

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO SOUND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

THE CASE OF NIGERIA

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Seeing the need for national strategies which approaches chemicals management in an integrated rather than sectoral manner, the Federal Ministry of Environment established the 'National Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes Management Committee' (NCHWMC) charged with the overall mandate of developing Integrated National Action Plans for the sound management of both hazardous chemicals and wastes in Nigeria.

2. This Committee was derived from its precursors; the "Standing Committee on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure Import Decisions" and the "Technical Advisory Committee on Notification of Toxic Chemicals in International Trade", which had been involved in :

- Preparation of national inventory of control actions to ban or severely restrict pesticides and other chemicals having health and environmental implications;
- Recommendation of national control actions on toxic substances under legislative control in international trade;
- Development of effective mechanism for pesticide registration and regulation of use and disposal;
- Development of collaborative strategies for effective national chemical tracking system; and
- Development of an appropriate legislative infrastructure for sound national chemicals management.

3. The NCHWMC was established in response to recent developments in both global and national chemicals management regimes; with the adoption of the Stockholm Convention, endorsement of the GHS for 2008 implementation and the finalization/ adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

4. The multistakeholder nature of the Committee results from the recognition that although chemicals management and environmental matters are the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, they dovetail into many aspects of national life over which other sectors have responsibilities

ROLE OF FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

5. The Federal Ministry of Environment (FMENV) took the lead in convening and coordinating the activities of this committee in line with its mandate as the nation's environment watchdog" and the UNEP/FAO Designated National Authority for both Chemicals and Pesticides under PIC Procedure. The FMENV also serves as Secretariat to the Committee.

MANDATE

6. The overall mandate of the Committee is the development of broad strategies in the implementation of national chemicals management infrastructure, with a view towards plugging loopholes and enhancing areas of cooperation and synergies between relevant stakeholders through the development of specific action plans.

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

7. The participation of civil societies in the process of decision-making and policy formulation with respect to chemicals safety issues is greatly encouraged by government. A number of trade associations, NGO and professional group have been in the forefront of voluntary initiatives for chemical management in Nigeria.

8. Some activities within the civil society involve various groups such as:

i. The Weed Science Society of Nigeria, a professional Non-Governmental Organisation, which has been involved in pesticides management nationwide through programmes geared towards fostering interest in all aspects of weed biology and control by exchange of information through conferences, seminars, publications and symposia. The Organisation also co-operate with all agencies (government, quasi-government, and private) and learned societies with similar interest in weed biology, weed control and pesticides usage, while serving to disseminate research findings on weed control methods and safe use of herbicides at all levels.

ii. The National Industrial Safety Council of Nigeria, which operates as a forum for discussion on safe and healthy management of hazardous substances, including chemicals with the government, employers and workers and their representatives. The Body is involved in disseminating to the public, information on occupational safety, health and environment through regular production of magazine. They also undertake relevant activities to educate the employers and the workers alike through seminars and workshops on healthy work environment.

BUSINESS/TRADE GROUP

9. The Nigerian chemical industry has also been actively involved in government efforts for sound chemicals management with various awareness raising and training activities, such as product users training, product stewardship activities and demonstrations. Other initiatives for capacity building in the sector entail training programmes targeted at retailers and dealers. This sector has been very actively involved in the successful implementation of the GHS capacity building project.

COMPOSITION

10. The NCHWMC comprise; the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Ministry of Health (National Agency for Food and drug Administration and Control), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development, Federal Ministry of Labour & Productivity, Federal Ministry of Industry, Federal Ministry of Transport, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Ministry of

Finance, Standards Organisation of Nigeria, Federal Road Safety Commission, Nigerian Customs Service, National Maritime Authority, National Planning Commission, Research and Academic Institutions, Industry (i.e Agrochemical Group of Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) and the Chemical & Pharmaceutical sector of MAN) and Public Interest Groups.

CONSTRAINT

11. The issue of sustainable funding to ensure active engagement of all stakeholders in relevant activities and partnerships with agencies and private sector both at the national and international levels remains a major hurdle in sound national chemicals management.

CHALLENGES

12. Some of the challenges faced in ensuring that the Nigerian populace benefits from a partnership approach involving government, industry, and public interest and labour organizations in sound chemicals management efforts, include amongst others:

- Legislation of a National Chemical Registration Board with membership of all relevant stakeholders to harmonize chemical/pesticides registration.
- Integration of national regulatory framework to address the entire lifecycle of chemicals, in order to avoid the current piecemeal, overlapping and conflicting regulations;
- Legislation of the existing multistakeholder "National Committee on Management of Chemicals and Hazardous Substances" as an Inter-ministerial Body that will be responsible for integrating the issues of chemicals safety/management into national development planning.
- Sustained national public awareness/sensitization programme on the relationship of environmental and health problems to chemicals exposure risks, underlining the complicated relationship between poverty and the environment.

CONCLUSION

13. Notwithstanding the need to strengthen the existing collaborative mechanisms among various national regulatory authorities, this forum for cooperation and coordination has been a key tool in national efforts geared towards effective and integrated chemicals management.

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