



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**



INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CHEMICALS

**Overview of international agreements/instruments, organisations and
programmes concerning chemicals management
(3rd edition)**



**Issued by UNEP Chemicals
Geneva, Switzerland
2001**

IOMC

INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

A co-operative agreement among UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO, UNITAR and OECD

Acknowledgements:

This is the third edition of this publication, which is updated annually. The first edition was based on the "Report on Enhanced Coherence and Efficiency among International Activities Related to Chemicals" that was presented to the 20th Session of the UNEP Governing Council (February 1999). The original report, as well as the updates, was developed under contract with Ms. Francine Schulberg, Consultant, San Francisco, USA.

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The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) was established in 1995 by UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and OECD (Participating Organizations), following recommendations made by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development to strengthen co-operation and increase co-ordination in the field of chemical safety. In January 1998, UNITAR formally joined the IOMC as a Participating Organization. The purpose of the IOMC is to promote co-ordination of the policies and activities pursued by the Participating Organizations, jointly or separately, to achieve the sound management of chemicals in relation to human health and the environment.

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INTRODUCTION

This publication is the third edition of “International Activities related to Chemicals”, a survey of legal agreements/instruments and international organisations/programmes involved with chemicals management.¹

This publication is designed to provide a brief overview of inter-governmental activities related to chemicals management for use by a wide range of possible readers in both the public and private sectors. It is not meant to be comprehensive, nor to provide detailed information. Rather, it can serve as a starting point for learning about international efforts to protect human health and the environment from adverse effects of chemicals. It provides websites and contact information for all the relevant secretariats in order that interested readers can easily obtain additional information.

It is planned that this publication will continue to be regularly updated and re-issued. Therefore, UNEP Chemicals invites suggestions for improvements to both form and content, as well as any corrections to the information contained herein.²

Background

The first edition of this publication was developed in response to a request by the Nineteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council (February 1997). At that time, the Governing Council considered various activities related to chemicals management, in light of the ongoing discussions concerning legal instruments related to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Rather than taking specific action in response to proposals to “enhance effectiveness” of the international, regional and national approaches to chemicals management, the Governing Council invited the Executive Director of UNEP, in close collaboration with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), to prepare a report outlining the roles and responsibilities of existing international legal instruments and organisations and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of various options for enhanced coherence and efficiency. (see Annex I for Governing Council Decision 19/13D)

The report was presented to the Twentieth Session of the UNEP Governing Council (February 1999). During related discussions, many Governments noted that the report - especially its survey of international legal instruments and international organisations and programmes involved with chemicals management - was a very useful tool for their further consideration, and indicated that the survey could form the basis for a regular publication.

As a result, UNEP Chemicals published the report presented to the Twentieth Session of the Governing Council as the first edition of “International Activities related to Chemicals” (1999).

In mid-2000 (approximately one year after the first edition), UNEP Chemicals began the process of revising the survey of international activities by soliciting updated information from

¹ The first edition was published in 1999.

² Suggestions and information can be sent to the UNEP Chemicals office at:

11-13 Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Chatelaine
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the relevant Secretariats. UNEP Chemicals also decided to add to the second edition a summary of highlights during the past year, as well as a key word index.

In mid-2001, UNEP Chemicals began the process of preparing this publication, the third edition, by sending requests to all Secretariats to review and, as appropriate, revise the relevant texts.

Scope of this Publication

For purposes of this publication ‘chemicals management’ is defined broadly. While it focuses on the types of activities discussed in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21,³ it also addresses a number of related activities. This is due, in part, to the fact that the line between chemicals and pollution, and between chemicals and wastes, is not always clear. Furthermore, many organisations address issues not traditionally considered to be part of chemicals management but which have relevant elements. There are also many activities that support chemicals management programmes such as those facilitating access to information or those providing financial or other resources. In addition, there are several initiatives designed to, *inter alia*, improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of relevant instruments and organisations.

Thus, this publication addresses agreements, instruments, organisations and programmes concerned with:

- management of industrial and agricultural chemicals;
- chemical accidents and the transport of dangerous goods;
- management of hazardous wastes;
- pollution of the air, ozone depletion and climate change;
- pollution of seas and inland waterways; and
- biodiversity.

This publication does not include information on activities concerning a number of subjects related to chemicals management such as: prevention of various types of pollution; protection of the health of certain groups (e.g., women or children); pharmaceuticals; narcotics; and nuclear or radioactive materials.

This publication addresses only inter-governmental activities. There is a focus on global activities, although certain regional organisations with major programmes related to chemicals management have been included (e.g., the OECD and the UN/ECE)⁴. This publication does not include the many initiatives from individual governments, private sector organisations, community-based groups, and academic institutions.

Given the range of activities that could be included in the definition of chemicals management, and the number of organisations that undertake some relevant activities, this publication may have excluded some organisations or projects of possible interest.

³ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), Agenda 21, Chapter 19 on “Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products.”

⁴ This publication also does not address the relevant activities of the European Commission, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, nor certain other regional agreements and programmes.

Format

Following this “Introduction,” the publication contains a short summary of “Major Developments” during the past year (mid- 2000 – mid-2001).

This is followed by the main body of the publication, arranged in two parts:

- Part I contains a short summary of nineteen international agreements and instruments. These are set out in chronological order from the date of adoption, beginning with those in existence for the longest period of time.
- Part II provides an overview of twenty-two international organisations and programmes, in alphabetical order based on the official name of the Secretariat. It is presented in three subparts:
 - Part II(a) addresses organisations and programmes that are members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC);
 - Part II(b) addresses other relevant organisations and programmes (including some that have only limited activities in the chemicals field);
 - Part II(c) addresses three co-ordinating mechanisms and programmes, designed, *inter alia*, to improve coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of work related to chemicals management.

Each of the 41 entries begins with Secretariat contact information including, where available, a contact person, mailing and e-mail addresses, telephone and facsimile numbers and web-sites. This is followed by general information describing the mandate, nature and scope of work, relationship with other organisations/programmes, and administrative matters.

Sources of Information

The information in this report is based primarily on information provided by the Secretariats of the conventions and organisations, supplemented with information from websites and official publications.

In mid-2001, UNEP Chemicals received updated information from most of the Secretariats of the 41 instruments, organisations and programmes described in this publication. The entries that have not been updated, or that have been updated without the participation of the relevant Secretariat, are indicated with a footnote.

*UNEP Chemicals
Geneva, Switzerland
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