



March 30, 2018

Mr. Baskut Tuncak
Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Hazardous Substances and Wastes
OHCHR-UNOG
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Submitted via email to: srtoxicwaste@ohchr.org

Re: International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) Submission to study on workers protection from hazardous substances

Dear Mr. Tuncak:

On behalf of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), we greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to contribute to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Hazardous Substances and Waste report on the rights of workers and toxic chemical exposure. ICCA is the worldwide voice of the chemical industry, and is made up of the leading national associations and their member companies committed to Responsible Care, the industry's performance initiative. Through ongoing innovation in chemistry and the continuous improvement of safe chemicals management, the global chemical industry makes a significant contribution to a sustainable society by improving human health, protecting the environment and delivering prosperity worldwide.

Industry's Commitments to Protecting Workers

Through Responsible Care and the Global Product Strategy, ICCA is committed to continuously strengthen our environmental, health, safety and security (EHS&S) performance, thereby improving the safety of chemical industry workers. As the industry's environmental, health, safety and security performance initiative, Responsible Care has helped ICCA associations and member companies to significantly enhance their performance and improve the health and safety of their employees, the communities in which they operate, and the environment as a whole. We are also committed to providing EHS&S information relevant to the safe management of chemicals along the supply chain and throughout their lifecycles.

As the Responsible Care network continues to expand to new regions, countries and companies, ICCA implements an increasingly rigorous system of checklists, performance indicators and verification procedures to track our progress. First published in 2006, the Responsible Care Global Charter was revised in 2014 to address ongoing stakeholder expectations and evolving challenges. As of March 2018, 65 chemical manufacturers' associations around the world are committed to the Charter, with more than 500 chemical companies signing a declaration of support to actively dedicate their company, people, technologies, and business practices to implementation its Charter.

Under the Global Charter, global chemical manufacturers are actively working together to track and improve our performance while striving for transparency with stakeholders. Since 2000, there has been a 60% reduction in lost-time injury rate among Responsible Care companies. In addition to employee safety, resource conservation and the safe transportation of our products are key components of the initiative. There has been a 36% reduction in SOX/NOX emissions and a 45% reduction in distribution incidents since 2000.

Occupational and process safety standards and systems are the first steps to help reduce risks and incidents at chemical manufacturing facilities for workers, the environment, and the public. While the chemical industry manufactures products that are critical to the everyday use, health and well-being of the public, effective systems and regulations are necessary to ensure site and worker safety by requiring facilities to identify and address any significant hazards and risks posed by the substances or processes present at the site. Elements of the ICCA Responsible Care initiative include worker safety, process safety, facility design, human health, chemical product safety, chemical security, environmental protection, waste management, and chemical distribution safety.

In addition to Responsible Care, ICCA developed the Global Product Strategy (GPS), which builds on and extends industry's product stewardship efforts. GPS leverages the experience and knowledge of leading global chemical manufacturers to improve chemical management practices, especially in developing countries and those without robust chemical regulatory frameworks. Through GPS, ICCA shares best practices and information about chemical safety and conducts trainings for small and medium sized companies and local governments. GPS helps ICCA achieve four primary objectives throughout the global chemical industry and the chemical value chain:

- Enhance product stewardship worldwide
- Improve chemical management through risk assessment and risk management;
- Enhance transparency about chemical substances and products;
- Reduce differences in the safe handling of chemical substances between developing, emerging and industrialized countries

GPS extends to chemical products the same level of care and commitment to excellence that Responsible Care applies to the environment, health, safety and security practices, processes and protections chemical producers carry out in their operations. ICCA and its members support the adoption of GPS worldwide by establishing standards and conducting projects and workshops to continuously increase the environment, health and safety performance of chemical products at each stage of the lifecycle.

Regarding the issue of ensuring the rights of workers to access information on issues relating to their occupational health and safety, the 2014 Responsible Care Global Charter addresses this issue directly:

Element 5: Engaging stakeholders, understanding and responding to their concerns and expectations regarding safer operations and products and communicating openly on our performance and products. Provide stakeholders with company performance and product safety information.

The Global Product Strategy likewise addresses the topic of sharing product information with stakeholders, including the public and members of the chemicals supply chain:

Elements 4 and 6: Develop a process to make relevant product stewardship information available to the public while protecting proprietary business information. Identify and prioritize industry sectors with which associations and their members can jointly develop a process to facilitate the flow of hazard and safe handling information, evaluate and mitigate risks, and address product challenges throughout the chemicals value chain.

National and International Institutions

ICCA is committed to increasing the adoption and implementation of the United Nations Globally Harmonized System for Classification & Labelling (GHS) to enhance worker protections and sharing information regarding the hazards and basic safe handling of chemicals. Classification and labeling systems provide essential product information, including safety precautions, to workers and users.

Hazard communication regulations and standards, such as the GHS, require a product label and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for all hazardous materials, which ensure that all environmental, health, and safety (EHS) information will be available to all stakeholders in the value chain.

Dissemination of a high quality SDS is crucial to ensure all vital information on the hazards of the material are clearly communicated to all involved stakeholders along the product lifecycle (including transport workers, emergency response personnel, downstream customers and recipients of the commodities) to allow them to safely handle the respective chemicals. The information communicated on the SDS can then be used in the regulatory process without duplicating the efforts of the regulators and industry. The benefits of an internationally harmonized system of transport regulations is that the regulated communities and workers around the world have the same classification, packaging, documentation, and hazard communication requirements.

As part of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), ICCA strongly supports the expansion of GHS as the first step towards sound chemicals management and helping countries at the earliest stages of chemicals oversight to identify and communicate the hazards of chemicals, including the use of easily understood symbols. Since SAICM was established in 2006, approximately 52 countries have begun implementing GHS.

Conclusion

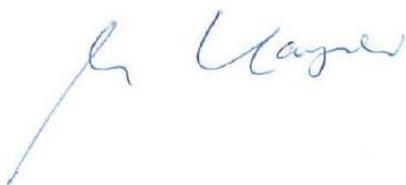
In conclusion, ICCA is committed to protecting workers and safe operations through mix of: chemical controls, both in the form of regulations and standards, and voluntary actions taken by producers and users that demonstrate industry's own commitment to sound chemical management. ICCA is committed to expanding Responsible Care and GPS implementation, with a focus on developing countries to enhance worker protections globally.

Again, ICCA appreciates the opportunity to provide this input to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Hazardous Substances and Waste and we look forward to participating in any expert consultation on behalf of industry and further contributing to the *Report on the Rights of Workers and Toxic Chemicals Exposure*. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us should you require any additional information. We look forward to engaging in a dialogue with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



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Vice-President Solvay Corporate Government & Public Affairs



Martin Kayser
Co-Chair, Chemicals Policy and Health Leadership Group, ICCA
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