



BASEL CONVENTION

the world environmental agreement on wastes

BASEL CONVENTION *bulletin*

October 2003

SHIP DISMANTLING: *Greening an industry*

The Secretariat has commenced discussions with key UN bodies to develop an inter agency technical assistance project on ship dismantling.

“Everyone knows that ships often carry cargoes of hazardous wastes from industrialized countries for dumping in developing and East European countries. But recently the spotlight has turned to the ships themselves, and the toxic materials they’re made of,” explains Ibrahim Shafii, Technical Officer for the Basel Convention.

“The decommissioning of a large vessel may involve the removal of many tonnes of hazardous wastes, including Persistent Organic Pollutants such as PCBs, heavy metals such as mercury and lead, asbestos, and oil and gas.”

“For this reason the Basel Convention assembled a group of international experts on hazardous wastes and shipping to produce guidelines for the environmentally safe dismantling of obsolete ships.”

The Guidelines, adopted in 2002 at the sixth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, detail procedures and good practices for decommissioning and selling obsolete ships, dismantling them, sorting the parts (for reuse, recycling and disposal), identifying potential contaminants, preventing toxic releases, monitoring environmental impacts, and responding to emergencies and accidents. They also address the design, construction and operation of ship dismantling facilities.

Next steps

The Secretariat will develop the project through a joint working group with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

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Dismantling ships can be a risky business.

Photo courtesy of ILO



EDITORIAL

Compliance mechanism: *a milestone*

Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto

After more than three years of complex and lengthy negotiations, a new Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance with the Basel Convention was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting (Geneva, December 2002). The first meeting of the Committee was held just before the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (20–24 October 2003).

The mechanism aims at assisting Parties “to comply with their obligations under the Convention and to facilitate, promote, monitor and aim to secure the implementation of and compliance with the obligations under the Convention.” The mechanism is therefore non-confrontational, facilitative, preventive in nature, and non-binding.

A bit of history

During the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention in 1999, the Parties mandated the Legal Working Group to prepare a draft text for the mechanism for promoting implementa-



Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto

tion of and compliance with the Basel Convention.

Parties negotiated the draft text through meetings of the Legal Working Group, including two inter-sessional meetings.

The main contentious issues were the nature of the mechanism, the procedure for submission of cases of non-compliance, the composition and tenure of the Committee administering the mechanism and sources of information.

At the first Open-ended Working Group held on 28 April–2 May 2003, Parties elected members of the Compliance Committee.

How it works

The Compliance Committee is composed of 15 members based on equitable geographical representation. The members are nominated by the Parties and elected by the Conference of the Parties, unless otherwise decided by the Parties. Five members, one from each region, are elected for one term, and ten members, two from each region, for two terms.

Under the new mechanism, submissions of non-compliance may be made

to the Committee by a Party not being able to comply and requesting specific assistance, by a Party that is affected by the non-compliance of a third Party, and by the Secretariat when it becomes aware that a Party is encountering difficulties in fulfilling obligations under Articles 13-3 (Transmission of Information, obligation to report to the COP through the Secretariat).

In the case of a Party presenting a submission about a third Party or the Secretariat presenting a submission about a Party, consultations with the Party whose compliance is in question must be carried out before moving ahead in the proceedings.

A facilitating procedure is put in place so that the Committee, after consultations, provides the Party facing compliance difficulties, with advice, non-binding recommendations and information relating to strengthening regulatory regimes, accessing financial and technical assistance, elaborating compliance action plans or follow-up arrangements for reporting. If the Committee considers it necessary, after undertaking the above-mentioned steps, it may present recommendations to the Conference of the Parties.

“The Party whose compliance is in question may present responses and/or comments at every step of the proceedings” of the compliance mechanism.

After arduous negotiations on submission of information to the Committee by entities other than Parties and the Secretariat, it was agreed that “a Party may also consider and use relevant and appropriate information provided by civil society on compliance difficulties.”

