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INTERIM CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

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OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR THE INTERIM CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:  
CONSIDERATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF FOCUSED SUMMARIES

Note by the secretariat

1. The purpose of the present note is to provide the Interim Chemical Review Committee with an outline of issues that need to be considered prior to requesting designated national authorities to submit focused summaries of the information used in support of the regulatory action and referred to in the notification of final regulatory action.

A. Background

2. The process for drafting decision guidance documents adopted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its seventh session (decision INC-7/6) stipulates that, when the secretariat has received two verified notifications for a chemical from two PIC regions, it shall forward them and the supporting documentation referred to in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the notifications of final regulatory action form to the Interim Chemicals Review Committee for review.

3. At its second session, the Interim Chemical Review Committee reviewed its operational procedures and agreed that, before the secretariat forwards verified notifications to it for review, the designated national authority, in response to a request by the secretariat for the documentation cited in the notification of final regulatory action, should, if possible, submit a focused summary of the information used in support of the regulatory action and cited in the notification of final regulatory action for use by the Committee. It was also agreed that examples of focused summaries should, in the future, be circulated to designated national authorities (UNEP/FAO/PIC/ICRC.2/11).

4. The Committee did not define the format of the focused summary, the level of detail or length of the document. Further clarification is needed regarding the format and content of focused summaries before appropriate guidance can be developed or they can be requested from designated national authorities.

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\* UNEP/FAO/PIC/ICRC.3/1.

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5. In discussing this issue, and as the first step in preparing guidance to designated national authorities on the development of focused summaries, the Committee may wish to consider the points set forth in the following section.

#### B. Issues to consider

6. It needs to be clear that a focused summary is not a new obligation on designated national authorities but a voluntary action aimed at facilitating the work of the Committee. The focused summary is not intended to replace the documentation referenced in the submitted notification of final regulatory action.

7. The focused summary could facilitate the work of a drafting group established by the Committee by summarizing the basis for the reported regulatory action and ensuring consistency in the information available. In situations where the supporting documentation is not available in English the focused summary could be that part of the documentation that is translated. Similarly where the supporting documentation is extensive the focused summary could be the part that is circulated to the Committee for consideration.

8. Any guidance to designated national authorities on what constitutes an acceptable focused summary will need to be flexible as it may be that the documentation already produced and published by some national governments may be adequate as a focused summary. One approach could be to define a “minimum standard” for a focused summary, e.g., key headings and level of detail, which in some instances would need to be produced by a Government but in others could be satisfied by the documents already available;

9. The members of the Committee will need to identify representative focused summaries that could be compiled by the secretariat and made available to designated national authorities as a supplement to any guidance document that might be developed.

10. The Committee should consider the process by which this guidance on focused summaries and the compilation of representative examples is to be developed.

#### C. Next steps

11. In their consideration of the subject of focused summaries, the Interim Chemical Review Committee might wish to consider the issues identified above, relating to the content and use of such summaries as the basis for developing guidance to designated national authorities on their development and submission.

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