

MEETING SUMMARY

Opening Ceremony and Presentation of Award of Merit

1. The third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), Forum III, was held 15-20 October 2000 in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, hosted by the Government of Brazil. Eighty-three governments participated in the meeting, together with representatives from ten intergovernmental (IGO) and twelve non-governmental (NGO) organizations. A list of participants is given in Annex 16. Mr J. R. Hickman (Canada) officiated as President, with Mr G. Seog (Republic of Korea), Mr A. Suburu (Argentina), Mr O. Touré (Mali), and Professor Dr G. Ungvary (Hungary) serving as Vice-Presidents.
2. The President of IFCS opened the meeting. He welcomed participants and congratulated Professor Michel Mercier recipient of the IFCS Award of Merit, the most prestigious global Award in the field of chemical safety. His Excellency Marco Maciel, Vice President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, presented the Award to Professor Mercier praising his contribution to international efforts in chemical safety.
3. Professor Mercier declared that he is honoured in receiving the award. He dedicated the award to all his colleagues having taken part in the establishment of the IFCS. He underlined three important objectives of the Forum: raising awareness, enhancing partnership mechanisms, and maintaining and reinforcing cooperation between governments, IGOs and NGOs. He concluded by wishing the Forum great success in its future endeavours.
4. The acting Brazilian Minister of Environment, His Excellency José Carlos Carvalho, noted the Forum was meeting for the first time in Brazil and Latin America, and underlined the importance of chemical safety for Brazil. Hosting the Forum offered Brazil the opportunity to promote this issue and highlight the country's involvement in various international initiatives to protect human health and the environment.
5. The Vice Governor of the State of Bahia, His Excellency Otto Alencar, reported on the modern and successful policy of chemical safety being promoted by the Government of Bahia which was honored by the presence of the Forum.
6. The Vice President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, His Excellency Marco Maciel, welcomed the participants and stated that within the context of globalization it is important to enhance quality of life through democratic solutions in a socio-economic balanced way. To reach this goal, there is a need to have sustainable development that can only be adequately promoted by balanced partnerships. He praised the contributions of the President of IFCS and underlined the Forum's importance in promoting a partnership in global chemical safety.
7. The President delivered a message to Forum III from Mr N. Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. Mr Desai stressed the major contribution made by IFCS to international cooperative efforts on Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. He recalled the important role of the Forum recognized by the UN General Assembly in the review of the Rio process in 1997. The General Assembly had noted that important items remain to be done in the

implementation of Agenda 21 and that the environmentally sound management of chemicals would continue to be an important issue well beyond 2000. Mr Desai stated that input from IFCS on the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including both an assessment of progress to date and recommendations for future priorities and actions, would be a valuable contribution to the preparations for the Rio+10 Conference. He expressed his appreciation to the Forum organizers and participants for their important contribution to the Rio+10 process. The Forum noted Mr Desai's comments with appreciation.

President's Analysis of Progress

8. The President briefly outlined his Analysis of Progress (IFCS/Forum III/08 INF). The report demonstrated the commitment of stakeholders to work together to improve the management of toxic chemicals. In each programme area addressed, progress has been made. He noted that there is a need for a more complete sharing of information between all partners in the IFCS. In conclusion, he underlined the Forum's unique mechanism for coordinating global action on chemicals and stressed the opportunity that the Forum provides for all partners to meet in a constructive atmosphere to reach the goal of a successful partnership for global chemical safety.

Round Table: *In Partnership for Global Chemical Safety*

9. Representatives from various IFCS participant groups were invited to provide perspectives from their respective spheres of responsibility on the challenges of enhancing the commitment and involvement of all stakeholders to actively work to integrate ideas, people and organizations into forward thinking strategies and work in a common direction. Mr H. Otterstetter served as moderator of the Round Table.

10. Mr J. Bélanger (National Round Table on the Environment and Economy, Canada) and Dr C. Bittencourt (ABIQUIM) gave industry's perspective. Both stressed that mutual trust, common goals, and mutual respect together with responsibility are essential objectives. The commitment demonstrated by industry through the Responsible Care[®] Initiative underlined its willingness to actively take part in solving human health and environmental problems. Prof P. Pothisiri (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand) presented the perspective and experience of a national government. He described the international action on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) as a good example of linking all partners to solve global chemical safety problems. Mr J. Willis (Chairman, Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)) described successful partnership programmes within the framework of intergovernmental organizations.