The texts of the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance with the Basel Convention and the report of the first meeting of the Compliance Committee is available at www.basel.int.

Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto,
Executive Secretary of the
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Joining the Party

Nine countries have recently ratified the Basel Convention: Kazakhstan, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Marshall Islands, Jamaica, Brunei Darussalam, Bhutan, Djibouti and Samoa. As a result, a total of 157 states and the European Community were Parties to the Convention as of 1 October 2003.

The Ban Amendment has also had 10 recent ratifications: Liechtenstein, Poland, Brunei Darussalam, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Tanzania, Romania, Germany, Qatar and Saint Lucia. The total number stands at 37 as of 1 October 2003.

WASTE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE

IMPEL spells enforcement

Ibrahim Shafii

One of the Basel Convention's main partners in enforcing compliance with waste shipment regulations in Europe is the Secretariat of the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL)

A recent Conference organized by IMPEL and hosted by the Czech Environmental Inspectorate was an important step in intensifying cooperation between IMPEL and the Accession Countries to the European Union, and a valuable opportunity to discuss enforcement activities of both IMPEL and the Basel Convention related to the transboundary movement of waste.

The Prague Conference with EU and EU Accession Countries on compliance and enforcement (23–25 June 2003) was aimed at promoting compliance with the waste shipment regulations of the European Union and the Basel Convention. It was attended by 60 participants including representatives of the Basel Convention Secretariat.

The Conference focused on EU Waste Shipment Regulations (WSR) and how these are implemented in practice when controlling the movement of wastes between member countries. This knowledge is particularly important for participating EU Accession Countries, which are also Parties to the Basel Convention.

Monitoring illegal traffic

The Conference also gave the SBC an opportunity to follow the progress of the EU IMPEL Transfrontier Shipment of Wastes (TFS) project, which will be useful in the



implementation of the Pilot Project for the Monitoring and Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes in the Asian Region.

One of the new projects being implemented under IMPEL TFS is the "Threat Assessment on TFS of Wastes Project" which is aimed at determining the extent of illegal trafficking activities, methods used to detect illegal traffic, and information gathering from various sources, etc. Other emerging issues in the enforcement and control of the transboundary movement of waste also discussed at the Conference included problems with used electrical goods (e.g. refrigerators), car wrecks and Green-listed Wastes.

Conclusions

Some of the major conclusions of the Conference were:

- Member States and Accession States would submit proposals for funding of projects related to TFS to the Open-ended Working Group under the Basel Convention;
- establishment of Support Centres for implementing WSR and the Basel Convention, commencing with a centre in Brno, Czech Republic;
- further consideration on the control of Green-Listed wastes, car wrecks and old refrigerators; and

- Member States would support the Accession Countries in the enforcement of WSR and the Basel Convention through the IMPEL network.

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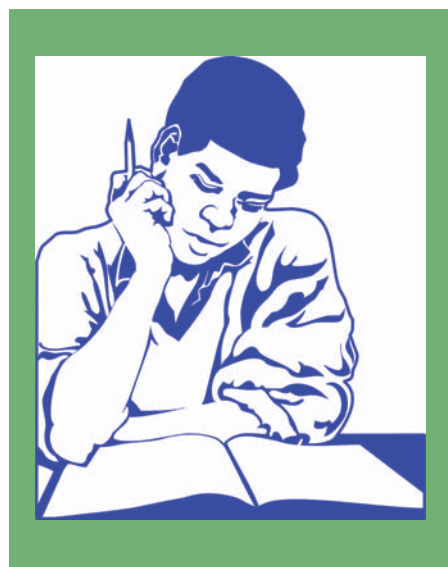
MOSCOW TRAINING WORKSHOP

Taking stock of hazardous wastes

Nalini Basavaraj
Vincent Jugault

In August, six countries from Central and Eastern Europe participated in a Training Workshop on national reporting and inventories under the Basel Convention

“A key to the efficacy of the Basel Convention is the quality of both its reports and its reporting,” comments Nelson Sabogal, head of Capacity Building and Training. “Quality data is important for the implementation of the Convention. For this reason we give high importance to training in the methodologies of data collection, classification and reporting.”



