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## UNIDO at International Chemicals Management Preparatory Committee meeting (SAICM PrepCom-3)

*Vienna, Austria, 19 - 24 September, 2005*



The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom-3) was held from 19-24 September 2005 in Vienna, Austria. UNIDO representatives, focusing on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and Chemical Leasing, were among over 595 participants, representing more than 185 governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies, who attended the session.

The Austrian Government, through the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forestry, contributed EURO 250,000 (US\$ 300,000) to cover part of the cost of the venue in Vienna. The Austrian Ministry of

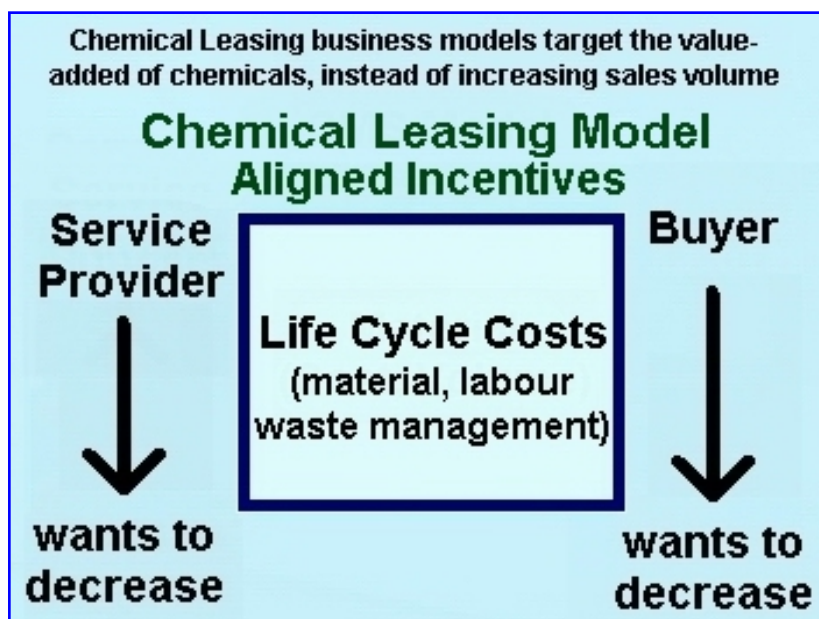
see <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/saicm/prepcom3/> for a full report on SAICM PrepCom-3 (documents are available at the UNEP SAICM PrepCom-3 webpage <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/prepcom3/>)

Foreign Affairs committed Euro 50,000 for UNIDO to present success stories of its experience in chemicals management ( [view or download case studies](#)), a UNIDO exhibition, and to organize a side event on Cleaner Production, highlighting business models on Chemical Leasing. UNIDO contributed US\$ 150,000 to cover part of the cost of the venue as well as the cost of participation of delegates from developing countries.

Chemicals and chemicals management have been important topics for UNIDO technical cooperation since the organization was formed in 1967. Initially, a Chemicals Industries Branch provided sectoral support to developing countries seeking to build indigenous chemicals industry capacity. After the Bhopal accident in 1984 the focus of technical cooperation activities shifted towards chemicals safety and occupational safety elements were included in all programmes. In 1992, UNIDO began work as one of four implementing agencies of the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund to help developing and other countries phase out their industrial use of ozone-depleting substances. UNIDO's activities with persistent organic pollutants (POPs) go back to the 1970s and actually predate the word itself, which came into popular use in the 1980s. [POPs is the priority area of UNIDO](#) with the [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#).

In general, UNIDO activities with regard to Chemicals Management involve: Transferring technology, skills

and knowledge to introduce or enhance the sound management of chemicals and biologicals; Promoting safety, health and environmental protection; Supporting the development and implementation of Intergovernmental agreements; and Supporting regional efforts to research, evaluate and introduce environmentally sound chemicals and formulations in place of more harmful preparations.



