

#### **4. Documents from Other International Organizations**

States Parties to the CWC are joined in their efforts to govern chemical weapons by a number of other international organizations that have interests in relevant issues that fall within their respective mandates. Documents emanating from these organizations are included in this section. The activities and initiatives of these organizations also serve to strengthen the international norm against the misuse of chemistry and promote the sound management of chemicals.

##### **4.1 International Committee of the Red Cross**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and armed violence. Established in 1863, the ICRC is headquartered in Geneva with delegations in around 80 countries and it has more than 12,000 staff. The ICRC's involvement in preventing the hostile application of poisons and disease is long standing, for example, it issued an appeal against the use of poison gas during the First World War. Regarding the use of these weapons as abhorrent, the ICRC has argued that 'the use of such weapons would contravene existing international treaties and many of the fundamental norms of international humanitarian law'.

More recently, the ICRC has held a series of international meetings to look at incapacitating chemical agents and, amongst other things, the political and legal ramifications of their use. Following on from these meetings the ICRC has produced a six page synthesis of the subject which concludes that the Third CWC Review Conference 'provides an important opportunity to build and shape international consensus' on issues related to incapacitating chemical agents. The synthesis document is included in the *Resource Guide*, with further information available from the ICRC's Arms Unit, which forms part of the Legal Division, via <http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/weapons/chemical-biological-weapons/index.jsp>.

##### **4.2 United Nations Environment Programme**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the designated authority of the UN system for environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

UNEP administers a number of multilateral environmental agreements dealing with toxic chemicals including: the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; the 1998 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; and the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Space limitations preclude including these agreements in the *Resource Guide*, but more information can be found on their respective websites: [www.basel.int](http://www.basel.int); [www.pic.int](http://www.pic.int); and [www.pops.int](http://www.pops.int).

The International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai in February 2006 adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The Strategic Approach was mandated by UNEP and endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the World Summit in 2005. Developed by a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral Preparatory Committee, the Strategic Approach supports the achievement of the goal agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of ensuring that, by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize

significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. The UNEP document Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), including the Dubai Declaration, is included for this reason.

UNEP also coordinates the Green Customs Initiative in which many other international organizations (including the OPCW, the World Customs Organization and Interpol) participate. The initiative offers information and training materials for customs officials to combat illegal trade in commodities of environmental concern, such as ozone depleting substances, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and endangered species. Space again precludes inclusion of the Green Customs Initiative background documents, but more details can be found at <http://www.greencustoms.org>.

### **4.3 World Health Organization**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations specialized agency for health established in April 1948 and based in Geneva. It is governed by its 194 Member States through the World Health Assembly. The WHO has long been concerned with preventing the hostile exploitation of chemistry and biology. In 1969, the World Health Assembly, requested the WHO Director-General to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Secretary-General on the issue of chemical and biological weapons and the consequences of their possible use. The 1970 WHO report on *Health Aspects of Chemical and Biological Weapons: Report of a WHO Group of Consultants* was the result of that work.

In May 2002, the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA 55.16 defining a role for WHO in responding to the ‘natural occurrence, accidental release or deliberate use of biological and chemical agents or radionuclear material that affect health’. In 2004, it published *Public Health Response to Biological and Chemical Weapons—WHO Guidance* (see <http://www.who.int/csr/delibepidemics/biochemguide/en/index.html>), a revised and updated version of its 1970 report.

The WHO also supports the implementation of the revised International Health Regulations (2005), a legally binding agreement that entered into force in 2007 and provides ‘a new framework for the coordination of the management of events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern’. IHR considers a range of public health risks that affect human health regardless of the source, including the deliberate release of toxic chemical substances, and for this reason the IHR are included in this guide. The implementation of IHR (2005) is monitored and summarised in States Parties’ report on IHR core capacity implementation which includes assessment of the development of capacities for four IHR-relevant hazards including chemical events further details of these reports is available from: <http://www.who.int/ihr/en/>.