11. Perspectives from different NGOs were presented by Mr R. Agarwal (Srishti Toxic Links, India), Mrs K. Perry (Physicians for Social Responsibilities, USA) and Mr R. Green (International Federation of Chemical, Energy Mining and General Workers Union (ICEM)). Panelists stated that the public is too often not adequately informed to play an effective role in chemical safety. Barriers to progress in partnerships include unbalanced opportunities both for meaningful input and participation, especially in developing countries. Public interest NGOs have demonstrated that they can be valuable resources for information and expertise, an example being the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN). What is needed, however, are financial resources and

capacity assistance. In the work place, cooperation for chemical safety requires mutual commitments and respect between partners. These partnerships can be established through legislation and voluntary initiatives providing benefits to all.

Organizational Matters Concerning Forum III

12. The President reported on preparations for Forum III. He noted the work of the Forum Standing Committee (FSC) and that agenda items had been developed following the adopted IFCS practice of a lead sponsor approach. The time schedule had been structured to permit regional groups adequate opportunity for discussion and formulation of regional recommendations to be brought forward to plenary. The provisional agenda (IFCS/FORUM III/01w/01w) and time schedule (IFCS/FORUM III/04w) were adopted as proposed. Participants agreed to designate Dr R. F. Hertel (Germany) as rapporteur for Forum III.

13. The drafting process for the meeting report was introduced by the Executive Secretary, Dr J. Stober. It was agreed that a drafting group composed of lead sponsors and recorders for each of the subject areas would be formed to produce a draft of the Final Report of Forum III. The reports would be reviewed and the recommendations and decision items agreed in plenary during the final session. Subsidiary reports and reports of the Regional Group meetings would be attached as Annexes to the Final Report.

14. The President presented an overview of the agenda items to be discussed during Forum III highlighting the draft Declaration to be finalized to reflect of the discussions and decisions taken by the Forum. The President recommended the formation of an *ad hoc* working group to prepare a revised draft Declaration based on the discussions and proposals throughout the sessions and report back to plenary. The working group would be composed of representatives from each region, representatives of the IGOs and industry, public interest, labour and science NGOs. Regional and other nominations for the working group were presented. Australia as lead sponsor for the agenda item served as facilitator for the working group.

15. A number of IFCS participants organized exhibitions on their work at Forum III. Exhibitors included Brazil (IBAMA), Brazil and Latin America, Japan (GINC), USA (Project on Sustainable Chemistry), BUA/GDCh (Germany), IPCS, IOMC, UNEP, UNITAR, IOMC Coordinating Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), Pesticide Action Network (PAN), Voarisoa (Madagascar), WWF, ICME, ICCA (HPV-challenge programme). Participants were invited to visit the exhibits during the week.

16. A series of informal lunchtime presentations on special topics were organized by several groups of participants. These included: Multi-Stakeholder Success Stories: Sustainable Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals (sponsored by public interest NGOs); Harmonization of Approaches to the Assessment of Risk from Exposure to Chemicals sponsored by the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS); "Meet the IOMC" (presented by IOMC Participating Organizations); and Case Studies from Brazil (Crisis Management in the Chemical Industry presented by Dr G. Santana, UNIVALI, Santa Catarina, Brazil and Chemical Safety and Governance in Developing Countries presented by Mr C. Freitas and Mr M. Porto, FIOCRUZ, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil).

IFCS Administrative Items

17. The President introduced the Forum III working document “Organization of Work and Terms of Reference” (IFCS/Forum III/06w). The 1994 Resolution on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety recommended that the Forum conduct a full review of the organizational, administrative and financial aspects of the Forum, as well as an assessment of its effectiveness, for consideration by the third session of the Forum. Forum III was asked to consider the role and future direction of the IFCS.

