

Remarks by Udo Oels
Member of the Bayer Board of Management and ICCA Board of Directors
ICCA Side Event at UNEP International Conference on Chemicals Management
Sunday 5 February

“Partnership on Capacity Building in Chemicals Management”

Excellencies, Professor Töpfer, Akasaka-san, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here in Dubai at this important global event – the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

It is my pleasure to speak to you on behalf of the International Council of Chemical Associations, the ICCA, about one of the cornerstones of SAICM.

SAICM is the road map for all stakeholders to achieve the Johannesburg target 2020 on the safe production and use of chemicals globally. However, capacity for the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle remains inadequate on a global level, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Therefore, from ICCA’s perspective capacity building in these countries is a key element for implementing both SAICM and existing international instruments and conventions on chemicals safety in an efficient and non-bureaucratic way.

Capacity building to promote and improve chemical safety is a complex process and should comprise the following main elements:

First: Ensuring that the necessary national infrastructure and political framework are in place.

Second: Promoting and supporting education and training in the relevant areas and sharing best practises and the necessary information to ensure that chemicals and products made from chemicals can be handled safely.

And third: Support the transfer and use of environmentally sound technologies and environmentally beneficial goods and services.

ICCA member federations and their companies are prepared to further promote and support activities aimed at capacity building on chemical safety.

Ladies and gentlemen, ICCA also recognizes that the challenges of SAICM in this respect cannot be met without concerted efforts from all stakeholders.

There is a need for a new partnership approach among inter-governmental organizations, national governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to manage chemicals and processes safely at a global level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

in order to explain and to demonstrate what this type of partnership could look like and what the added value for the partners might be – I would like to provide some examples of Capacity-Building Activities that my company – Bayer – has implemented very successfully.

As Professor Töpfer has mentioned already, Bayer and UNEP have set up a public-private partnership as a model for how business and politics can work closely together. Naturally, a major United Nations organization and a global company do not always share the same opinions and perspectives. We have recognized, however, that in many areas we do share the same goals – making it logical to work together to achieve our common goals.

The partnership between Bayer and UNEP focuses on young people. We are convinced that we need to involve young people in environmental matters to raise their awareness and encourage their environmental commitment. Together with UNEP, we run a dozen projects around the world. Our funding includes more than one million Euros a year, as well as a wide range of non-cash contributions.

An outstanding example is the Young Environmental Envoy Project that Bayer has established already 10 years ago. Every year we invite 50 especially dedicated young people from 16 countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America to participate in a week-long field trip to Germany to experience modern environmental protection at first hand.

When they return to their home countries, the Environmental Envoys are expected to share their new knowledge and experience through the networks they are involved with and thus, bring the idea of environmental protection back to their home countries.

All in all, we currently support about 300 projects around the world spending more than 50 million Euros a year for corporate social responsibility. This reflects our new corporate policy regarding capacity building and our social responsibility.

In Partnership with National Geographic Society, Bayer has established the “Global Exploration Fund” to support innovative research into the worldwide development of new water resources. This program is one of our contributions to the “Water for Life” decade of the United Nations.

Most of our CSR activities are focussed on capacity building, based on the principle of “helping people to help themselves”, for example, in Latin America and Africa.

The few examples I have mentioned have one theme in common: they benefit everyone – the society, the environment and our company. In other words, they represent a classic win-win-situation for all participants involved.

We are convinced that we can balance economic, ecological and social interests. Corporate social responsibility is thus an expression of our belief that we should never lose sight of the welfare of everyone.

It is also an expression of our philosophy, which is focused on trust and cooperation to enable us to jointly tackle the major challenges facing the lives of all of us – now and for future generations.

Thank you for your attention.