The Workshop, held in Moscow on 25–29 August 2003, was made possible by the generous provision of resource persons by Finland, Germany, the Russian Federation and UNEP Chemicals. It was organized by the Centre for International Projects of the Russian Federation and the Basel Convention Secretariat, and welcomed participants from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Russian Federation and Ukraine.

“The Secretariat’s quality control processes had identified data issues common to many Parties, particularly related to the link between national waste classification and data reporting under the Convention. We invited six people to participate as trainers based on their reliability as regular reporters under the Convention.”

The Workshop heard a variety of presentations and undertook a number of practical exercises including:

- presentations on existing methodologies and coordination at the national level for data collection and reporting under the Basel Convention by participating countries;
- overviews of data and information collection and processing activities, waste definitions, classification and characterization under the Basel Convention by the Secretariat;
- presentation on Germany’s experience in data collection and quality control in relation to reporting under the Basel Convention;
- practical exercises on the use of the Annexes I, III, VIII and IX of the Basel Convention;
- training on inventory techniques concerning hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention.

Practical results

Key practical outcomes from the Workshop included support for the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Moscow to initiate an analytical review of national and international legislation on environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and their transboundary movement; support for harmonizing waste definitions and classifications between Central and East European countries; support for the development/improvement of relevant



legislation in the participating countries and harmonization of legislation with the requirements of the Basel Convention; and better understanding of Basel Convention reporting and inventory requirements.

“All in all, this was a big step toward improving the practical application of the Convention,” concludes Sabogal. “The skills acquired by workshop participants will be multiplied many times over in their home countries.”

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Vincent Jugault and
Nalini Basavaraj

A remarkable life

Interview with Dr Jinhui Li

Where are you from in China?

I was born in the countryside near Baoding City, Hebei Province China. Hebei is located to the north of the **Yellow River** and to the east of the **Taihang Mountains**.

Once known as "The Land of Yan and Zhao", this is a culturally rich area, home to more than 50 minority ethnic groups. Baoding City is famous for its nearby Yesanpo Scenic Area, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

What was your early work experience?

I was on the staff of the local Environmental Protection Agency in Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province. In this position I was able to use my experience as a chemical engineer producing chemical products for everyday use.

How did you come to this current position?

I was recruited in 1997 by the Department of Environmental Science and Engineering, Tsinghua University. Soon after I began working for the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre for Hazardous Waste Management in Beijing, set up following a decision of the third COP to the Basel Convention.

What interests you about your current position?

My work and research focuses on hazardous waste management, e-waste management and recycling, although my duties at the Centre also include establishing working procedures, organizing workshops and other such administrative work.

E-wastes are a particular and growing problem in the Asia-Pacific region. This is partly the result of the increasing use of computers and other electronics in homes and businesses.

But another factor is the profitability of refurbishing used PCs and disassembling obsolete PCs, monitors, and circuit boards and then recovering the gold, copper and other precious metals. Unfortunately they can also contain hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium and mercury. Several Asian countries are at the top of the list of importers of e-wastes generated around the world.

What actions have you taken?

One of our Centre's major activities was to organize in November of 2002 a workshop on the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes – the first ever such meeting to be held on this problem in Asia.

Another of our preoccupations is the recycling of plastics, which can emit toxic materials such as bromine and chlorine if not properly treated. Recycling batteries and other household items is also high on our agenda – China's growing consumer society makes this a priority.

What are the Centre's biggest challenges?

