



President: Dr Zoltán Szabó, Hungary
Executive Secretary: Dr Judy Stober

Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
Global Partnerships for Chemical Safety

Contributing to the 2020 Goal

To: Minister of Foreign Affairs

April 2008

Excellency,

FORUM VI
Sixth Plenary Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety - IFCS
Dakar, Senegal 15-19 September 2008

In my capacity as President of the IFCS, I have the honour of inviting your Government to participate in the Sixth Plenary Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (Forum VI) which will be hosted by the Government of Senegal and held in Dakar, 15 – 19 September 2008. Regional group and other pre-meetings will be held on 14 September 2008.

The IFCS was established in 1994 at an Intergovernmental Conference convened in Stockholm by ILO, UNEP and WHO, in response to a recommendation adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The IFCS, with its participatory and inclusive way of working, has an impressive record of fostering an understanding of the issues, identifying practical solutions and approaches, building partnerships and improving coordination among governments and other representatives of civil society in dealing with chemical safety issues. The IFCS involves, encourages and supports relevant “stakeholders” to come forth with new ideas and proposals and provide their valuable contribution to the common effort. A major achievement of IFCS is the recognition that chemical safety is a shared agenda requiring a more comprehensive and integrated approach by all stakeholders. Forum VI will be another building block in creating a strong framework for improved chemicals management in all countries.

The theme of Forum VI will be ***Global Partnerships for Chemical Safety Contributing to the 2020 Goal***. The theme was chosen to bring focus to the integral role partnerships have in achieving the WSSD goal 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. In the last decades remarkable achievements has been made on chemical safety, but much remains to be done. Following the guidance provided by IFCS participants at Forum V and the invitation of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in February 2006, Forum VI will once again provide countries the opportunity to consider their priority topics and emphasize their special needs and concerns with respect to improving chemicals management. IFCS participants have committed their time and expertise to ensuring the preparation of an agenda that will contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the work of other chemicals-related international organizations and institutions. Representatives of all IFCS participant groups - governments, international organizations, labour unions, and public interest, science and industry associations - have contributed to preparing the agenda and programme. Plenary topics include nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials: opportunities and challenges; substitution and alternatives; international transport of lead and cadmium via trade: an international concern?; and ecologically based integrated pest management and integrated vector management: key elements of pesticide risk reduction strategies. The Future of IFCS will be a substantive Forum VI agenda topic. At Forum VI, governments and other stakeholders will consider the future role of the IFCS as requested by Forum V in its Resolution on the Future of IFCS in light of the final agreements on the strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM) that was adopted at the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The provisional agenda is enclosed (Enclosure 1).

Full representation from governments as well as international organizations and a wide range of non-governmental organizations involved in chemical safety are expected to participate in Forum VI. The Terms of Reference of the Forum state that the government representative should be a senior official concerned with chemical safety, including health and environmental issues. In view of the intersectoral nature of chemical safety related issues, it is highly desirable that the government representative reflect the full range of chemical risk assessment and management interests. Each country shall nominate only one representative, who may be accompanied by other delegates and advisors. The representative will need to be in a position to take decisions on behalf of your government and is required to present appropriate accreditation to the IFCS Credentials Committee when registering at Forum VI. Dr Judy A. Stober, Executive Secretary of the IFCS, would appreciate receiving the name of your representative and of all accompanying delegates as soon as possible but no later than 31 July 2008 (see pre-registration form, Enclosure 2).

The working languages for Forum VI will be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Meeting documents will be made available on the IFCS website (www.ifcs.ch) by 1 August 2008.

The success of Forum VI will depend on the wide participation of IFCS members, with special reference to developing countries and economies in transition. In that respect, "twinning" arrangements are fostered wherein a developed country or an organization supports the participation costs of countries requiring assistance. In addition, designated contributions to support the participation of non-governmental organizations needing assistance may be made by donors. I would encourage those participants who are in a position to offer such "twinning" support to contribute in accordance with the procedure contained in Enclosure 3, and to inform the IFCS Secretariat on this matter at an early stage.

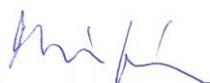
It is anticipated that "twinning funds" will be available to support travel and/or accommodation costs for a limited number of participants. In view of the limited resources to support travel costs, those participants requesting support are invited to consider cost sharing arrangements. A request for assistance should have the concurrence of the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and be limited to one participant per country. Official requests should be submitted in writing to the IFCS Secretariat no later than 15 June 2008. Requests should be accompanied by a completed pre-registration form (Enclosure 2). Recipients will be chosen following the adopted IFCS Guidelines. Anyone requesting funding who proposes a cost sharing arrangement will be given priority consideration, all other criteria being equal, to facilitate support to the greatest number of delegates.

A visa may be required for visiting Senegal. It is the responsibility of the individual participant, including sponsored participants, to obtain his or her own visa. The local organizers will be happy to assist if requested. For further information on local arrangements and hotel accommodation, please see the IFCS website (www.ifcs.ch).

In its brief history the IFCS has been successful in bringing together all parties to address and manage the national, regional and global problems of chemical safety. We look forward to your country's participation and support in Forum VI.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Zoltan Szabo
IFCS President

Enclosures:

1. Forum VI Proposed Provisional Annotated Agenda
 2. Forum VI pre-registration form (deadline for submitting to Secretariat is 31 July 2008)
 3. Contribution to the IFCS Trust Fund - twinning support
- cc: Permanent Mission in Geneva where applicable
IFCS National Focal Point