

NGO/CSO Global Common Statement on The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management¹

Recognizing that “fundamental changes are needed in the way that societies manage chemicals,”² Environment Ministers, Health Ministers and other delegates from over 100 governments together with representatives of civil society and the private sector declared in Dubai, February 6, 2006, that “the environment worldwide continues to suffer from air, water and land contamination, impairing the health and welfare of millions.”³ They adopted the *Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management* (SAICM), a global plan of action whose stated goal is: “to achieve the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle so that, by 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.”⁴

The SAICM addresses both agricultural and industrial chemicals; covers all stages of the chemical life-cycle of manufacture, use and disposal; and includes chemicals in products and in wastes.

We, (Name of organization), a civil society organization, join in this global effort to work for a future where exposure to toxic chemicals is no longer a source of harm.

We agree with the SAICM:

- On the need to take action to “prevent the adverse effects of chemicals on the health of children, pregnant women, fertile populations, the elderly, the poor, workers and other vulnerable groups and susceptible environments.”⁵
- On the need to “apply the precautionary approach”⁶ and “give priority consideration to the application of preventive measures such as pollution prevention.”⁷
- On the need to address the “lack of capacity for managing chemicals in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, dependency on pesticides in agriculture, exposure of workers to harmful chemicals and concern about the long-term effects of chemicals on both human health and the environment.”⁸
- With the commitment to “promote and support the development and implementation of, and further innovation in, environmentally sound and safer alternatives, including cleaner production, informed substitution of chemicals of particular concern and non-chemical alternatives.”⁹
- On the need to promote “adequate transfer of cleaner and safer technology”¹⁰ and with a call to make available both “existing and new sources of financial support.”¹¹
- On the need to promote “capacity-building, education and training and information exchange on sound management of chemicals for all stakeholders.”¹²
- That “the sound management of chemicals is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty and disease, the improvement of human health and the environment and the elevation and maintenance of the standard of living in countries at all levels of development.”¹³
- With the commitment to “promote and support meaningful and active participation by all sectors of civil society, particularly women, workers and indigenous communities, in regulatory and other decision-making processes that relate to chemical safety.”¹⁴
- With the commitment to facilitate access to “information and knowledge on chemicals throughout their life cycle, including the risks that they pose to human health and the environment.”¹⁵

We commit ourselves and call upon all stakeholders including governments, non governmental organizations, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations and others to work together to implement SAICM policies, and to reform domestic chemicals assessment and management laws, policies and practices to achieve the 2020 goal in all countries.

The NGO/CSO Global Common Statement on SAICM was developed by representatives of six NGO networks at a Planning Meeting held in Toronto, Canada, January 23-25, 2008 to launch a Global SAICM Outreach Campaign. These networks were: Health Care Without Harm (HCWH); the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN); International Society of Doctors for the Environment, (ISDE); Pesticides Action Network International (PAN); Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF); and the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA). It was agreed at the meeting that this statement would be presented for consideration and adoption to NGOs and CSOs in all regions of the world as part of a global campaign to secure more than one thousand NGO endorsements of this statement in at least 80 countries covering all regions of the world.

¹ The *Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)* comprises three core texts: *The Dubai Declaration*, which expresses the commitment to SAICM by Ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of civil society and the private sector; *The Overarching Policy Strategy*, which sets out the scope of SAICM, the needs it addresses and objectives; and *A Global Plan of Action*, which sets out proposed work areas and activities for implementation of the Strategic Approach. These texts can be found in all UN languages at:

<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/SAICM%20texts/SAICM%20documents.htm>

² SAICM Dubai Declaration paragraph 7

³ SAICM Dubai Declaration paragraph 5

⁴ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 13

⁵ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 7 (c)

⁶ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 14 (e)

⁷ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 14 (f)

⁸ SAICM Dubai Declaration paragraph 6

⁹ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 14 (j)

¹⁰ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 10 (b)

¹¹ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 19

¹² SAICM Global Plan of Action, Executive Summary, paragraph 8 (i)

¹³ SAICM Dubai Declaration paragraph 1

¹⁴ SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 16 (g)

¹⁵ SAICM Dubai Declaration paragraph 21