International EMF Project

Standards Harmonization

WHO/ICNIRP/South Korean Government meeting
EMF biological effects and standards harmonization in
Asia and Oceania, 22-24 October 2001

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Collaboration

International partners

- WHO, UNEP, ICNIRP, ILO, IEC
- IARC, NATO, ITU & EC

National partners >45

- WHO collaborating institutions
  USA, UK, Japan, Sweden & Germany
- Independent scientific institutions
Objective

Reach international agreement on a framework for developing guidelines on protection of the public and workers from exposure to EMF.
International EMF Project
Standards Harmonisation

- Project facilitates international consensus on standards
- Project will identify health risks using WHO/IARC procedures
- WHO does NOT develop standards, only health risk assessments
- ICNIRP full partner in Project and develops international standard
- All major standards setting countries are involved in the EMF Project
EMF Standards Harmonisation

Benefits

✔ Increased public confidence that governments and scientists agree on health risks
✔ Reduced debate and fears about EMF -- precautionary principal?
✔ Everyone protected to the same high level
EMF Standards: Political Process

Protecting populations against potentially hazardous agents is part of the political process so there is no reason to expect that all jurisdictions will choose exactly the same levels of protection.

It is accepted and expected that different countries, and even different jurisdictions within a single country, may sometimes choose to provide different levels of protection against environmental hazards, responding to their citizens’ wishes.
Disparities in National EMF Standards

Arisen in large part from:

- different interpretations of the scientific data
- using different philosophies for standards development in the exposure limits and the scientific data used as a basis for standards
- differences in the way scientists interpret risk data and the nature of environmental risks
- possible deficiencies in communications among scientists between different regions
STATUS OF STANDARDS HARMONIZATION

- Conducted scientific reviews, identified gaps in knowledge
- Currently promoting EMF research funding agencies to support WHO’s research agenda
- Forming working groups to deal with key components of standards framework
- Will conduct formal health risk assessments that form the basis of an international standard
- Will encourage all EMF Project member countries to accept internationally agreed standard

All on home page at: http://www.who.int/emf/
Working Group on Standards

Topics for discussion

- Criteria for evaluating scientific studies
- Models for developing exposure limits
- Use of safety factors
- One or two tier standard?
- Form of the standard - indicate how to determine compliance?
- Scientific rational to support limits?
- Social and economic impacts...should they be considered?
- One standard cover for whole frequency range (0-300 GHz)?
- Other considerations?
Working Groups on Standards

- **WG1**: Standard concepts and terminology
- **WG2**: Criteria to evaluate research results. Scientific rationale to support limits, and comparison of various standards
- **WG3**: Model for developing standards. Safety factors: how should they address uncertainties
- **WG4**: Should social and economic impacts be considered? How should precautionary approaches be developed, if needed?
Workplan on Standards

- Working group meetings will be held, generally in conjunction with scientific meetings in key geographical regions that will allow the input of scientists and government officials in those regions.

- Setting up working groups in each region will enhance the quality of communication among scientists and government officials, in examining the scientific basis for the standards and the assumptions that underlie them.
Draft Schedule of Meetings

- Xi'an, China 23-26 October 2000.
- San Antonio, Texas 13-14 November 2000
- Lima, Peru 7-9 March 2001
- Bulgaria 30 April - 4 May 2001
- South Korea, 22-24 October 2001
- Cape Town, South Africa, 4-7 December 2001
- Working group, China 2002
- International meeting, Geneva 2004
Working Group on Standards

Want framework for standards completed by 2003-4 so it can be used to develop internationally agreed standards once the health risk assessment process has been completed 2005

Draft framework has now been developed and will be circulated during and after Regional meetings