18. Since the inaugural meeting of IFCS in Stockholm in April 1994, the Forum has undergone a gradual evolution and adapted its procedures to improve the organization of its work and better meet the needs of its participants. These changes were reflected in the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference, Role of the President, Regional Roles and Responsibilities for Vice-Presidents, Guidelines for National Focal Points, and Terms of Reference for the Forum Standing Committee (FSC). The changes included a discontinuation of the Intersessional Group, election of five Vice-Presidents, one from each region, and an independent President, and provision for National Focal Points. Additional amendments were proposed, taking into account discussions in Regional Groups. These addressed the role of the IFCS in analyzing progress, the IFCS consensus building process, the need to take into account subregional issues, a policy respecting participation in IFCS meetings, mobilization of resources to assist participation in IFCS, the responsibility of Vice-Presidents to promote Forum recommendations and to work with IFCS National Focal Points, the role of National Focal Points in establishing coordinating mechanisms, and expanded regional membership in the FSC. The Forum agreed to a proposal from the Asian Regional Group to change the name of the region to Asia and the Pacific.

19. The revised IFCS Terms of Reference and annexed documents (Role of the President, Regional Rules and Responsibilities for Vice-Presidents, Guidelines for National Focal Points and Forum Standing Committee Terms of Reference) were adopted (Annexes 1 to 5).

20. An Election Facilitating Committee was established to oversee and facilitate the election process at Forum III. Members of this Committee included a designated representative from each of the five regions. Mrs L. Musset (France) chaired the committee. Members were responsible for bringing forward regional nominations for IFCS Officers and Forum Standing Committee members.

21. The IFCS Financial Statement (IFCS/Forum III/07w) was introduced by the Executive Secretary. The report presented information on the IFCS Trust Fund including organizational and administrative arrangements for the secretariat, in-kind contributions, the IFCS Twinning Funds (government and NGO) and bilateral twinning assistance. The Forum approved the proposed budget for 2001-2003, noting that variances may be necessary as a result of decisions taken at Forum III. A request that the budget be routinely updated to reflect new contributions and initiatives was noted.

Priorities for Action Beyond 2000

22. Prof G. Ungvary (Hungary) and Dr G. Bengtsson (Sweden), lead sponsors, introduced the working paper (IFCS/FORUM III/09w). It was noted that Forum I had adopted

a number of Priorities for Action in order to provide guidance for immediate action and to set goals that were to be achieved in the longer term. As noted in the President's Analysis of Progress, there has been significant progress in many areas. It was noted that many of the Priorities for Action adopted by Forum I have now been implemented and that some, for varying reasons, have become obsolete. In addition, the successful and efficient implementation of these Priorities for Action has not been achieved evenly throughout each of the programme areas or geographical regions. New and modified priorities, as well as emerging challenges in the field of chemical safety, need to be taken into consideration when recommending immediate and longer-term goals. Revised Priorities for Action proposed for consideration were fewer in number, more focused and measurable. Criteria were proposed for updating the priorities. These included the potential to improve chemical safety at all levels, the potential to prevent or reduce adverse health and environment effects of any chemical throughout its lifecycle, suitability for immediate implementation by most nations, and the availability of suitable tools for rapid application at the national level. An overview of the proposed priorities was presented.

23. The IFCS Vice-Presidents reported on regional discussions and proposed amendments and additions for updating the priorities. Input was also received from NGOs and IGOs. To facilitate the work, an open ended *ad hoc* working group was established with Ms M. C. Cardenas Fischer (Colombia) serving as Chairperson and Dr G. Bengtsson (Sweden) as recorder. The working group held three meetings and periodically reported back to plenary on progress and received further input.

24. The Priorities for Action beyond 2000 adopted unanimously by Forum III are presented in Annex 6.

Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products

25. Ms F. Jallow Ndoeye (The Gambia) facilitated the session and introduced the topic prepared by a FSC working group chaired by The Gambia and Germany (IFCS/FORUM III/10w) pointing out that the Forum was addressing this issue for the first time. The problem of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products exists in all regions and awareness of the problem is increasing, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. She highlighted the objectives in Programme Area F of Chapter 19 and a proposed approach to address these objectives. She noted that information on ongoing work at the international level would be provided and representatives from each region would briefly describe regional issues of concern, mechanisms of illegal traffic and recent developments. Regional papers distributed as Room Documents provided more detailed information.

