemicals.

### **Activities**

Governments, in cooperation with international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, should:

- implement legislation to prevent illegal import and export of toxic and dangerous chemicals
- monitor compliance to such legislation and apply penalties for noncompliance
- exchange information on illegal transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous chemicals.

## **G. Enhancement of international cooperation relating to several of the programme areas**

A meeting of government-designated experts in London, December 1991, recommended increased coordination among United Nations bodies and other international organisations involved in chemical risk assessment and management. Further meetings of this group should occur.