

Global Partnership to Implement the GHS

Teleconference – 15 May 2020, 10am -12 pm (CEST)

Summary report (17 June 2020)

1. Welcome and adoption of agenda (UNITAR)

UNITAR opened the teleconference and welcomed participants, with all introducing themselves. Twenty participants joined the call, representing a range of sectors and stakeholders. See annex 1 for the list of participants.

The agenda was adopted as proposed. Moderating responsibilities were shared among OECD, ILO and UNITAR, the three founding partners of the Global GHS Partnership:

2. Global GHS workshop originally scheduled for April 2020 (UNITAR)

A global face-to-face “lessons-learned and planning workshop” was planned for April 2020 but could not take place due to COVID19. To keep momentum and to foster action leading towards ICCM5 it is proposed to organize the workshop virtually, complemented by additional webinars/workshops on priority topics and workstreams advanced by the GHS coalition, before ICCM5.

Participants supported replacing the planned face-to-face workshop on lessons-learned from implementation of the GHS, through a webinar, or series of webinars on the topic (see also report item 3). This could include possible regional webinars to take into account time zones and languages (where possible) and a variety of experiences. Webinars on lessons learned would take place before the end of 2020, so that ideas can feed into IP4.

Further webinars could also be organized on other workstreams supported under the coalition, e.g. webinars with regional economic integration organizations. UNITAR, in coordination with ILO, will develop a more detailed schedule for the series of webinars and coordinate them alongside coalition partners and other invitees to the webinars.

3. Identification of lessons-learned from past GHS activities (ILO)

Numerous GHS capacity development activities have been undertaken by many partners. A systematic process to assess the effectiveness of these interventions has not yet taken place. Some partners (e.g. ICCA) have started work on identifying lessons learned. This, and other valuable activities could inform a workstream supported by the coalition to identify determinants for successful GHS capacity development and criteria for country selection.

Participants supported collection of lessons-learnt, case studies and useful tools for GHS implementation to support future capacity development. A document presenting results should be presented during the Beyond 2020 process and/or at ICCM5. Participants agreed that such work should inform criteria (as a guidance) for selection of countries to support in implementing the GHS. However, it was noted that before lessons learnt can be collected, a more general stock taking of previous GHS activities implemented at the country level would be useful, e.g. capacity development workshops.

The following participants offered to participate in a working group on this topic:

- ICCA
- ILO
- ITUC
- OECD
- UNITAR

ILO noted that a key lesson learnt that came out of a capacity development workshop of Cote D'Ivoire in 2019 was the active engagement and participation of the labour sector, (i.e. Ministry of Labour, workers' organisations) which leveraged the ongoing efforts of the development of national occupational safety and health (OSH) policies as well as the work leading up to the ratification of the ILO Chemicals Convention No. 170 in the country. Multi-sectoral engagement can therefore be seen as an important preliminary lesson learnt. CEFIC, on behalf of ICCA, has already undertaken some initial information gathering on the topic of lessons-learnt and case studies, and offered to share their work on this.

4. Implementing capacity development in committed countries (ILO)

Capacity development activities across the coalition are expected to continue before ICCM5. This could include work on practical guidance for consideration of legislative options, and initiation of capacity development activities taking into account the development of selection criteria. Initial results could be shared at ICCM5.

Noting that capacity development activities will likely carry on before lessons-learnt and criteria for selection documents are available, the group discussed related activities.

UNITAR, ILO and UNECE are co-custodians of the indicator of progress on the GHS. However, this is difficult to track as the agencies are only recipients of information, given there is no formal requirement to report implementation. Furthermore, the inherent flexibilities in the GHS mean defining what constitutes implementation and accessing that information can be difficult. However, recent steps have been taken to make the methodology more robust and develop a wider network of stakeholders who have knowledge of new implementation.

ILO noted that capacity development efforts should not see GHS as a stand alone component, but rather integrate its efforts with the promotion of ILO Conventions related to chemical safety (No. 170, No. 174, along with many others), as well as with national OSH policies and programmes. In this way, capacity development efforts can leverage ongoing national activities and promote the establishment of more comprehensive national chemical safety programmes.

Participants also discussed and supported the idea to develop a practical guidance on options for legislation and standard setting to implement the GHS. Several relevant documents should be taken into account, including:

- ECHA [Guidance on the Application of the CLP Criteria](#)
- IOMC toolbox guidance - legislative guidance throughout (<https://iomctoolbox.oecd.org/>, pending new weblink)
- UNEP's [LIRA guidance](#) and [chemicals control guidance](#)
- The Swedish Chemicals Agency's (KemI) [guidance](#)

The coalition felt that such work would be worthwhile and welcomed this as a future area of work, forming an additional working group. UNITAR noted that some resources were likely available for this and offered to lead on the work, with ILO joining. ITUC recommend engaging with IndustriaALL on this work.

5. Engagement of economic integration/ regional trade organizations (OECD)

Agreements to facilitate trade may become a driver for GHS implementation and harmonization. Yet, global efforts to support GHS implementation have not fully engaged with regional trade organizations which are active in GHS implementation (e.g. APEC, SADC) or have a potential to support GHS implementation.

