

Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety

I. We, the participating partners in the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), met in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, October 15–20, 2000 for our Third Forum. Representing governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations from industry, public interest groups, and groups concerned with scientific and labor interests, we:

Reaffirm our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development including the principles on sustainable development, capacity building, access to information and the precautionary approach;

Recommit to Agenda 21, Chapter 19, acknowledging the challenges for chemical safety set in 1992 at Rio;

Note the progress made since the establishment of our Forum in 1994;

Emphasize the essential role of sound management of chemicals in sustainable development and the protection of human health and the environment;

Recognize the responsibility of all sectors to work together in our shared vision for the safe management of chemicals;

Acknowledge that all countries have diverse needs in working to achieve chemical safety;

Recognize the importance of the provision of technical and financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to accomplish Forum priorities beyond 2000;

Understand that our knowledge of the effects of exposure to chemicals remains very incomplete; that continued research and vigilance are needed; that new challenges will demand new responses; that cooperation and partnership are essential to the development of appropriate policies and infrastructure for chemicals management in all countries; and that an informed public is a vital support for the work that needs to be done; and

II. Accordingly, we call on governments, industry, public interest non-governmental organizations, labor unions, scientific organizations, international organizations, and the public to engage and join us in our common efforts toward the accomplishment of the priorities that we have set for review at Forum IV and Forum V and beyond:

1. Promoting global cooperation for chemicals management; for pollution prevention; for sustainable agriculture; and for cleaner processes, materials and products;

2. Increasing the flow of information about the safe use of chemicals; the risks that can be involved in their manufacture, release into the environment and disposal; and the means to avoid or reduce risks;

3. Ensuring that all countries have the capacity for sound management of chemicals, particularly through coordinated national policies, legislation and infrastructure;

4. Ratifying and implementing chemicals conventions and agreements and ensuring efficient and effective coordination between all chemical safety-related organizations and activities;

5. Marshalling resources to remedy chemical safety problems warranting concerted international response and action, such as illegal trafficking in toxic and dangerous products; and

6. Increasing access to information, knowledge, and skills development in chemical safety, recognizing that communities have a right-to-know about chemicals in the environment and to participate meaningfully in decisions about chemical safety that affect them.

III. While taking satisfaction that much has been done we, the participants, agree that much still remains to be done in order to accomplish the intent of Chapter 19, as:

1. Many countries are still struggling to establish the essential infrastructure for chemical safety including the creation of national coordinating mechanisms, the development of national profiles and the implementation of national action plans;

2. Standards of chemical safety across much of the world fall short of that needed to provide adequate protection of human health and the environment;

3. Insufficient international resources have been mobilized and insufficient local resources exist to properly manage and dispose of the many stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals that remain around the world; and

4. International assessments of chemicals have not reached the targets set at Forum I in 1994.

IV. In order to build on progress to date and to meet those objectives that have been set in a number of fora and in Salvador da Bahia during Forum III we, the participants, commit ourselves to:

1. Work together as partners in this mutual enterprise, recognizing the valuable contributions that each has to make to attainment of our goals;
2. Give greater emphasis to cooperation and coordination at all levels, seeking synergies through sharing concerns and experience, and through pooling of resources;
3. Identify innovative solutions to the problems of chemical safety and pursue them energetically;
4. Seek ways of securing greater and more stable flows of resources to enable work on the pressing priorities identified, and the goals set, at Forum III; and
5. Promote the entry into force at the earliest possible time of international treaties and agreements concerning chemical safety that are under negotiation or not yet in operation,

V. So that we can focus our energies and resources and measure our progress, we commit ourselves and, where applicable, with the support of donor countries and international organizations to achieve a number of goals for review at Forum IV and Forum V, as set out in full in our Forum III document *Priorities for Action beyond 2000*. To keep these before us we list key goals in short form:

By 2001:

The Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants will have been adopted.

By 2002:

Most countries, through a multi-stakeholder process, will have developed a National Profile on chemicals management, ensured national coordination for the sound management of chemicals and designated an IFCS National Focal Point.

Seventy or more countries will have implemented systems aimed at preventing major industrial accidents and systems for emergency preparedness and response.

Poison centers will have been established in thirty or more countries that do not have such centers and further strengthened in at least seventy more.

By Forum IV in 2003:

The Rotterdam Convention will have entered into force.

The Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) will have been adopted.

An effective Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals will be operating.

The Forum will consider recommendations for prevention of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products, and countries will have elaborated their national strategies.

A report will have been prepared on the problem of acutely toxic pesticides and severely hazardous pesticide formulations and recommending sound management options.

All countries will have reported on risk reduction initiatives they have taken on other chemicals of major concern.

By 2004:

Recommendations to establish common principles and harmonized approaches for risk methodologies on specific toxicological endpoints will be available.

An additional one thousand chemical hazard assessments will have been completed and made available to the public in a timely manner.

Most countries will have procedures in place to ensure that hazardous materials carry appropriate and reliable safety information.

Most countries will have integrated and ecologically sound pest and vector management strategies.

Most countries will have established action plans for safe management of obsolete stocks of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals and at least two countries in each IFCS region will have commenced implementation of their action plans.

Following its adoption in 2001, the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants will have entered into force.

At least two additional countries in each IFCS region will have established a Pollution Release and Transfer Register or emissions inventory.

By 2005:

At least five countries in each IFCS region will have full arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals.

Most countries will have developed national policies with targets for improving the management of chemicals.

Beyond Forum V (expected in 2005 or 2006)

The Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals will be fully operational.

Most countries in each IFCS region will have fully operational arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals.