

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY (IFCS) FORUM VI- SUBSTITUTION AND ALTERNATIVES

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Dependency syndrome as the underlying challenge to substitution of hazardous chemicals in developing countries and economies

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Overview

- Definitions
- Why developing countries and economies
- Challenges in light of dependency syndrome
 - In research & development
 - Public awareness and education gaps
 - Technical capacity lapses
 - Financial capacity
 - Policy formulation and implementation
 - Economic investment priorities
- Overcoming the challenges

Definitions

- Substitution as adopted by the forum
 - replacement or reduction of hazardous substances (products & processes)
 - use less hazardous or non-hazardous substances (technology and organisation)
- Dependency syndrome
 - Lack of in-built capacity (technical, financial and administration)
 - Thus looking for interventions from external
- Developing countries and economies – as adopted by the forum

Why developing countries and economies

- Increased desire to get industrialized and developed and be at par with others
- Economic growth overrides environmental and human health safety expressed by governments and private sector
- The low technical, administrative and fiscal capacity relative to developed economies
- The resultant socio-economic and political problems already evident in the countries

Weaker capacity in research and development

- Research in toxic chemicals is underdeveloped in DC & E
- DC & Es contribute to <1% of research in chemicals –publications
- Researches backing responses are done in developed countries & sometimes supported by interested corporations
- The developing countries and economies thus depend on the developed countries' research – the different conditions pose challenges
- Preferred action –
 - Institutional strengthening of research NGOs etc
 - Organizational development for research NGOs etc
 - Screening the intention of corporations and multinationals – Rockefeller

Challenges in light of dependency syndrome

- Weaker capacity in research & development
- Public awareness and education gaps
- Weaker technical capacity
- Low financial capacity
- Policy formulation and implementation
- Biased or skewed economic investment priorities

Public awareness and education gaps

- Lower awareness and knowledge levels on the toxicity of chemicals in use especially in the informal SMMEs
- Informal SMMEs employs over 60% in the DC & Es
- Alternatives and substitutions are new entrants to the sector
- Eurocentric education tools are dominant from the researches – a challenge in our project
- Fewer forums on chemicals and possible intervention accessible to DCs & Es – the IFCS is uncertain – funds
- NGOs are instrumental in advocacy for policy in line with resolutions of forums (IFCS, SAICM, etc)

Weaker technical capacity

- Development of substitutes & alternatives require technical personnel –mostly borrowed from the developed economies
- Thus the sustainability is uncertain
- Appropriate approach is to build the capacity of the local personnel:
 - To design BATs & BEPs to respond to local scenarios
 - To train local people emphasizing on TOTs (best in developed in NGOs)
 - Interpretation – the research and policies into feasible technologies on substitution & alternatives
- The policy behind the expatriates should be re-interpreted or re-thought within NCPCs – National Cleaner Production Centres

Policy formulation & implementation

- Policy formulation on substitution and alternatives are mostly influenced by:
 - Eurocentric researches and international conventions
 - Level of awareness and knowledge of the policy makers –low
 - Interests of the multinationals & corporations –those that justify the existence of their chemicals products
- Wanting political will – the politics of the influence of the east and the west in DCs & Es and support of govts
- Limited forums for policy advocacy and lobbying – the role of NGOs (calls for support)
- Need for well thought alternatives – e.g. bio-fuels & demand for pesticides & food security

Low financial capacity

- The most outstanding and cross-cutting challenge
- The available funds are over-stretched infrastructure development, food security & other national priorities
- **Strategic** funding is required for:
 - Research & monitoring
 - Public awareness and education
 - Policy devlpt, advocacy & lobbying for adoption
 - Technical and administrative capacity building
 - Development and access to substitutes and alternatives especially within the SMMEs through **micro-credits/micro-finance**
- The line ministries are so much red-taped to reach the grassroots and the informal sector – NGOs/CSOs are viable options to supplement and complement the govts' service provision

Biased economic investment

- Main investment focus is macro- & formal sector - skewed towards economics
- Mainstream credit facilities focus more on the formal sector industrial sector than informal SMMEs (60% workforce in Kenya)
- MFIs interest rates and collateral requirements makes them inaccessible to informal SMMEs
- Development & adoption of substitutes and alternatives in the informal SMMEs sector becomes unaffordable
- Non-profit making institutions are thus suitable for promoting development and adoption of the alternatives and substitutes through micro-credits (revolving fund scheme)

Overcoming the challenges

- Strategic funding to NGOs to build for
 - Institutional capacity building for public awareness and education and advocacy on policy
 - Research and development of alternatives locally
NCPCs
 - Micro-credit schemes to aid access to alternatives and substitutes
- Promote technical capacity building to individuals, NGOs and Govts through trainings
- Strategic information sharing –support participation of NGOs & Govts in forums and meetings e.g. IFCS, SAICM etc.

For more information and partnership
development

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Thank you