

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZATION SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification And Labelling of Chemicals

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GHS

Progress report on the implementation of the GHS in South Africa

Transmitted by the expert from South Africa

Introduction

A national implementation strategy was developed for South Africa and the activities, identified in the strategy, have been undertaken.

Agreement was reached in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) on the approach for the incorporation of the GHS requirements in the national legislative framework on the management of chemicals. It has been agreed that the requirements of the GHS will be incorporated into a national standard. This standard will be incorporated, by reference, into the relevant legislation identified in the strategy.

Development of a national standard

A draft is being prepared by the South African Bureau of Standards and will be presented to its GHS Technical Committee in 2006. The format of the standard will be such that other SADC national standards authorities would be able to adopt it if they so wish.

Training requirements

Training requirements are being incorporated into the chemical industry sector skills plan for 2005-2006, which is currently being developed. The next step is to develop the unit standards with which all training courses will have to comply. Once the training courses have been accredited, they will be available to anyone.

Implementation of the system will require a significant training initiative and work has commenced in the Chemical Industry Education and Training Authority (TISA) to identify existing training courses that can be adapted to include the necessary elements and to identify gaps where new courses need to be developed.

Awareness raising

The South African Chemical and Allied Industries' Association held a series of workshops to familiarise its members with the requirements of the GHS system.

Website

Funding has been approved and a consultant appointed for the extension of the existing website of the Chemical and Allied Industries' Association to cover chemical safety, including GHS implementation.

Implementation of the GHS in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region

Promotion of regional implementation of the GHS is one of the priorities to facilitate the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol. A memorandum of understanding has been accepted amongst SADC states on standardization, accreditation and certification. However, implementation is slow and governments are now negotiating an annex on GHS to the SADC Trade Protocol to give this issue greater weight. It is envisaged that this will strengthen the relationships between regulators and standards authorities in the SADC region.

Conclusion

Successful implementation of the GHS in South Africa is largely dependent on parallel implementation by trading partners. South Africa is concerned that achievement of the implementation date of 2008, to which all countries have now committed, will require more definitive international agreement on the target date and transitional provisions.

It is therefore proposed that the Subcommittee deliberate on this matter with a view to presenting a recommendation to ECOSOC.