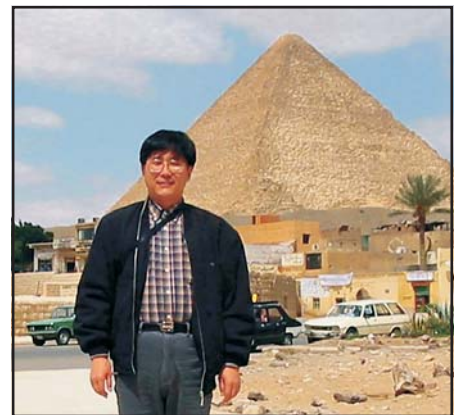
We have the universal problem of inadequate financial resources, and need to find new sources of funding for projects. We need to work harder to improve our efficiency – a key factor for the operation of the Centre. We must strive to improve our network by encouraging a greater sense of cooperation and enthusiasm among our partners. We must communicate the importance of environmentally sound management of wastes to policymakers.

Most of all, we must ensure that our work has a positive influence on the lives of the ordinary people of our region, and encourage those same people to reduce waste generation in their daily lives.

What is your greatest source of personal satisfaction from your work with the Centre?

I have to say it is the personal friendships I have developed with my colleagues in the Government of China, at Tsinghua University, among the Parties to the Convention, and of course in the Basel Convention Secretariat. Thanks to them, I lead a remarkable and fascinating life.

Dr Jinhui Li is Administrative Director, Basel Convention Regional Centre – China (Asia-Pacific Regional Centre for Hazardous Waste Management, Training and Technology Transfer, Beijing). Contact: jinhui@tsinghua.edu.cn



Jinhui Li

BECOME A PARTNER

Whether you're a corporation, NGO, foundation or government agency, partnering with the Basel Convention is simple. The Secretariat will work with you to create a tailored programme to meet your needs. There are many benefits to forming a partnership with the Basel Convention, including:

- Access to the expert capacity of the Secretariat, more than 150 Parties to the Basel Convention, and 13 Basel Convention Regional Centres around the globe;
- Opportunities to leverage your funds or resources with those of other Partners.

Forging a partnership with the Basel Convention is a smart investment in a better world.

To discuss your interest in partnering with the Basel Convention, contact Milton Catelin. Tel: +41 (0)22 917 8227 or e-mail: milton.catelin@unep.ch

The waste management world comes to Dundee

Moray Newlands

Dundee in Scotland was again the focus of an international gathering during September. A year after the major International Congress – Challenges of Concrete Construction, Advances in Waste Management and Recycling was a three-day International Symposium, organized by the Concrete Technology Unit (CTU) at the University of Dundee, which attracted some 265 delegates from 31 countries.

The three-day event discussed issues in Sustainable Waste Management and Recycling and Reuse of Waste Materials. It was organized in collaboration with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Scottish Executive, Remade Scotland and London Remade.

Opening addresses were given by Professor R K Dhir, Director of the CTU, University of Dundee, Sir Alan Langlands, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Dundee, Mr John Letford JP, Lord Provost, City of Dundee, Mr Calum MacDonald, Director of Strategic Planning, SEPA and Ms Jennie Price, Chief Executive, WRAP. The event was opened by Mr Stephen Aston, President of the CIWM with the cooperation of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention.

Delegates moved freely between the two parallel sessions listening to world experts from the fields of waste management, waste processing, practitioners, users and public bodies. Keynote speakers from Italy, Germany, Canada, UK, Portugal, Denmark, Malta and the Netherlands led the sessions on a diverse range of subjects covering Global and International Commitments, European Waste Directives, National and Local Government Policies, Waste Generation Issues, Processing Techniques, Recycling and Reuse of Materials and Future Developments.

An interactive workshop session took place on day three. Chaired by Russell Imrie of COSLA, who was also a speaker, the audience debated the



presentations and viewpoints given by Jos van Beurden, Feniks Recycling, Netherlands, Bill Duncan, ASSURRE, Belgium and Dairmid Jamieson, SLR Consulting UK. The speakers reviewed the array of subjects discussed during the previous two and a half days of the Symposium, identifying a number of key points including the increasing need for producer responsibility, the importance of sustainable resource strategies, the behavioural changes required to see the potential of waste as materials for recycling and use in sustainable markets. The audience had invaluable input and one of the main outcomes was that a whole-scale cultural change is now taking place which will further advance waste management strategies and processing and recycling of waste materials.

