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Organización  
de las  
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Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COUNCIL

### Hundred and Thirty-first Session

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### New International Developments on Pesticide Management

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## **I. Introduction**

1. This document has been prepared in order to inform Council of recent international developments relevant to FAO's role in pesticide management. These include completion of a Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and UNEP on the secretariat arrangements in support of the Rotterdam Convention and the adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management by governments at the International Conference on Chemicals Management in February 2006. This document also serves to seek continued support for the provision of the Joint Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention.

## **II. Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade**

2. The Rotterdam Convention entered into force on 24 February 2004. The Convention is a multilateral environmental agreement designed to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among Parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals, in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm and to contribute to their environmentally sound use by facilitating information exchange about their characteristics, providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export and disseminating these decisions to Parties. As of July 2006 there were 107 parties to the Convention. The first and second meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) were convened in September 2004 and September 2005 in Geneva and Rome, respectively. The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in October 2006 in Geneva.

3. The Hundred and Twenty-seventh Session of the Council was provided with an information paper (CL 127/INF/4) on the entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention, the outcome of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the related activities of the Secretariat. The Thirty-third session of the Conference was provided with a further information paper (C 2005/INF/17) that detailed FAO's role in the development of the Rotterdam Convention, reported on the status of implementation of the Convention and the key outcomes of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (September 2005), including the decision regarding arrangements for the Secretariat.

4. Article 19 of the Convention states that "the secretariat function for the Rotterdam Convention shall be performed by the Executive Director of UNEP and the Director-General of FAO, subject to such arrangements as shall be agreed by them and approved by the Conference of the Parties". The first meeting of the COP accepted the offer of the Governments of Italy and Switzerland to host jointly the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention in Rome and Geneva. The COP invited the Executive Director and the Director-General to make arrangements for the performance of the secretariat functions, possibly based on the same elements as in the earlier arrangements, and to present it to the COP for consideration and approval, if possible, at its second meeting. It also invited the Executive Director and the Director-General to continue to perform the secretariat functions for the Convention based on the existing arrangements until the COP had approved the new arrangements.

5. The Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of UNEP developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the arrangements to perform jointly the secretariat functions for the Rotterdam Convention, based on the arrangements in place since 1992. In order to facilitate the mobilization by the Secretariat of the full range of scientific, technical and economic expertise required by the Convention, each organization is required to assume the responsibilities set out in the MoU on the basis of their areas of competence,

comparative strengths and experience. The FAO part of the Secretariat has primary responsibility for pesticides, while the UNEP part of the Secretariat takes primary responsibility for other chemicals.

6. The arrangements also include the provision and maintenance of staff and resources in line with the decisions and authorizations of the respective Governing Bodies of the two organizations and the budgets approved by the COP. In addition, two trust funds have been opened within FAO, a General Trust Fund to cover the costs of the Secretariat and a Voluntary Special Trust Fund to cover the costs of participants' travel to meetings of the COP and for technical assistance.

7. The arrangements for the performance of secretariat functions and the MoU between FAO and UNEP were presented to the second meeting of the COP for consideration and approval. The COP approved the arrangements proposed by the Executive Director of UNEP and the Director-General of FAO for the performance of the secretariat functions and agreed to review these arrangements at its future meetings, if necessary.

8. The MoU was subsequently signed by the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of UNEP in October and November 2005, respectively.

9. Since October 2005, activities in support of the regional delivery of technical assistance on the implementation of the Convention have focused on working with individual countries and small groups of countries with a view to facilitating the development of national plans and priorities for action in the ratification and/or implementation of the Convention. By the end of 2006, a total of 27 countries will have developed national action plans for the implementation of the Convention, with a further 27 countries having participated in meetings aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of the Convention and promoting ratification.

10. A key element in the success of this programme has been the FAO regional and sub-regional offices. In particular, inputs from the Regional Plant Protection Officers have helped to identify regional differences in approaches to technical assistance and opportunities to build on existing institutions and activities such as the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) and the Sahelian Pesticides Committee (CSP) established under the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

11. The ongoing support of FAO to the implementation of the Convention has been recognized by the COP at each of its meetings. The Governing Bodies of UNEP and FAO have also been invited to continue their financial support for the operation of the Convention and its Secretariat.

12. The fourth meeting of the COP is scheduled to take place in September/ October 2008 in Rome, Italy.

### **III. Outcome of the International Conference on Chemicals Management - the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

13. The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Dubai (United Arab Emirates), 4-6 February 2006. The overall objective of SAICM is the sound management of chemicals, including pesticides, throughout their life-cycle. It is a voluntary initiative and is intended as a framework to assist countries in meeting the objectives of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in September 2002, in particular "that by year 2020 chemicals will be produced and used in such a way as to lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment".

14. SAICM includes agricultural chemicals; it will thus have an impact on the agricultural sector, in particular on pesticides, their management and use, and the implementation of the *International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides*, the Rotterdam Convention, Codex Alimentarius and other international undertakings. Reference is made to CL 127/INF8 and CL 123/19 through which Council was informed about the recent developments in pesticides.

15. SAICM was initiated as a result of a decision of the Seventh Special Session of UNEP Governing Council in February 2002. Three preparatory meetings were held. FAO participated in those meetings as a partner organization of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)<sup>1</sup>.

