

**HEMA Task Force Meeting
Montreal, May 22-23**

Summary Record

DAY 1

Terms of Reference

- There was a great deal of discussion on the Terms of Reference, and a number of specific comments (editorial and more specific changes) were provided at the Task Force meeting.
- In response to questions regarding the purpose of this Task Force, the co-chair clarified that the main focus of this group is to seek guidance from the communiqué (Para. 7) and present Ministers of Health and Environment with proposals for a structure by which HEMA follow-up activities can occur. In addition, the group would propose an initial two or three key areas for action.
- In addition to the Terms of Reference some Task Force members also raised issues related to the involvement of stakeholders, financing, and future structure to support HEMA follow-up activities. These issues were discussed in detail on Day Two (see below).
- The revised terms of reference are attached.

Critical Path

The Task Force members discussed the draft critical path. Comments on this document included:

- There was some discussion regarding the timing of the next Task Force meeting (early August).
- There was general agreement on the critical path.
- The revised critical path is attached.

Presentations by UNEP/PAHO, and OAS

UNEP/PAHO and OAS made presentations to the Task Force members. Copies of the presentations are attached.

In addition, the organizations identified areas that they felt needed to be addressed in the Americas. Some of the points raised included:

- Base line information needed – both on, and to inform, the priority areas
- Elimination of DDT – perhaps there is the potential to do the same for POPs
- PRTR work
- Contaminated areas and brownfields – particular sensitivity to areas with a lot of tourism, like the Caribbean (priority: clean water/clean beaches).
- Set up a special fund for those countries with least capacity

- Solid waste – is an important area, and there is no convention that addresses this issue
- Water management and need to strengthen institutional process

Inventory

There was general agreement that an inventory would be useful, and that the draft inventory tabled by Canada needs work. Two major points that came out of the discussions were:

- The need for an understanding of the “big picture” and to identify who has the mandate to undertake specific activities in the region.
- The need for information at various levels, in order to point to “gaps” where HEMA activities can be value added.

DAY 2

The Task Force discussed six issues relevant to a follow-up structure:

Issue 1 - What might be the objectives for the “governance structure” of the HEMA follow-up process?

The points raised by the Task Force members included:

- bridge building; not a heavy structure
- reporting back, monitoring, tracking progress, managing information, and capacity building
- bi-national/regional discussions

Issue 2 - What sorts of activities could be undertaken by the “governance structure”?

The Task Force members reviewed the items for consideration, and raised points which included:

- need to identify where we are in terms of activities; need to identify where are the gaps before undertaking any monitoring of follow-up work
- need to identify mechanisms/strategies to do follow-up work for each of the activities in order to meet the goals identified by the Ministers
- there is an inter-relationship that should exist between health and environment, but also between other departments – e.g. should be making linkages with water authorities, urban affairs
- need to build on existing activities, and to identify common issues
- need to consider the “political” angle of the issues under consideration
- general support for all items for consideration.

Issue 3 - Given the objective and activities, what would be the appropriate “governance structure” for HEMA follow-up between Ministerial meetings?

The Task Force members reviewed the different ideas for consideration, and generally agreed on the following points related to structure and roles:

- Meeting of **Ministers** once every four years, in advance of the Summit of the Americas; Ministers would set direction and make decisions every four years
- Some form of **Working Group at the senior officials level** could meet inter-sessionally to facilitate direction and decisions of ministers; generate ideas for implementation (could be done at the sub-regional level); and may also make recommendations, as appropriate to Ministers
- Working group needs to represent sub-regions, and should have support from PAHO, UNEP, and OAS
- Action will ultimately be taken at the national/local levels
- Some of the duties of this working group could include:
 - Report back to Ministers
 - Facilitate capacity-building
 - Monitor to assess progress in each target area
 - Consult with civil society for their input into the Working Group.
- The working group would be supported by a **Secretariat**, which would be made up of the **co-chairs of the working group** (current and future Summit of the Americas chairs), supported by UNEP/PAHO/OAS.
- Secretariat is a repository for information collection and dissemination; UNEP/PAHO/OAS would incorporate, as appropriate, HEMA activities into their work programmes; Secretariat provides logistical support to the Task Force and ministerial meetings; and assesses implementation of HEMA goals.
- The **co-chairs** of the working group would work closely with the Secretariat
- There is a need to develop a work plan and to ensure value added and country buy-in.

Issue 4 - How could the “governance structure” and HEMA Ministerial meetings be funded?

Issue 5 - For HEMA meetings, how could efficiency be maximized and costs reduced?