26. Mr J. Willis (UNEP) described work being done in relation to several international conventions, including the Basel Convention, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Montreal Protocol. In 1999 UNEP established a standing working group on compliance and enforcement in multilateral environmental agreements. The 6th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC) in July 1999 encouraged delegations to ensure that IFCS addresses the topic of illegal international traffic at Forum III and agreed that

the issue would be revisited at its next session, bearing in mind inter alia the outcome of any discussion thereon by IFCS.

27. Regional presentations were made by Mr I. Sow (Africa), Prof P. Pothisiri (Asia and the Pacific), Ms J. Alvarez (Latin America and the Caribbean), Dr J. Kovacicova (Central and Eastern Europe), and Mr M. Penders (Western Europe and Other Groups). The presentations noted issues pertinent to each region and highlighted the importance of information collection and sharing, training, coordination and cooperation at all levels, and the involvement of the World Customs Organization. A number of specific recommendations, detailed in regional papers distributed as Room Documents, were presented for consideration by the Forum.

28. The Forum noted that there is global concern for illegal traffic. Despite the diversity of problems in the different regions, there are common issues as well as potential and possible solutions. The question was raised about the value added to discuss illegal traffic within IFCS. It was noted that linkage is necessary to ongoing activities in international conventions, e.g. the Chemicals Weapons Convention, and organizations like Interpol and World Customs Organization (WCO). There was general support for international work to be done on enforcement and prevention of illegal traffic. However, concerns were raised how the Forum could be involved in the discussion on illegal traffic bearing in mind that IFCS has only very limited resources to support active participation in this work.

29. An *ad hoc* working group was set up to discuss possible outcomes and propose recommendations to the Forum. The working group, chaired by Mrs F. Jallow Ndoeye (The Gambia), included government participants from each region and representatives from each of the IFCS NGO and IGO participant groups. Two recommendations emanated from the working group; first requesting that IOMC establish a working group on illegal trafficking, drawing on the expertise of the Forum, and building upon ongoing activities within IOMC participating organizations; second recommending that governments elaborate national strategies for prevention, detection, and control of illegal traffic. The recommendations as adopted unanimously by the plenary of the Forum are presented in the Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (Annex 6).

Information Exchange:

Barriers to Information Exchange for the Sound Management of Chemicals

30. Dr W. Sanders (USA) presented the working paper (IFCS/FORUM III/11w) in which Forum III was requested to sponsor a global effort to ensure that officials responsible for sound management of chemicals have Internet access (both e-mail and web) and training for the effective use of it. Having access to the Internet has become an integral component of capacity building. In giving an overview of the Internet Access Training Project sponsored by the US government and UNEP Chemicals, he noted the importance of strong national leadership and commitment which has made possible the initial training efforts in Mali and Nigeria. Mr J. Willis (UNEP) observed that this is a pilot partnership project addressing the clearly defined needs of the recipient countries for capacity building, both human and technical. The effort is expected to grow in geographic scope, with Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire scheduled to be the next training sites. He noted that development of networking at the national and regional level is an important outcome of the training, and that measures must be taken to promote and ensure

sustainability of such networks. Mr O. Touré (Mali) described the many positive outcomes already obtained as a result of the training conducted in Mali. These include: facilitation of necessary communication in the African region; improvement of access to information required for effective sound management of chemicals; development of mutual trust among the stakeholders; easing the development of inventories of pesticides and appropriate enforcement actions; and a significant increase in awareness and interest in several quarters. Several delegates expressed appreciation for the generous support of the US government and UNEP Chemicals in undertaking this effort and for providing significant financial and human resources to conduct the training courses.

31. Brazil, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group proposed that the target group for the project be extended to include the national authorities responsible for the Basel Convention and Montreal Protocol, and that industry organizations and companies be requested to participate in funding. Mr J. Willis, as Chair of the IOMC, agreed to consult with the other IOMC participating organizations to identify an IOMC member organization that would take on the responsibilities requested by the Forum. IPEN stressed the importance of access by NGOs to information they believe is now withheld under inappropriate commercial confidentiality arrangements. As examples, they cited restrictions of information on where chemicals are used, on location and content of environmental reservoirs, on test to detect individual chemicals, and on alternatives to the use of hazardous chemicals.

