



Planning implementation of global and regional chemical safety policies

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Scope and purpose

Several high-level strategic decisions have been adopted recently to ensure greater protection of human health and the environment from the negative impacts of hazardous chemicals. They include the new Global Framework on Chemicals and the Bonn Declaration (2023), World Health Assembly resolution WHA76.17 on the health impacts of chemicals, wastes and pollution (2023), further development of existing regulatory mechanisms, and discussion of new ones. The Budapest Declaration on Environment and Health (2023) includes commitments to improve chemical safety in the WHO European Region.

Achievement of the objectives and targets of current chemical strategies would appear to be feasible in view of progress made in the Region in terms of strengthening the legal and institutional basis; improving the availability of information; development and use of novel tools; environment monitoring and health surveillance; and awareness-raising. Baseline and other conditions that influence planning of further actions differ, however, from country to country, and prioritization of common regional activities would facilitate planning of national chemical agendas and ensure more effective use of technical, human and other resources.

The planned meeting will consist of two parts. The first will be a discussion and agreement on regional chemical safety priorities and planning of actions to ensure implementation of the Budapest Declaration on Environment and Health and other relevant policies. Specifically, the following will be discussed:

- alignment of global and regional chemicals management policies;
- identification of regional priority areas and activities at the mid-term (up to 2030);
- consolidation of efforts through partnerships; and
- use of science in accelerating progress in chemical safety

The second part of the meeting will consist of training in planning health protection activities throughout a chemical's life cycle, with the example of mercury. Training will cover: industrial activities and protection of the health of workers and communities; mercury in products; chemical wastes management, focusing on health-care wastes; and use of human biomonitoring in evaluating the effectiveness of policy implementation (the Minamata Convention on Mercury). Training will also include practical exercises on the development of health strategies for implementation of the Minamata Convention.

In preparation for the meeting, a webinar will be organized to introduce meeting participants to new chemical policies and their targets and objectives; participants will be requested to complete a questionnaire to facilitate discussions during the meeting.

The meeting is expected to identify actions to support Member States in implementing their commitments in the Budapest Declaration on Environment and Health and other chemical policies and in mainstreaming action to meet those commitments. The meeting outcome may be considered for updating the WHO Chemical Road Map. It is expected that experience in prioritization, planning and sharing of scientific information will support action at national level.