FORUM V

Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety

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Toys and Chemical Safety
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The Forum considered potential chemical risks from toys linked to chemical exposures, the question of prevalence of chemical related harms, the current approaches taken to assess potential chemical risk, and actions to protect children from chemical harms from toys.

The Forum recommended the following action items:

1. Given the potential enhanced exposures and/or vulnerabilities of children to chemicals, the known hazards from certain chemicals already detected in some toys, as well as the incomplete information about chemicals in toys and their impact on child health, the Forum encourages the use of a full range of tools and approaches including prevention and precaution to ensure that toys are safe. Such tools and approaches should be used by

   - designers and manufacturers of toys,
   - decisions makers in supply and sales of toys, and
   - governments and regulators working in the area of toy safety.

2. Given the information gaps that exist, the Forum encourages dialog among governments, toy manufacturers including those in the informal sector in developing countries and countries in transition, retailers, consumer groups, and other stakeholders to:

   - identify chemicals of concern used in toys, and potential substitution options,
   - develop strategies for sharing information on chemicals commonly used in toys and adverse effects from their use,
   - encourage countries and regions to develop and share the results of surveillance of chemical content of toys with other countries and all stakeholders,
   - promote research on impacts of chemicals on product safety and children’s health in the context of toy use, and
   - support educational efforts to increase awareness of issues of chemical safety and toys among critical groups such as parents and children, health care professionals, small and medium scale manufacturers and the informal sector.

3. Given the increasing international trade in toys (including on the internet) and existing differences in toy safety standards globally, governments and industry are encouraged to work towards developing guidance for toy safety and harmonization of international standards. Important areas to address may include:

   - determination and documentation of the chemical content of toys,
   - actions towards elimination of use in toys of substances, such as lead and mercury, that are likely to result in adverse toxic effects,
   - actions to protect children from exposure to hazardous chemicals in toys,
   - safety labelling.