

2nd IPCP Letter, October 2007

Dear colleagues supporting the IPCP initiative,

in this 2nd IPCP letter, we want to inform you about the progress of the IPCP initiative since March 2007 and about next steps planned for late 2007 and early 2008.

1. General: The initiative to establish an International Panel on Chemical Pollution, IPCP, is supported by an increasing number of scientists and we received positive feedback also from several national governments. In July, we moved the IPCP website to www.ipcp.ch. At the new web site, you find the IPCP declaration and the list of signatures as well as background information about the initiative. As of October 2007, 70 scientists from 33 countries have signed the declaration.

The Steering Committee members present at DIOXIN'2007 met on 2 September 2007 to review the present status of IPCP and to discuss next steps (see below).

2. Presentations of the IPCP initiative: the IPCP initiative was presented at several national and international scientific meetings, including the SETAC Europe Meeting in Porto, Portugal (May 2007), the Dioxin 2007 Conference in Tokyo, Japan (September 2007), the EuCheMS 11th ICCE conference in Torun, Poland (September 2007), the 9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum in Chisinau, Moldova (September 2007), and the annual meeting of the Division of Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology of the German Chemical Society in Osnabrück, Germany (September 2007).

At the Dioxin 2007 Conference in Tokyo, the IPCP was discussed in a session with seven oral presentations. Martin Scheringer gave an overview of the objectives and the current status of the initiative; Noriyuki Suzuki discussed the objectives and the role of the IPCP, also in relationship to existing institutions; Derek Muir presented the objectives of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) and pointed out opportunities for collaboration between SETAC and IPCP. After these three more conceptual presentations, Joao Torres (Brazil), Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana), Ricardo Barra (Chile), and Bernard Kiremire (Uganda) presented chemical pollution problems in their countries and discussed how the IPCP could support scientific research and education in these countries. We are grateful to the Japanese and Swiss governments, who provided funding to support the participation of the colleagues from Africa and Latin America. The slides summarizing the IPCP session for the Highlights session on September 7 are available at www.ipcp.ch/IPCP_Documents.html.

At the ICCE conference in Torun, September 2007, Åke Bergman presented the IPCP initiative both to the board of the EuCheMS Division of Chemicals and the Environment and to the interested audience at the meeting.

3. Topics for IPCP working groups: the most important next step for the IPCP initiative will be to identify priority topics and to start to work on these topics. Our intention is to establish working groups with a chair and several members who will review the scientific knowledge about the group's topic, including a discussion of consensus, disagreement, uncertainties and priorities for further research. The results

of this process of reviewing and interpreting the current knowledge will then be presented in a report that will be delivered to international institutions and national governments and will also be available to the public.

As a first step in this direction, please send us your suggestions for priority topics that should be addressed by IPCP working groups.

We will inform you about the proposals made and, based on the feedback from you, we will make suggestions for first IPCP working groups.

4. Proposal for SAICM Quick Start Programme: the Steering Committee confirmed its earlier decision to submit a proposal to the SAICM Quick Start Programme (see www.chem.unep.ch/saicm). Because preparation of such a proposal is more complicated than we expected, we did not meet the last deadline (September 14). Our intention is to put together a “tool box” for the identification of priority chemical risks and hazards and to employ this tool box in four different regions of the world to identify priority problems in these regions and to further develop the tool box based on the experience from the four case studies. We have identified countries in most of the UN regions interested in participation and are now working with them on the content of the proposal. We will inform you about next steps in this project as soon as possible.

5. Additional steps: the IPCP steering committee decided that the IPCP should be given a legal status and, for that purpose, that it should be registered as a non-profit society in Switzerland. This also implies that statutes have to be prepared for the IPCP. We will draft these statutes and send this proposal to all of you and invite comments.

Please send us your feedback and suggestions for the further development of the IPCP. The most important point is item 3 above but feedback on all other aspects mentioned in this letter is very welcome, too.

Please forward this letter to colleagues who may also be interested in the IPCP initiative.

With best regards,

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