

**Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally
Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals**
(Fifth session, 7-9 July 2003)

HARMONIZATION OF PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS

Results of the meeting of the intersessional Group on Precautionary Statements during the fifth session of the SCEGHS

1. At the fifth session of the SCEGHS, the Correspondence Group was offered to hold a meeting with the participation of all interested parties. The related document was UN/SCEGHS/5/INF.5. The open issues with respect to the terms of reference have been illustrated. The discussion revealed the following results:
2. It was agreed to regard the Precautionary Statements as a module of the GHS and as such dependent from the Hazard Statement module.
3. There were no objections to use the IPCS compiler as a major source for the selection of Precautionary Statements, notwithstanding the fact that this compiler is not yet in line with the GHS criteria.
4. The Working Group was informed that the IPCS compiler is going to be adapted to the GHS. Due to the limited time scale for the Working Group, an adaptation in advance is envisaged by the group for selecting appropriate Precautionary Statements from the IPCS phrases catalogue.
5. There is an agreement that Precautionary Statements should address the physico-chemical, toxicological and environmental hazards equally. Any gaps in the IPCS system should be filled.
6. Reservations have been expressed to design the Precautionary Statements as a core element too close to the needs of the inexperienced user. In general, no distinction should be made between the types of users. If a substance or product is too dangerous, it would not be at hand for the public.
7. A modified structure of precautionary aspects, i.e. Prevention and Response, has been proposed by the United States of America as a heading. The more specific aspects such as storage, use, personal protective equipment, accidents, and disposal might be attributed to these two main headings.
8. There seems to be a need for establishing a hierarchy of Precautionary Statements (comparable to a hierarchy of hazards). This will facilitate the choice of appropriate Precautionary Statements with respect to the addressed target audience.
9. No firm conclusions have been drawn regarding the use of precautionary pictograms or the flexibility of phrase wording.

10. It is obvious that the concept of Precautionary Statements has to be proven by its practicability. This might be a process of development. Examples will be helpful.
 11. Any contributions related to this subject are requested by August 15 for circulation within the correspondence group. The United States of America announced proposals.
 12. A revised concept for Precautionary Statements with examples will be presented for the sixth session of the SCEGHS in December.
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