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MS. JUDY A. STOBER, Ph. D.

Executive Secretary

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Dear Dr. Stober:

Respectfully attached herewith are answers to the questionnaires regarding examples of tools, approaches and frameworks for applying precaution with regards to National Chemical Safety efforts.

Thank you and rest assured of our continuous support and cooperation.

Very truly yours,

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answers to questions:

1. Key tools and approaches in making decisions in circumstances of uncertainty in the context of chemical safety?

The EMB has an inter-agency chemical review committee composed of experts from government agencies and academe knowledgeable on toxicology, occupational exposures, environmental effects, etc of chemicals. This group is convened whenever there is a need to identify: i.e. priority chemical listing (list of toxic chemicals that may be regulated.)

Assessment is based primarily on the following criteria:

hazard identification (toxicity of the chemical)

This also relates to physical, and chemical properties like persistence bioaccumulation potential, toxicity and hazards potential;

exposure assessment

dose response assessment

risk characterization

risk assessment

Other criteria factors may pertain to production aspects, release, disposal methods and chemical used.

If available: monitoring data may also be used (although this is very limited due to lack of resources to support monitoring);

Considerations are also given to commitments under international chemical conventions, like the Stockholm, Rotterdam, Basel, etc. Chemical Weapons; and to other nationally regulated chemicals i.e. narcotics;

Chemical incidents which leads to political interventions (i.e. mercury incident in Paranaque) may also lead to chemicals being prioritized.

For a chemical to be issued a chemical control order where: gradual phased out plans may apply: stakeholders consultation is a must.

2. Can you describe a particular case where precaution was applied in the context of chemicals management.

a. mercury incident in a school where some school children were brought to the hospital;

b. inter agency was convened and involvement of each parties including the school authorities where the incident took place were identified including resources needed to assess the risk.

c. Positive impact: Since this is a multi agency approach – each agency was able to contribute their expertise, equipment for analysis; discussion of strategies etc; there was also political will in the process;

d. Negative impacts: The decision process took longer, because consensus was needed to determine that the risk has been addressed.

e. Unintended consequences: The IACEH was able to identify the gaps the agencies have in terms of assessment of risk, ability to analyze risk; and lack of emergency protocols in case of accidents. There were also some gaps in legislation which have to be addressed in the future.

#. Can you describe a particular case where precaution wasn't applied

a. Chemical incidents in small scale mining.

b. Reasons for non-action: Inability to control use of certain chemicals (cyanide) in the backyard mining industries.

c. Cases have been reported where the children were affected by the use of cyanide.

4. Biggest challenges:

Lack of resources to assess the situation; conducting field studies; assessing exposure scenarios; monitoring data; lack of laboratories

Gaps in legislation;

Enforcement of existing legislations.

5. Perceptions as to some concerns regarding application of precautions...

Acquiring the commitments of the government is a challenge in the implementation of these strategies in precaution...Efforts i.e. risk communications will be needed to raise awareness of decision makers.to support the implementation – and the needed to act early on- before any major incidents can take place.

Funding support may be necessary considering that the government has limited budget.