UN/SCEGHS/6/INF.11

Sub-Committee of Experts
on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemical
(Sixth session, 10-12 December 2003)

COOPERATION WITH THE TDG SUB-COMMITTEE ON ITS 24th SESSION

Extract from the report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its 24th session
(3-10 December 2003)

New label for Division 5.2

Document: ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2003/33 (Norway)

Informal document: INF.40 (CTIF)

14. Some delegations supported in principle proposals by Norway and by CTIF for a new label to distinguish Division 5.2 more clearly from Division 5.1 in order to permit improved emergency response. They preferred the solution proposed by Norway, however (upper half red and lower half yellow), to that of CTIF (upper half white and lower half yellow with the indication "ORGANIC PEROXIDE") since the association of yellow and red was a more accurate reflection of the dangers of oxidation and flammability. The CTIF proposal was furthermore not in keeping with the original principle of the United Nations Recommendations whereby the hazard should be identified by an illustration without any need to refer to a written text.

15. Other delegations considered that this matter should the submitted to the GHS Sub-Committee. It was recalled, however, that the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods was the focal point of the GHS Sub-Committee where physical hazards were concerned. The proposal by Norway moreover only concerned the transport label and would have no influence on the GHS label. However, it was pointed out that it would have been preferable to submit such a proposal when the GHS was still under development and that it was now rather late for raising such kind of issues.

16. Other delegations said that it would always be possible to improve labelling, but that, according to the emergency response services in their countries, the present labelling system for organic peroxides did not pose any problem that would justify a revision. It should also be recalled that the matter of substances potentially presenting simultaneous explosive, self-reactive, oxidizing and flammable properties was a delicate one and was still the subject of study and research by industry; it would perhaps be premature to introduce a new label before this work had been concluded.

17. It was also noted that it was not particularly desirable to multiply the number of labels from the safety point of view insofar as this complicated the training of participants in transport operations and in the emergency response services and the updating of their knowledge. Provision would also have to be made for a transitional period for the introduction of a new label and the use of the old labels.

18. The expert from Norway said that he would submit a new proposal for the next session, bearing in mind the comments made.

* * * * *

HARMONIZATION WITH THE GLOBALY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS (GHS)

Physical hazards

Document: ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2003/54 (United States of America)

67. There was general support in principle for harmonizing the 60.5 °C flash point upper cut-off value for packing group III with the 60 °C GHS value.

68. Several delegations considered that extending the scope of the Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to all GHS Category 4 substances, i.e. those with a flash point above 60 °C and not more than 93 °C, was not justified. This would imply checking the classification of a multitude of chemical products and reclassification with additional costs for the industry, when for example in Europe, the previous upper limit of 100 °C had been lowered to 60 °C in 1995 for reason of harmonization with the UN Recommendations, and this had entailed no safety problem.

69. The 450 litres minimum quantity limitation for application of the Model Regulations to such products was also questioned and it was also noted that the GHS did not require any symbol for identifying category 4 products.

70. The principle of covering all substances with a flash point more than 60 °C and not more than 93 °C, put to the vote, was not adopted.

Establishment of an OECD Ad Hoc Group on Physical Hazard Characterization

Informal document: INF.27 (Secretariat)

71. The Sub-Committee noted with concern that the OECD Working Group of National Coordinators of the Test Guidelines Programme had agreed to establish an OECD Ad Hoc Expert Group on Physical Hazard Characterization under the umbrella of the International Group of Experts on the Explosion Risks of Unstable Substances (IGUS). This implied that IGUS, instead of working as an independent group able to contribute to the work of the Sub-Committee as it did fruitfully in the past, would now have to work within the OECD intergovernmental structure in accordance with OECD rules of proceedings and reporting.

72. Recalling that it had been agreed by the GHS Sub-Committee that any new issue concerning physical hazards should now be brought first to the attention of the GHS Sub-Committee which would refer it to the TDG Sub-Committee for resolution (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/8, para. 22), the Sub-Committee felt that the creation of such and Ad Hoc OECD group might result in unnecessary duplication of work and competences and in complications in the relationship between IGUS and the GHS and TDG Sub-Committees and the decision making process.

73. The Sub-Committee expressed the wish that the GHS Sub-Committee reaffirm that all matters concerning physical hazards would be referred to the TDG Sub-Committee for resolution.

Hazards to the aquatic environment

Document: ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2003/58 (Netherlands)

Informal document: INF.22 (Netherlands)

75. Some delegations felt that since self-classification criteria had been introduced in the Model Regulations for hazards to the aquatic environment allowing the industry to classify pollutants of the aquatic environment in Class 9, under UN Nos. 3077 or 3082, it was not necessary to include additional provisions as proposed by the Netherlands. Some of them recognized that identification of the hazard to the aquatic

environment was relevant for maritime transport but believed that this was superfluous for other modes since according to 2.0.1.2, many ot the substance assigned to Classes 1 to 9 are deemed, without additional labelling, as being environmentally hazardous. They noted that the application of the GHS criteria as reflected in Chapter 2.9 of the Model Regulations and the revision of labelling provisions accordingly was being discussed by IMO, and felt that the Sub-Committee should await the outcome of these discussions.

76. The Sub-Committee noted however that, according to paragraph 5 of informal document INF.11 by IMO, the IMO Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers was awaiting the adoption by the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals of a GHS marking for marine pollutants before making a recommendation to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee to consider adopting the same marking and deleting the present IMO marine pollutant mark.

77. Several delegations mentioned the practical difficulties encountered when trying to implement a self-classification system for environmentally hazardous substances. Contrary to substances likely to present other types of hazards, the release of any kind of chemical, industrial product or even foodstuff in the aquatic environment could be deemed as causing some potential damage to the environment, which implied that such products would all have to undergo costly tests before being transported. From the experience with the IMDG Code and RID/ADR they considered that it would be more practicable to work step-by-step with closed or indicative lists of substances identified as meeting the GHS criteria, which could be enlarged with testing experience.

78. It was also recalled that a number of substances in Classes 1 to 9 had already been identified as hazardous to the aquatic environment by IMO and the European Community, and that since many countries were committed to implement the GHS criteria for storage and supply regulatory purposes new data would soon be available and it would also be possible to identify such substances under transport regulations.

79. Finally, the Sub-Committee decided by a majority vote, that all substances hazardous to the aquatic environment, either falling under Classes 1 to 8 or under Class 9 only, should be identified as such by a GHS label or mark under transport regulations. The expert from the Netherlands was invited to revise her proposal in the light of certain comments made, and to provide the Sub-Committee with a list of substances already identified as meeting the GHS criteria for hazard to the aquatic environment.

(…)

Work of the GHS Sub-Committee

Documents: ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2003/7 (EIGA)

ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2003/9 (OECD)

UN/SCEGHS/6/INF.6 (France)

94. The Sub-Committee exchanged views on the proposal of EIGA concerning the classification of gas mixtures for toxic effects and that of OECD concerning substances which emit toxic gases in contact with water which were on the agenda of the sixth session GHS Sub-Committee to be held from 10 to 12 December 2003.

95. As there was no unanimous view on these subjects, no recommendation was made to the GHS Sub-Committee in this respect.