32. The recommendations presented in the Executive Summary were adopted unanimously.

Information Exchange:

Information Exchange for Chemical Production Decision Making

33. Mr I. Fuller (USA) introduced the working paper (IFCS/FORUM III/13w) co-sponsored by the USA and ICCA. He described the basic problem of lack of access to information on best practices in the design and implementation of new or expanded chemical production facilities. He noted that a mechanism was needed to provide the information to minimize health and safety problems and environmental risks associated with the manufacture of chemicals. Mr F. McEldowney (ICCA) noted that members have been requested to implement worldwide the Responsible Care[®] initiative including management practice codes. He cited the benefits of consistent standards and systematic exchange of information stressing the responsibility of both government and industry in establishing facilities.

34. The Latin America and Caribbean Region and the Asia and the Pacific Region proposed amendments to the proposed actions outlined in the working paper. These emphasize the aim of preventing adverse impacts to health and the environment, the inclusion of all stages of the operation, and reference to national laws, regulations and sound practices as established by international agreements and guidelines.

35. The recommendations presented in the Executive Summary were adopted unanimously.

Emission Inventories

36. Mr A. Halpaap, UNITAR, Vice Chair of the IOMC Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) Coordinating Group, facilitated the session and introduced the topic. Mr J Harman (USA) presented the working document (IFCS/FORUM III/14w) which had been prepared by the IOMC PRTR Coordinating Group. Collecting information on chemicals through PRTR systems can increase understanding and awareness which, in turn, supports decision-making. The benefits of PRTRs were highlighted with examples. Mr P. Acquah (Ghana) presented a summary of the Forum III PRTR workshop which took place on 16 October 2000. The workshop focused on PRTR issues from the perspective of developing countries and countries with economies in transition and was sponsored by Environment Canada, UNITAR, Canadian Chemical Producers' Association (CCPA), and Pollution Probe.

37. Several intervenors highlighted the importance and potential benefits of PRTRs/emission inventories as tools for environmental management and noted the value of the Forum III PRTR workshop in preparing for the plenary discussion on this topic. Many intervenors stressed that a key for successful design and implementation of PRTRs/emission inventories is to match the system to national circumstances and needs. Due to the significant interest in the topic and the wide range of potential opportunity for follow-up action by all IFCS partners, an informal group was established which developed a Forum III PRTR/Emission Inventory Action Plan that is included as Annex 7.

38. The recommendation and actions as adopted are presented in the Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (Annex 6) and Executive Summary.

Awareness Raising

39. Prof U. Schlottmann (Germany) served as facilitator for the session, which was co-sponsored by Germany and the USA. He noted in his introductory statement that the sound management of chemicals currently does not rank high on the agenda for governments and is also not usually a priority for international development organizations, especially bilateral and multilateral donors. The goal of the session was to initiate the development of strategies that will help establish links between potential donors and recipients, and strengthen their political commitment to capacity building for the sound management of chemicals. Several speakers had been requested to give short statements describing lessons learned in past and on-going projects to help facilitate a better understanding of the necessity for awareness raising and the role of donors and recipient countries.

40. Dr M. Kern (Germany) summarized the issues presented in the working document (IFCS/FORUM III/15w). He noted the role of the IFCS in promoting chemical safety, particularly in identifying strategies that will help strengthen the political commitment to capacity building for the sound management of chemicals. He stressed the importance of securing funding for capacity building projects and called for a dialogue with politicians, administrators and the general public.

41. Dr Siriwat Tiptarodol (Thailand) provided information on the experiences in Thailand highlighting recent developments in Asia including ratification of international

conventions and agreements, revision of legislation, and strengthening civil society. He spoke of the strengths and weaknesses of the various stakeholders involved in chemical safety as well as the opportunities and challenges they face.

