IFCS Forum Standing Committee response to the recommendations made by the African Region in the Abuja Statement

The Forum Standing Committee (FSC) of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) acknowledges and welcomes the recognition given by the African region to the role of the IFCS in the SAICM process.

The African Regional Meeting on the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was held in Abuja, Nigeria, 24-26 May 2004. At this meeting, African governments, NGOs and IGOs expressed commitment to the development of the SAICM and emphasized the important role of the IFCS in the development and implementation of SAICM.

The Abuja Statement states that, "the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety has provided an open, inclusive, multi-stakeholder forum for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to discuss issues and to assist countries in identifying priorities for cooperative action on chemical safety and notes the need for it to play an active role in strengthening coordinating mechanisms at all levels within the strategic approach to international chemicals management" (SAICM/AfRM/1 Annex II, pg. 10).

The African position on SAICM re-iterates the message in the Abuja Statement and adds that "The IFCS terms of reference should be reviewed and revised to achieve the goals and objectives of SAICM" (SAICM/AfRM/1 Annex III).

The IFCS was established by governments to be a flexible and responsive mechanism. The IFCS will, therefore, seriously consider any role in SAICM that is requested of it by the SAICM Preparatory Committee. The governments that decide the outcome of SAICM will, in fact, largely be the same governments participating in and deciding on any changes to the IFCS, as all member states of the United Nations bodies and Specialized Agencies participate in the IFCS.

IFCS Forum V will be held in September 2006, in Budapest, Hungary, following the final SAICM meeting, the "International Conference on Chemicals Management" (scheduled for early 2006). This schedule allows for a timely discussion by the IFCS regarding any recommendations by the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the role of the IFCS in implementing the SAICM, and enables any necessary changes to be made to the IFCS Terms of Reference.