The UNIDO side event on Chemical Leasing presented the results of a programme launched at the beginning of 2005 in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of the Environment to promote Chemical Leasing business models through UNIDO's Cleaner Production Network in developing and transition countries. Co-funded by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, the programme is being implemented at the moment in Egypt, Mexico and Russia (St. Petersburg). These centres have already established a good working relationship with chemical industries and are well versed on the problems in their respective countries (view or download presentations on: [Mexico](#), [Russia](#), [Intro to CL](#) and [UNIDO and CL](#)). Sixty-five representatives from government, industry and NGOs participated in the UNIDO Chemical Leasing side event which was inaugurated

during the UNIDO side event on Chemical Leasing, experts from UNEP-UNIDO National Cleaner Production Centres in Egypt, Mexico and Russia presented the results of their Chemical Leasing Programmes download presentations on: [Mexico](#), [Russia](#), [Intro to CL](#) and [UNIDO and CL](#)

by Mr. Thomas Nader, Director, Multilateral Development Cooperation, Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Thomas Jackl, Director, Chemical Policy, Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

Chemical Leasing business models represent an innovative response to global changes in chemical sector policies. The key element of the leasing models is a shift from the traditional business concept in chemical industries focusing on the sale volume of chemicals towards a more service-oriented and value-added approach. Experience in Austria shows that chemical leasing reduces ineffective use and over-consumption of chemicals and helps companies enhance economic performance.

But Chemical Leasing is only a small part of Chemicals Management. During the week, PrepCom-3 delegates discussed three documents: **the SAICM high-level declaration (HLD)**, **the overarching policy strategy (OPS)**, and **the global plan of action (GPA)**. The primary objective of PrepCom-3 was to produce the final text of the "high level declaration" to be forwarded to the [International Conference on Chemicals Management](#), (ICCM) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 4-6 February 2006. However, the draft high-level declaration (HLD) is still available for comments <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/> (until Friday 11 November 2005), as delegates did not reach agreement on many elements in all three documents under consideration (meeting documents and information documents are available at the UNEP SAICM PrepCom-3 webpage <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/prepcom3/>). Areas of disagreement cover: principles and approaches; description of the SAICM as "voluntary"; financial considerations; and the timing and frequency of International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) meetings.

PrepCom-3 did make significant progress in the global plan of action (GPA) in some sections of the executive summary and a number of work areas, and in sections of the overarching policy strategy (OPS), including international illegal traffic, governance, and key parts of the implementation section. However, there are still many politically sensitive issues that remain unresolved, and will have to be taken up by the ICCM in Dubai.

The substance of SAICM lies in the [global plan of action](#) (GPA), and the 288 activities that will contribute to achieving SAICM's objectives. Another of the key objectives of PrepCom-3 was to determine the institutional

or structural aspects to enable SAICM to operate at the international level. Apart from the differences in opinion as to the future role of the [Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety](#) (IFCS) and its possible relationship with SAICM, institutional issues were among the less problematic. There was near unanimous agreement on the need for both a secretariat, and an oversight body or "review process" to evaluate progress and keep SAICM on track. There was also general agreement that, whatever its institutional form, the implementation of SAICM will need to embrace a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach, ensuring the open, transparent and inclusive participation of all relevant stakeholders. UNEP will continue to function as the Secretariat with a major role for WHO to ensure that both human health and the environment constitute priorities for SAICM. Most participants agreed that the *International Conference on Chemicals Management* could serve as an oversight or review body.



find out more about: [UNIDO and Chemicals](#) or [UNIDO and the Montreal Protocol](#)

Funding commitment by donors awaits resolution, notwithstanding general agreement that SAICM can only become a reality if enough funds are available to support activities to enhance the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to safely manage chemicals. Although several participants expressed disappointment in the outcome of PrepCom-3, noting that it did not reflect the urgency of chemicals-related problems and the significant number of issues left unresolved. Many participants remained hopeful, however, and saw the real test for SAICM in its implementation phase, and on what is achieved on the ground.

Major achievements of UNIDO with regard to Chemicals Management include: Establishment of a network of over 30 National [Cleaner Production Centres](#) and a supporting dedicated website; Introduction of cleaner production methodologies, environmentally sound technologies, environmental management and accounting systems to industry in developing and transition economy countries; Development of policies and transfer of methodologies and technologies for the monitoring, treatment, recycling, and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes; Establishment of ecotoxicology centres; Establishment of and support for a regional network on safe pesticide production and information for 17 countries of the Asia and Pacific region (RENPAAP); Support for over 40 developing and transition economy countries with their Global Environment Facility (GEF)-financed "enabling activities" to prepare National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention on [Persistent Organic Pollutants](#); Evaluation and promotion of Best Available

Techniques and Best Environmental Practices and alternative materials thereby removing barriers to meeting convention obligations; Removal of 24,500 tonnes of ozone depleting substances (ODS) during 10 years of implementing [Montreal Protocol](#) objectives; Introduction of technologies and methodologies to prevent environmental release of toxic chemicals from various industry sectors such as textiles, leather tanning, [small-scale mining](#); and Evaluation and introduction of arsenic removal technologies for households and communities in South and South-east Asia.

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