42. Dr K. Bláha (Czech Republic) provided an overview of the issues in raising the priority of the sound management of chemicals in governments of countries with economies in transition. Substantial, but uneven progress, has been seen in the region. Future efforts needed to recognize and take into consideration the underlying reasons for subregional disparities. He called on governments, through an intersectoral and multi stakeholder approach, to prepare national profiles, legal framework, develop national chemical safety programmes and the infrastructure for enforcement of regulation. He called on IFCS to make active contact with governments of the region at the highest political level.

43. Mr V. Vithoontien (World Bank) presented the experiences and lessons learned on development of national action plans under the Montreal Protocol. He stressed that the development of action plans should be a dynamic process requiring both useful information and the necessary organization to track progress and improve the plan. The Bank has recently embarked on the development of an environment strategy. The objective is to improve peoples' health by reducing exposure to environmental factors, including as toxic substances.

44. Points noted during general discussion included the need to create synergies and opportunities for coordination in the implementation of conventions, increased emphasis on worker protection, the importance of providing public access to information and actively promoting its dissemination, and strengthening NGO participation.

45. Forum III agreed that IFCS should play a much more active role in advocating the importance of chemicals management at high political levels in organizations and in governments of international aid donor and recipient countries. The recommendations presented in the Executive Summary were adopted unanimously.

Capacity Building Network

46. Mr A. Halpaap (UNITAR) introduced the working document on Development of a Capacity Building Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IFCS/FORUM III/12w). He referred to the decision of the third meeting of the Intersessional Group (ISG 3) which requested UNITAR to develop a draft terms of reference for a capacity building network. He summarized the outcomes of an international consultation meeting on the subject that was organized in January 2000 with financial support of the Government of Switzerland. Participants agreed that the network should be comprised of a number of specific information exchange services that are relevant to planning, implementing, evaluating and coordinating of capacity building projects for the sound management of chemicals. The meeting also agreed on a number of guiding principles for the network, e.g. keeping the network simple and flexible and making sure that it does not interfere with more specialized network arrangements already in place or under development.

47. Intervenors from a broad range of countries, organizations and non-governmental organizations indicated broad support for the development of the network and noted with appreciation the preparatory and consultative work undertaken by UNITAR. One of the

key factors for the success of the network will be to ensure active participation of countries, international organizations, industry, labor unions and public interest groups. FAO suggested that the name of the network should indicate that its primary objective is to facilitate information exchange on issues related to capacity building (e.g. Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals). UNEP noted the importance of linking the development of the Network to ongoing discussions in the negotiations for a legally binding instrument on persistent organic chemicals to develop a capacity assistance network addressing capacity building activities on POPs under the Convention. UNEP also stated that the Network, operating within the framework of the IFCS, would provide an important contribution to implementing Article 16 of the Rotterdam Convention which encourages partnerships for building capacities to enable implementation of this Convention.

48. The recommendations and actions adopted unanimously are presented in the Executive Summary and Priorities for Action beyond 2000 (Annex 6).

Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety

49. Mr P. Burnett (Australia) introduced amendments made to the draft Declaration by the *ad hoc* working group noting that the final text was shorter and more focused. The key goals were abbreviated versions of those specified in the Priorities for Action. Additional amendments agreed upon in plenary included recognition of the importance of providing technical and financial assistance and technology transfer to enable accomplishment of IFCS priorities, recommitment to challenges set out in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, and reporting on risk reduction initiatives on other chemicals of major concern.

50. The final text of the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, adopted by acclamation, is presented in the first section of this report.

Information Session:

Global Harmonization of Chemical Classification and Labelling Systems (GHS)

51. Ms A. Sundquist, vice-Chair of the IOMC Coordinating Group for the Harmonization of Chemical Classification Systems (CG/HCCS), made a presentation outlining the progress made, next steps towards implementation, and the benefits of a GHS. Representatives from industry (Mr G. Ethier, ICME), labour (Mr R. Green, ICEM), governments (Mr R. Puiatti, Brazil; Dr H. Jonai, Japan; Mr A. Fassey, UK) and international organizations (Dr R. Visser, OECD; Mr A. Halpaap, UNITAR) commented on the importance of, and problems confronting, the GHS from their perspectives. During the information session countries were encouraged to prepare for adoption of the system and to identify their needs for capacity building and technical assistance in order to implement the GHS.

