

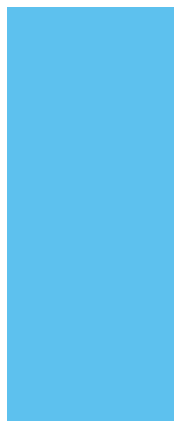


# unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

## The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)

UNITAR – 12 September 2023



# THE GHS

**G**LOBALLY  
**H**ARMONIZED  
**S**YSTEM  
OF CLASSIFICATION  
AND LABELLING  
OF CHEMICALS



**GHS often regarded as a fundamental** component of the sound management of chemicals, applicable to all sectors; **health, labour, agriculture, environment, transport, trade, and more.**

Global political backing:

- Plan of Implementation, adopted by WSSD (2002), encouraged **countries to implement the GHS as soon as possible.**
- The High Ambition Alliance stated at IP3 (Bangkok, 2019): “...**essential that the [GHS] be implemented by all countries**”
- The GCO-II (UNEP, 2019), under Action 1 on developing effective management systems calls for “**full implementation of the GHS**”.

FAO, in their 2022 update to the Guidance on good labelling practice for pesticides notes that:

“the GHS has become the international standard for classification and labelling of chemicals, including pesticides... This guidance recommends use only of the GHS for pesticide labelling”.

Further to this:

“**FAO** and **WHO** therefore strongly recommend progressive adoption of the GHS for classification and labelling of pesticides”.



GHS has direct relevance to:

- **FAO/WHO Code of Conduct on Pesticides** (and labelling guidance)
- **WHO Chemicals Roadmap**
- **ILO Convention 170 (and more)**
  - “...critical synergies between the GHS and the ILO’s instruments on chemicals and occupational safety and health, with an aim to further promote GHS implementation and an even greater engagement of the world of work in global efforts towards the safer management of chemicals.”
- **The Rotterdam Convention**
- **The Stockholm Convention**
- **Highly Hazardous Pesticides**
- **Sustainable trade, development**
- **Sustainable chemistry**
- **and more...**

## Information to accompany export (Article 13)

- ▶ both **chemicals listed in Annex III** and **chemicals banned or severely restricted** in the exporting Parties, when exported, shall be **adequately labelled** with regard to health or environmental hazards, **taking into account international standards (e.g. UN GHS)**
- ▶ All hazardous chemicals, when exported, shall be accompanied by **safety data sheets** according to **international standards (e.g. UN GHS)**



## 2.2 Criteria

The FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management [2008] recommended that HHPs should be defined as having one or more of the following:

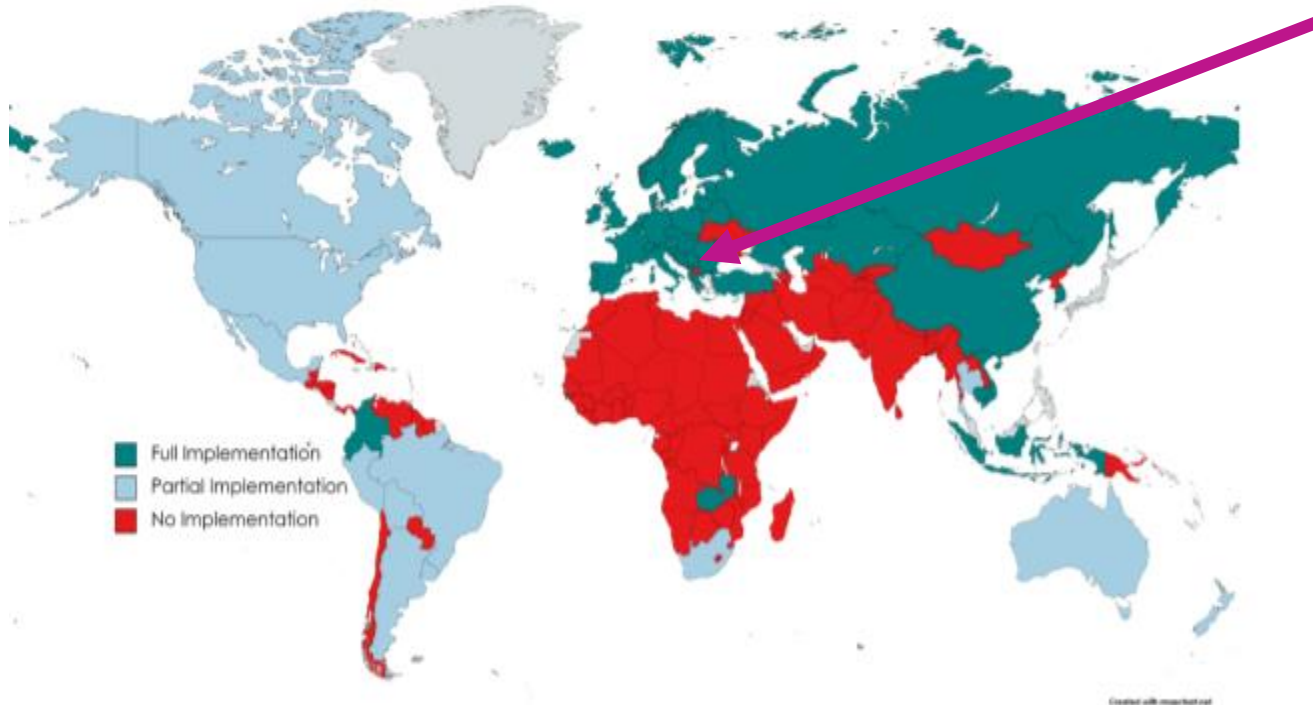
- Criterion 2: *Pesticide active ingredients and their formulations* that meet the criteria of carcinogenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the **GHS**, or
- Criterion 3: ...meet the criteria of mutagenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the **GHS**, or
- Criterion 4: ...meet the criteria of reproductive toxicity Categories 1A and 1B of the **GHS**