One encouraging thread running throughout the event was the part played by the construction industry in minimizing waste generation and providing a sustainable market for recycled products with many innovative waste management strategies and value-added construction products containing waste materials such as glass cullet, plastic, and tyres being discussed. These are all areas that are currently the subject of extensive research at the CTU.

Overall the International Symposium held in Dundee proved to be a fruitful event for all concerned. In conclusion, Profes-

sor Dhir asked delegates to make a note in their diary for 5–7 July 2005 – dates of the next major International Congress “Global Construction: Ultimate Concrete Opportunities” to be held in Dundee.

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Opening speakers at Advances in Waste Management and Recycling (from back left): Sir Alan Langlands, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Dundee, Mr Stephen Aston, President, Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, Professor R K Dhir, Director of the Concrete Technology Unit, University of Dundee, Ms Jennie Price, Chief Executive, WRAP, Mr John Letford JP, Lord Provost, City of Dundee, Mr Calum MacDonald, Director of Strategic Planning, SEPA.

UN Graduate School Summer Programme

Students offer fresh ideas

Jeremy Richardson

Every year the United Nations Department of Public Information runs a Summer Graduate School in Geneva. Graduate students from around the world attend the one-month course, where they learn how the United Nations works, and what its key priorities and initiatives are. This year the Secretariat of the Basel Convention volunteered to moderate the Graduate School's environment group. Running the environment group involves designing an interesting and stimulating agenda for the students, and ensuring that they deliver a well-researched and challenging dissertation to the Secretary General.



Jeremy Richardson

The most exciting area

The first task facing SBC was to persuade students to choose the environment group over the Human Rights and Social Development Groups. We had five minutes to stand up in front of 100 students and convince them that the environment was the most exciting area. In recent years environment has been the smallest group. This year the environment group had a record enrolment with fully one quarter of the graduates choosing it!

We then organized a programme of speakers from the Secretariat and other UN organizations to talk about some of the major environmental challenges facing the UN in the 21st century. Constanza Martinez from the SBC legal team spoke about the environmental impacts of the multilateral trading system and what SBC and UNEP were doing to minimize nega-

tive impacts and enhance environmental benefits. Milton Catelin spoke about how environmental institutions are responding to the Johannesburg challenge of developing more public-private partnerships using examples from the Basel Convention Partnership Programme.

Other speakers came from the Regional Office of UNEP in Europe, the UNEP Post Conflict Unit, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Institute of Research and Social Development, and the Egyptian Mission in Geneva.

The result was an excellent report, full of interesting and innovative ideas. Of most direct interest to the Basel Convention was the students' chosen subject of developing public-private partnerships to address medical waste. Other issues addressed by the environment group included trade and the environment and the need for a new UN force of "Green Helmets" to address environmental protection in zones of conflict.

We at the Secretariat look forward to working with the graduate school next year, as we believe that people soon realize that urgent action is required when issues on hazardous and municipal waste management are communicated in a sound and professional manner.

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Continued from page 1

Early discussions with these bodies and other interested Parties and stakeholders have centred on the sphere of work of the joint working group. The Secretariat has identified four topics that the joint working group could consider:

- complementarity among the sets of technical guidelines prepared by the Basel Convention, IMO and ILO; in particular, how to achieve complementarity on the ground when implementing the guidelines;
- review of IMO rules, conventions or protocols and the Basel Convention provisions to identify possible gaps and overlaps to ensure that ships destined for dismantling would be subject to coherent and adequate controls;
- responsibilities of ship owners and flag States, including identification of the exporting country in case of a ship going for dismantling, and the environmentally sound management of the wastes and residues arising from ship dismantling operations;
- the development of an inter-agency technical assistance project in countries where ship dismantling occurs as the start of a global programme of action.