52. The GHS will become a practical and coherent global standard for chemical hazard communication within the workplace, for those involved in work-related activities, for the transportation system, and for consumers. The GHS will set criteria for the classification of chemicals and standards for the communication of chemical hazard information. The GHS will have implications for chemical safety laws and regulations in all countries. It will ensure coherence between the information needed by each target

audience, aid comprehension of hazard information by users, and simplify the production of this information by suppliers. The GHS will enhance overall safety in the sound use and management of chemicals worldwide.

53. The Forum welcomed the progress made since Forum II. In particular, agreement has been reached on classification criteria for chemicals, and on an implementation mechanism through the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It will be essential that the anticipated GHS guidance document meets the needs of the various user groups and for it to be supported by other tools, e.g. information and training packages on the Internet and in more traditional forms. The GHS should be able to be fully and effectively implemented in all countries as a fundamental building block in the development of approaches for controlling the risks from chemicals. The particular importance for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to be given appropriate and targeted assistance as soon as possible was noted. It was noted also that UNITAR and ILO have agreed to take the lead in: encouraging and assisting countries to adopt and implement the GHS; in providing appropriate capacity building assistance; and in developing the appropriate mechanisms and strategies to bring interested countries to an operational level.

Election of IFCS Officers and Forum Standing Committee Members

54. Ms L. Musset (France), Chairperson of the Election Facilitating Committee, presented the nominations for the Forum Standing Committee and IFCS Officers compiled from the Regional Groups. Cameroon supported by USA endorsed the proposal that Brazil serve as President, and that Ecuador, Hungary, Japan, Senegal and Sweden serve as Vice-Presidents. The proposal was carried unanimously. Canada, supported by Brazil, proposed that the nominations for the Forum Standing Committee be adopted. The proposal was carried unanimously. The President thanked the Election Facilitating Committee and expressed gratitude to those who have agreed to serve the Forum in various capacities until, and during Forum IV.

55. The newly elected IFCS Officers and members of the Forum Standing Committee are listed in Annex 15.

Future Forum Meetings

56. The President noted two generous offers to host Forum IV in 2003. These had been received from the Governments of Hungary and Thailand. Subsequently, the Government of Hungary had agreed to modify its offer to host Forum V in 2005 or 2006. The schedule for future IFCS meetings was agreed as follows: Forum IV will be held in 2003 in Thailand. Forum V is scheduled for late 2005 or 2006 in Hungary. The Forum was unanimous in expressing its gratitude to the Governments of Hungary and Thailand for their interest and future contributions to the work of the IFCS.

Closure of Forum III

57. Representatives of several countries and NGOs thanked and congratulated the President, the Secretariat, the Brazilian Government and the local organizing Committee for all efforts undertaken to ensure a successful meeting. The President thanked the Vice-Presidents, the Executive Secretary, Secretariat, and those responsible for local

arrangements that had ensured the smooth running of daily business for their work. He expressed the Forum's appreciation of the hospitality of the Governments of Brazil, Bahia, and Salvador. Mrs I. Teixeira, Ministry of Environment, gave the closing address on behalf of the Brazilian Government to Forum III. She underlined the important work accomplished during the sessions of Forum III and the high level of success reached in terms of chemical safety. She noted that the strategies for the sound management of chemicals developed during Forum III will not only encourage the Brazilian government to continue its successful environmental policy, but will be an important step forward to reach the goal of global chemical safety. In closing she thanked the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the participants for their efforts in reaching this important goal.

58. The President, Mr J. R. Hickman, in noting that his presidency came to an end, gave his best wishes to Mr H. B. Cavalcanti as new President and welcomed him. Mr Cavalcanti gave his respects to the past presidents Dr G. Bengtsson and Mr J. R. Hickman praising their successful and effective leadership. He expressed his thanks to the new members of the Forum Standing Committee for their willingness to actively support and promote the goals of IFCS.

59. Mr J. R. Hickman wished the participants a safe journey home and declared Forum III closed.