

**High-level launching event for “Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals”**

**18<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**New-York, USA**

**12 May 2010, 6:15 pm**

**Opening Remarks**

**by**

**Donald Cooper**

**Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent**

**Organic Pollutants**

**Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior**

**Informed Consent Procedure for certain hazardous Chemicals and**

**Pesticides in international trade**

Ms. Chair, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to open this important event to launch the publication **“Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals”**.

With the shift in the consumption and production of chemicals from OECD countries to non-OECD countries, our focus should be today to support the development of the sound management of chemical in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their human and technical capacities to deal with the new associated risks.

This publication supports this objective and highlights some successful practices and experiences from both developed and developing countries but also from NGOs and industry worldwide.

To fast-track implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on chemicals, CSD calls for the use of new modalities, as well as the scaling-up of successful practices, like partnerships.

This publication is a good example of successful joint initiatives to place chemical safety high in the global sustainable development agenda, towards achieving the 2020 goal on the sound management of chemicals. For this reason, I sincerely thank the colleagues from the Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), UNEP /Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE)/ Chemicals Branch to have made this endeavour possible.

I am also very much grateful to all 18 authors, including the three delegates that are here with us today from the Government of Japan, the Government of Mexico and from International Council of Chemicals Association (ICCA), that have generously shared their experience and lessons learned and make the case for scaling up best practices with regards to: coherent and integrated legal and institutional frameworks; chemicals risk assessment, chemicals disposal and contaminated sites remediation; awareness raising for the public and the workers on chemicals risks; among other things;

Taken together these initiatives highlight factors that contribute to the better management of chemicals. Among them; we can mention the importance of the following:

**1) Make chemicals a priority in national development plans.** This is an area which has been mentioned in the SG report, by which greater efforts to integrate fully the objectives of sound management of chemicals throughout relevant sectors and into national budgets and development cooperation will bring greater attention at the national level and at the donor level, and subsequently bring additional financial resources.

**2) Involve a wide range of stakeholders.** The engagement of multiple stakeholders, such as the private sector, grassroots organisations, professional associations, enable knowledge-sharing and collective action to increase the effectiveness and quality of our work. For instance, industry has a greater role to play in providing and assessing data, and in managing chemicals. Workers and the public must take a more active role in monitoring and contributing to chemical safety management discussions.

**3) Promote a more integrated and multi-sectoral approach.** Chemicals management is cross-sectoral by nature, and as such involves several ministries, including agriculture, industry, labour, environment and health. Steps towards policy coherence, including through inter-ministerial committees, national focal points or integrated implementation plans are proven to be effective and bring positive impacts.

**4) Improve international cooperation.** There is a continuous need for international cooperation and technology transfer, in particular for assessing chemical risks; and finding cost-effective and safer alternatives for developing countries.

**5) Take a full life-cycle view when assessing and managing chemicals.** Historically, most of the management approaches used for controlling emissions during production have dealt with “end-of-pipe” solutions. Recently, governments and industry have been considering more holistic approaches to minimize impacts on health and the environment throughout the lifecycle of a product - from raw material use to final disposal – by designing more environmentally benign chemicals and adopting integrated product policies, including extended producer responsibility.

I hope that this publication will support to work of the Commission by providing food for thought for the discussions that will lead to the development of policy actions and measures to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan on chemicals.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important event, and I look forward to listening to the concrete experiences from the delegates from Japan,

Mexico and from ICCA, but before that, I would like to pass the floor to my colleague, Mr. Kaj Madsen, from UNEP Chemicals.