(8 criteria overall)

However, despite this, the GHS is still **not operational in more than 120 countries**, mostly developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

► Figure 3. Global GHS implementation status



*The boundaries shown on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the ILO*

- ILO, 2021 (The GHS in the world of work) based on the Global Chemicals Outlook 2, UNEP, 2019 and Persson et al. 2017



# IOMC



INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

A cooperative agreement among FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, World Bank and OECD



Indicators of progress in implementing SAICM

- IOMC indicators of progress, including:
  - Implementation of the GHS (UNITAR, ILO, UNECE)
    - Builds on academic research from 2017 to ascertain available legislation implementing the GHS, adding details on new countries as new information is received or found

## GHS

While the GHS will clearly be a referenced indicator of progress under the new framework, discussions continue on the *targets*

A draft target:



*By 20XX, all governments have legally implemented and enforce the UN GHS in all relevant sectors.*

The Beyond 2020 discussions continue in Bonn...

# UNITAR's activities and resources



- Co-lead of the Global Partnership to Implement the GHS, with the **ILO** and **OECD**, and a range of coalition partners
  - Governments, regional organisations, private sector, trade unions, academics and NGOs
- Activities for training and awareness raising, developing implementation strategies, and supporting the drafting and review of legislation



- **National Activities:**

- Last 10-15 years, supported multiple countries in developing national implementation strategies (typically funded by the Quick Start Programme)
- Directed support for drafting of legislation

- **Regional Activities:**

- Work in multiple regions, such as ASEAN, to develop regional approaches and coordination
- Work with UNEP and the Gulf Cooperation Council to update the 2002 guidelines for the management of chemicals; GHS and chemical accidents

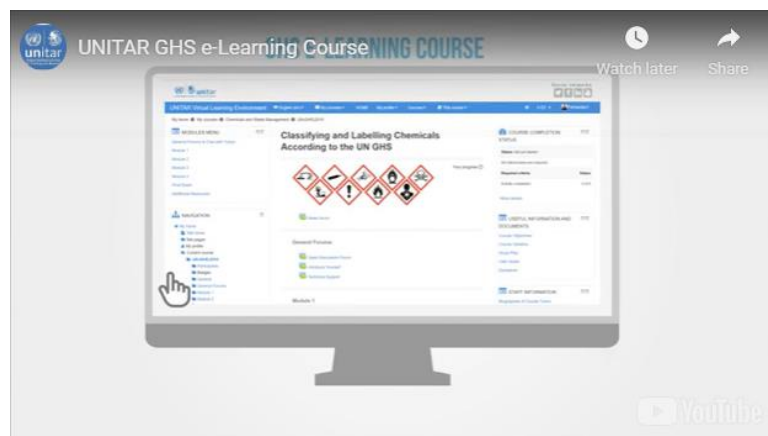
- **Guidance in the toolbox:**

- Developing a National GHS Implementation Strategy,
- Understanding the GHS: A Companion Guide to the Purple Book

- **Guidance document in the IOMC toolbox:**



- **e-Learning course:** Have successfully run an online GHS course over the past 10 years; technical understanding of the GHS
    - English and Spanish available, run twice a year, each March/April and September/October
- (<https://www.unitar.org/event/event-pillars/planet>)



- French is expected in 2023/2024



While **financing is always important**, there is **also a great deal of non-financial resources** available for stakeholders to be benefiting from:

- lessons-learnt
- implementation experience and know-how
- guidance and advice.
- access to data and information (including knowing where to find it)

Making use of information that already exists can be significantly helpful in designing development activities



## New resources available (to be added to the toolbox):

- Key elements of an implementation roadmap (UNITAR)
- Lessons-learned (UNITAR)
- Legislation guidance (UNITAR)
- The GHS and trade (UNITAR)
- The GHS in the world of work (ILO)

<https://unitar.org/global-partnership-implement-ghs>



Thank you for your  
attention!

<https://www.unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/planet/>

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