The discussion of these two items was combined. Some of the points raised by the Task Force included:

- Holding meetings on the margins of other existing Ministerial meetings seems reasonable, depending on timing/availability of Ministers.
- Quota contribution by countries not acceptable
- Host country – pool together sub-regional resources to host HEMA meeting. However sub-regions may not have the capacity to do so.
- UNEP current budget does not include HEMA-related work but that does not mean that UNEP cannot support activities in the future

- OAS: contribution at present can be in-kind (gathering information, facilitating contacts, etc). Voluntary Fund might be “tapped” by countries; suggest going through the missions.
- IFCS has structure and focal points and can provide information.
- Finding funding should be a joint effort, supported by all countries, but led by current and future hosts.
- Important to consider who will manage the funds to undertake the activities
- Given economic situation, unrealistic to expect funds from LAC.
- Knowing how much funding is required will help determine the strategy to find the funding.
- How is progress/success defined – through political commitment, or through securing funding?
- Future hosts (Argentina): Commitment currently limited to continuing to work in this process, facilitating the next meeting in Argentina
- Funds should come from Canada/US, who would attempt to leverage/raise funds from International and Regional Banks (e.g. WB, IDB), as well as private funds (e.g. MacArthur).
- Suggestion to extend the work of this Task Force, operating by e-mail/conference call, until the next meeting of Health and Environment Ministers.
- For projects: The ability of countries to contribute initial funds to work together results in greater opportunities to leverage additional funding.
- Flexibility and sustainability should be considered.

Issue 6 - How would stakeholders be engaged in the HEMA follow-up process?

The Task Force members discussed a number of issues related to the ideas for consideration related to engaging stakeholders, including:

- Supportive of having a process by which public input and feedback is facilitated
- Each country has different ways of consulting the public, and for determining the types of groups that they want to consult; each country/region should consult public as appropriate
- Use HEMA model to determine how public will participate that was used for the 1st HEMA meeting in Ottawa.
- Ensure that civil society includes business groups, academics, labour groups, as well as others
- Consider including parliamentarians
- Do not support giving a contract to only one NGO – not an objective enough viewpoint.

Discussion of “Key Priorities/Opportunities”

The Task Force members began a very preliminary discussion of the key priorities of their sub-regions. The items raised included:

- Southern Cone:

- Consider dividing goals into three categories
 - Goals, commitments, conventions (a,b,e,h)
 - Exercise of assessment/evaluation (c,d)
 - Development of plans/strategies/research (f,g,i,j,k,l)
- Water important
- Need to identify what priorities are “do-able”, where you can get concrete results.
- Andean region:
 - Water important area (treatment, potable water), hazardous waste, and biodiversity.
 - Having common priorities will be difficult.
- North America:
 - Take one or two priorities and develop them at the hemispheric level.
 - Indicators on children’s health, with specific emphasis on water (synergies with regional work within the CEC)
 - Mexico: water quality focus – link with children’s health indicators
 - Sound Management of Chemicals (synergies with regional work within the CEC)
 - Consider emphasis on indigenous people
 - U.S.: interested in (e): phasing out lead in gasoline and (f) sulfur in gasoline
- Caribbean:
 - In each of areas, identify some of critical issues requiring hemispheric level intervention to assist countries to move forward. Climate change is an example where some assistance is required, as opposed to water, where we have passed the “hump”.
 - Ministers of Health of the Caribbean: identified environment and health issues such as water quality, linkages to children’s health, food security and food safety, sanitation
- Central America:
 - Have identified 4 priority areas in environment and health area in Central America. Compare these to the priority areas raised by Andean Region, CARICOM and try to find commonalities.
 - First step – a diagnostic. If we agree with the three suggested categories (Brazil), at 2nd meeting, can identify the actions needed in each of the specific areas.
 - Have a standard matrix by which everyone can provide information.
- UNEP:
 - Have to examine each of the priorities and goals in communiqué; see where we are in each one; and identify what actions are needed to ensure these are addressed.
 - The Task Force should seek synergies at hemispheric level to help/facilitate sub-regional and national levels meet goals and priorities identified in HEMA communiqué.
 - If there are clear targets, there can be better follow up, e.g. UNEP could do something on POPs.

Next Steps:

- For the next meeting, in addition to further discussion and agreement on the follow-up mechanism/committee for HEMA, there is also a need to take stock of where countries/sub-regions are on each of the 8 priority areas and 12 goals, and to begin identifying, in a more concrete manner, the two or three key areas of work to suggest to Ministers.
- Matrix – to be designed by Canada; standardized format for reporting on goals will be sent out by Canada and is to be completed by Task Force members prior to the 2nd Task Force meeting.
- UNEP offered to host the 2nd Task Force meeting, tentatively first week of August in Mexico City. Canada will follow-up with UNEP to discuss details.

June 5, 2003