16. The IOMC played an important coordinating function during the preparatory phase of SAICM, and it was requested by the ICCM to continue with this function. A joint statement was issued by the Executive Heads of the IOMC agencies at the ICCM stating that “we, the organizations cooperating in the IOMC, affirm our commitment to work together to strengthen the sound management of chemicals and to contribute to the achievements of SAICM within our mandates and in accordance with decisions of our governing bodies”.

17. One hundred and fifty-one governments, 19 intergovernmental organizations and 47 non-governmental organizations participated in the ICCM, which recommended that SAICM should be brought to the attention of the Governing Bodies of all relevant United Nations organizations for their recognition or eventual endorsement.

18. The scope of SAICM includes: a) the environmental, economic, social, health and labour aspects of chemical safety and b) agricultural and industrial chemicals, with a view to promoting sustainable development and covering chemicals at all stages of their life-cycle, including in products and wastes. The goal is to achieve increased efficiency and coherence in international chemicals management at national, regional and global levels, covering all aspects of chemical safety. It promotes a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to chemicals management involving *inter alia* agriculture, environment, health, industry and labour.

19. SAICM comprises three core documents: i) the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management; ii) the Overarching Policy Strategy and iii) a Global Plan of Action. The ICCM also adopted four resolutions related to implementation arrangements, in particular a Quick Start Programme which includes a Trust Fund to facilitate implementation (detailed information available at [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm)).

20. The Global Plan of Action defines 36 work areas supported by a list of almost 300 individual activities that may be undertaken voluntarily by stakeholders in order to pursue the commitments made and objectives expressed in the Dubai Declaration and the Overarching Policy Strategy. The Global Plan of Action defines targets, timeframes, indicators of progress and implementation aspects for the periodic review of progress. The next ICCM is scheduled to take place in 2009 and subsequent conferences are planned for 2012, 2015 and 2020.

21. The Global Plan of Action includes a variety of work areas with direct and/or indirect impact on the agricultural sector. Examples taken from the document are:

- pesticide programmes
- sound agricultural practices
- highly toxic pesticides (risk management and reduction)
- legal, policy and institutional aspects
- risk assessment, management and communication
- waste management (and minimization)

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<sup>1</sup> The participating organizations of the IOMC are FAO, ILO, OECD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR and WHO, with UNDP and the World Bank as observers.

- international agreements, and
- capacity-building to support national actions.

22. FAO's activities related to pesticides, in particular the *International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides*, the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme, the Africa Stockpiles Programme (ASP) and the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, address many of these areas. In most instances, reference is made to the work of FAO in the Global Plan of Action. The overall objectives of SAICM are consistent with FAO's approach to pesticide management.

23. In its preparatory phase SAICM has largely been driven by the environment sector; in many countries, the agricultural sector has had minimal involvement. In order for the full benefits of SAICM to be realized and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort with respect to existing programmes and activities on pesticides, it is important that the agricultural sector be actively involved in the implementation of SAICM.

24. Countries have been requested to nominate national focal points for SAICM, create a national coordination mechanism and work together to establish regional focal points. Regional meetings are scheduled to consider the implementation of SAICM. UNEP has established the SAICM secretariat and the Quick Start Programme.

25. Member Nations are encouraged to take full account of SAICM and its implications for the agricultural sector. It is important that they engage in the implementation of SAICM, e.g. through the nomination of a national SAICM focal point that reflects the experience and needs of the agricultural sector.

26. A Trust Fund, administered by UNEP, has been established for the Quick Start Programme. It contains limited funds and in its current iteration is limited to five years. Under the Quick Start Programme, governments and other stakeholders are invited to prepare project proposals in the range of \$50,000 to \$250,000 to support SAICM implementation. Effective national coordination of SAICM implementation may provide an opportunity for Governments to strengthen their pesticide management capabilities.

27. Project proposals under the Quick Start Programme are to be submitted to the SAICM Secretariat within UNEP which will review them for completeness and eligibility. A Trust Fund Implementation Committee, made up of IOMC organizations including FAO, will then select the individual projects that are to be funded. In its present format, the Quick Start Programme provides limited opportunities for organizations other than UNEP to act as the implementation agency for these projects<sup>2</sup>.

28. The ICCM encouraged the Governing Bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations to endorse, or otherwise appropriately acknowledge, SAICM with a view to incorporating its objectives into the programmes of work within their mandates, and to report thereon to the ICCM.

29. FAO foresees a growing demand and workload on pesticide-related activities associated with the further development and implementation of SAICM at three different levels:

- a) participating in various subregional, regional and international meetings on the further development and implementation of SAICM;
- b) providing expertise and capacities in order to respond to project proposals and inquiries from member countries;
- c) ensuring coordination at regional and international level, in particular with UNEP and WHO.

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<sup>2</sup> Details of the Quick Start Programme Trust Funds are described in Appendix II of Resolution Four of ICCM, [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm).

30. The Council is invited to consider the outcome of the ICCM, in particular the role of FAO in its implementation, and to endorse or otherwise appropriately acknowledge SAICM.

31. The important role of FAO in pesticide management is reflected in the numerous references to existing programmes and activities in the Global Plan of Action. The Council is requested to note that FAO's ongoing work on pesticides represents a significant contribution to activities proposed under SAICM.

32. It is anticipated that it will be difficult for FAO to meet the increased expectation of countries under SAICM within existing Regular Programme resources. In the light of this and the limitations of the Quick Start Programme, Council is requested to consider other sources of support outside the Regular Programme, including identifying work under SAICM as a priority for Trust Funds to FAO, or to indicate other possibilities.