"Fortunately, dismantling ships is not entirely a negative proposition," notes Shafii, "and can even bring substantial economic benefits. Most ships are about 80-90% steel, which can be sold as scrap metal for reprocessing, while other valuable components, such as pumps and valves, can also be recycled."

A high standard

The technical assistance project promises to contribute to a coherent and effective international framework for ensuring the environmentally sound dismantling of ships worldwide.

"By taking responsibility for the environmental impacts of its expired equipment, the shipping industry is setting a high standard for other industries to emulate," concludes UNEP Executive Director, Klaus Töpfer. "These initiatives also demonstrate once again the vital contribution that the Basel Convention is making to reducing the risks of hazardous wastes."

For more, see <http://www.unep.ch/conventions/press/sbc/pr6-01.htm>

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New publication

Diagnostic et plan d'action national (French), Côte d'Ivoire

Pilot project of a hospital waste management plan undertaken by the Secretariat together with the National Authorities and WHO. Available from the Basel Convention Secretariat.

Basel Convention and SAICM

Getting the message **OUT**

Milton Catelin

In this second decade of the Convention, the Secretariat is committed to working with partners to improve the international architecture of chemicals and waste management.

A particular challenge for the Secretariat will be to engage non-governmental organizations and broader civil society in understanding the role of the Basel Convention as an effective, existing mechanism for addressing waste generation, movement, management and disposal.

A need for balance

An important message will be that the important focus on the entry into force of new multilateral environment agreements (e.g. Kyoto, Rotterdam, Stockholm) needs to be balanced with attention to the existing Conventions and Protocols that are already in force and undertaking positive action.

The Secretariat will be taking this message to a key preparatory meeting in Bangkok in November under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

The meeting arises from a decision of the UNEP Governing Council (Seventh Special Session, February 2002), which called upon UNEP to:

- identify actions currently underway or planned to advance the sound management of chemicals;
- identify any gaps in the IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000;
- identify concrete projects and priorities in the context of the SAICM working with key partners such as the Secretariats of the Rotterdam Convention, the Stockholm Convention and the Basel Convention;
- convene, together with the IFCS, an open-ended consultative meeting to further the development of the SAICM.

Coordination is key

Among other things, the IFCS Bahia Declaration calls for entry into force of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and for ensuring efficient and effective coordination between all chemical safety-related organizations and activities.



Milton Catelin

It is important to international chemicals and waste management that Rotterdam and Stockholm do enter into force, that the SAICM is a success, and that improved cooperation between the relevant Conventions and Protocols is a constant and serious objective.

Existing multilateral environment agreements, such as the Basel Convention, play a significant role in the safe management of chemicals. Most recently, the Basel Convention joined with other existing international organizations in the creation of the Africa Stockpile Project aimed at eliminating harmful stockpiles of pesticides on that continent. The Basel Convention is also working to create useful partnerships in areas as diverse as e-waste, biological and medical waste, and a global partnership aimed at addressing the stockpile of used oils in Africa.

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Meetings 2003

6–15 October	ILO Workshop on Ship Dismantling for selected Asian countries and Turkey (Bangkok, Thailand)
16–17 October	25th Session OECD/WG/WPR (Paris, France)
19–25 October	AOSIS Waste Management Workshop (Cuba)
3–7 November	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) Forum-IV (Bangkok, Thailand)
early November	NGO Roundtable (Bangkok, Thailand)
10–14 November	Preparatory Meeting on SAICM (Bangkok, Thailand)
10–13 November	International Training on Implementation of Waste Minimization – Cleaner Production Project (Bratislava, Slovakia)
10–21 November	32nd session of the WCO/Harmonised System Committee (Brussels)
19–21 November	GEF Council Meeting (Washington, D.C.)
1–10 December	UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG) and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (Geneva, Switzerland)

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