



*25 - 29 September 2006
Budapest, Hungary*

Chemical Safety for Sustainable Development

Thought Starter
South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Capacity Building
for Sound Chemicals Management

Side-event on South-South Cooperation at IFCS
Forum V, Budapest, 25 September 2006

Prepared by: SAICM Secretariat

R O O M D O C U M E N T

The SAICM Secretariat will organize a lunchtime side event on Monday 25 September 2006 on SSC. This thought starter is intended to provide a short overview of the planned side event and its objectives.



**Strategic Approach
to International
Chemicals Management**

Title of the event:

South-South Cooperation and Capacity Building for Sound Chemicals Management

Background / Context:

Today, South-South Cooperation (SSC) is recognized as a fundamental driver of development effectiveness. SSC refers to the fact that many development issues common among developing countries and countries with economies in transition can best be remedied among themselves through cooperation, sharing of experiences, and pooling of resources. This most effectively works in conjunction with existing channels of assistance and should not be seen as a substitution for assistance from developed countries. While the concept does not suggest that all developing countries are similar economically, socially or politically, it does imply that they share a similar set of vulnerabilities and challenges.

A number of examples of formal South-South cooperation already exist. Some of these like the India-Brazil-South Africa trade and economic cooperation initiative¹ comprise an alliance of individual countries that may have identified common interests, others like the Asia-Africa trade and investment initiative² comprise two or more regions of the world, yet another approach includes the sub-regional or regional groupings, which are often based on economic co-operation. In African context these include the Africa Union regional economic communities (RECs).

It has become clear that SSC will play a critical role in tackling the development challenges the world faces in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There has been tremendous growth in the number and variety of stakeholders in SSC. Today not only governments, but also the private sector, Southern multinationals in particular, as well as civil society are playing an important role. Although the existing SSC initiatives are mainly based on economic or specific sectoral considerations, they are not necessarily well known in the chemicals management area.

SAICM has clearly identified the need to incorporate sound chemical management strategy in developmental and poverty alleviation strategies. One related strategy is for developing countries to increase their market access not only to developed countries but also to the burgeoning economies in the developing world. Sound chemical management can play an important role in increasing market access both for agricultural (e.g. plant production products) and non agricultural products (e.g. biocidal products, industrial chemicals etc.).

SSC has significant potential to address the so-called “widening gap” in the capability for sound management of chemicals between developed countries on the one hand and developing countries on the other. The widening gap issue has been the subject of an initiative at IFCS Forum IV and of intersessional work. Facilitating the sharing of technical expertise among developing countries and countries with economies in transition may unlock a substantial resource that to date has not been fully utilized for various economic and political reasons. Applying SSC may offer new opportunities to facilitate the strengthening of chemicals management in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Applying SSC will stress an active role for developing countries in the transfer of knowledge and experience as well as in the creative expansion of technologies aimed at increasing productivity and competitiveness. It will stress the importance of education, information

¹ India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum

² Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD); Asia-Africa Trade and Investment Conference (AATIC)

exchange and sharing of best practices. Additionally, triangular cooperation with the North in conjunction with SSC may help to foster these channels of communication and cooperation.

Purpose:

The purpose of the side event at Forum V is to explore the potential for existing SSC initiatives to be used as the basis of a more integrated approach to chemicals management that will contribute to the national and regional imperatives of economic development and poverty alleviation and strengthening knowledge and information exchange..

Structure of the side-event:

There will be introductory presentations from a panel of experts and practitioners, followed by an exchange of views and experience.

Possible outcomes:

A brief report to Forum V, which in turn could be used as a background document for SAICM regional meetings so that regions could consider this issue in greater detail.

Participants:

This side event is open to all Forum V participants. Panelists will include:

- Dr. Soroush Modabberi (Iran)
- Jack Weinberg (EHF)
- Lilian Corra (Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente, AAMMA)