Jonathan Krueger, independent consultant working for UNITAR, introduced ongoing work to identify support activities to implement the GHS, including economic integration organizations. It is expected that a draft of this will be available during June 2019.

Participants agreed that engaging with economic integration/ regional trade organizations should be a priority topic, noting specifically the African Continental Free Trade Agreement as an example.

ITUC added that global unions have negotiated labour, safety and environmental clauses in bipartite agreements with multinationals (Global Framework Agreements) and in contract compliance clauses in contracts with the World Bank and other international finance institutions. These are both potentially fruitful avenues to develop GHS compliance language.

KemI offered to undertake/commission a study on GHS within trade agreements and across regional trade organizations and countries. ITUC, ICCA and UNITAR offered to join, with UNITAR indicating it would be able to seek engagement of WTO and other Geneva-based entities.

6. Ambition of the coalition and mobilisation of commitment and resources (OECD)

The GHS coalition seeks to foster enhanced commitment and support for GHS implementation. Through what "vehicle" will the coalition seek to achieve this commitment, e.g. would a GHS Strategy be developed complementary to the targets and indicators under the beyond 2020 process? What could be done to obtain a better understanding of what resources may be available through coalition partners and other stakeholders?

Participants re-emphasised the importance of feeding into IP4, ICCM5 and the Beyond 2020 process. The group agreed that GHS implementation should be one of the targets. It is important to note that the proposal [at IP3 of an Alt Target A.3](#) “By 20XX [legal requirements] to implement the GHS have been adopted in countries” was not retained in the [proposed targets of the Technical Working Group on targets, indicators and milestones](#) for IP4.

Participants agreed to organize a webinar on the strategy of the partnership and how this could feed into ICCM5. This could be a follow-up to the lessons-learnt webinar.

A survey on available resources to support GHS implementation had been proposed to the group. However, the participants felt it was more valuable to focus efforts on agreeing on targets, indicators and milestones for such implementation, and then afterwards seeing how resources can be leveraged to meet the level of ambition that is agreed.

As a link to a new stakeholder and possible resources, the European Commission referenced the European Union (EU) Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative (https://europa.eu/cbrn-risk-mitigation/index_de). In addition, the ICCM5 Bureau reps for the Health (Susan Wilburn) and Public Interest (Joe DiGangi) NGOs respectively were recommended as relevant contacts, as well as Andrea Rother of the University of Cape Town. It could also be possible to link implementation support activities to the provision of co-financing by recipients, to demonstrate commitment to the aims of projects/activities, such as the mechanism used by the GEF.

7. Options for governance (UNITAR)

When created in 2002 at WSSD the GHS Global Partnership had an informal governance structure, including an Annual Meeting of stakeholders, informal consultation among the three supporting organizations (UNITAR, ILO, OECD) and secretariat support services provided by UNITAR. Would there be value added to upgrade the governance structure, for example by to establish a Steering Committee engaging all core coalition members?

Noting the flexible structure that is currently in place for the partnership and its engagement with coalition partners, participants were happy to continue with the current informal arrangements for upcoming work.

Annex 1 – List of Participants

<u>GHS - partnership - teleconference - list of participants</u>				
		<u>15-May-20</u>		
	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Agency/Institution</u>	<u>Email</u>
1	Achim	Halpaap	UNITAR Advisor	achim.halpaap@unitar.org ;
2	Ann-Evelyn	Luyten	CEFIC/ICCA	ael@cefic.be ;
3	Ari	KARJALAINEN	ECHA	Ari.KARJALAINEN@echa.europa.eu ;
4	Bob	Diderich	OECD	Bob.DIDERICH@oecd.org ;
5	Felix	Wertli	FOEN, Switzerland	Felix.wertli@bafu.admin.ch ;
6	Gunilla	Ericsson	KemI, Sweden	Gunilla.Ericson@kemi.se ;
7	Halshka	Graczyk	ILO	graczyk@ilo.org ;
8	Jenny	Holmqvist	ECHA	Jenny.HOLMQVIST@echa.europa.eu ;
9	Jonthan	Krueger	Independent consultant	jpkkrueger@yahoo.ca ;
10	Jorge	Ocana	UNITAR	Jorge.OCANA@unitar.org ;
11	Juergen	Helbig	EC	Juergen.HELBIG@ec.europa.eu ;
12	Lennart	Dock	KemI, Sweden	Lennart.Dock@kemi.se ;
13	Manal	Azzi	ILO	azzi@ilo.org ;
14	Maria	Ruiz-Cuevas	CEFIC/ICCA	MCU@cefic.be ;
15	Matthias	Wolf	BMU, Germany	Matthias.Wolf@bmu.bund.de ;
16	Oliver	Wootton	UNITAR	oliver.wootton@unitar.org ;
17	Rory	O'Neill	ITUC	editor@hazards.org ;
18	Servet	Goren	CEFIC/ICCA	sgo@cefic.be ;
19	Sylvie	Poret	OECD	Sylvie.PORET@oecd.org ;
20	Tony	Musu	ETUI	tmusu@etui.org ;