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**Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods  
and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification  
and Labelling of Chemicals****Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods****Forty fourth session**

Geneva, 25 November – 4 December 2013

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda

**Miscellaneous proposals for amendments to the Model Regulations  
on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: marking and labelling****Large pictograms on transport packagings****Transmitted by the Dangerous Goods Advisory Council (DGAC)<sup>1</sup>****Introduction**

1. The Sub-Committee will recall that, at its 43<sup>rd</sup> session and the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the GHS Sub-Committee session, DGAC provided in informal document (identified as INF 8 for TDG and INF 25 for GHS) inquiring into the acceptability of large pictograms on cargo transport units and packages in transport. While the paper was not discussed at the TDG meeting due to lack of time, DGAC noted with interest the comments made at the GHS meeting, including comments by transport experts. The comments are summarized in paragraphs 45 to 47 of the report of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the GHS Sub-Committee (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/50).

2. In its informal paper, DGAC noted that GHS implementation has led to requirements or practices where GHS pictograms not representative of transport hazards and the size of transport placards are being displayed on some cargo transport units (see the example attached as figure 1). DGAC's concern was that such pictograms had the potential of creating confusion in the case of operations involving handling of cargo transport units (e.g., loading cargo transport units onboard a vessel) as well as creating the potential for confusion in the case of emergency responders who must sometimes act under conditions of less than ideal visibility where placards are intended to alert emergency responders from a distance. The potential for confusion arises irrespective of whether dangerous goods or materials not regulated as dangerous goods are present in the cargo transport units bearing

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the programme of work of the Sub-Committee for 2013–2014 approved by the Committee at its sixth session (see ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/84, para. 86 and ST/SG/AC.10/40, para. 14).

these large pictograms. In addition, there is also potential for confusion when pictograms the size of transport labels are displayed on transport packages. Unlike transport placards/labels, GHS pictograms (i.e., those not related to transport labels) are not intended as standalone symbols to communicate hazard (see GHS 1.1.3.1.3, 1.1.3.1.4, GHS label definition in 1.2, and 1.4.10.5). Based on the current text in Annex 7 (see notes associated with example 7) of the GHS, as well as comments at the GHS meeting, it is DGAC's opinion that the concern for potential confusion is widely appreciated.

3. In the case of cargo transport units, such as portable tanks, placards reflecting the transport hazards of dangerous goods must normally be displayed on all four sides. When GHS hazards not regulated for transport must be made known to workers, these hazards are typically communicated by a GHS label at the loading location. This practice, which is illustrated in the photographs (see figures 2 and 3) provided in the Annex to this paper, would seem acceptable as it does not cause confusion.

4. It is DGAC's opinion that steps should be taken to clarify that appearance of large pictograms on transport packages is unacceptable. On this basis DGAC proposes amendments to the regulations.

5. DGAC recommends the following:

(a) Inclusion of the definition of "GHS label" in the Model Regulations. This definition should be based on the "label" definition appearing in chapter 1.2 of the GHS. In that the definition includes the term "appropriate group" it is assumed that a standalone pictogram does not qualify as a GHS label.

(b) Addition of a new provision in the Model Regulations prohibiting the display of diamond shaped graphics on packagings that may be confused with transport labels while specifically providing an exception in the case of GHS labels where two or more label elements are shown. DGAC anticipates that practical considerations would generally preclude a GHS sized pictogram of a size comparable to a transport label in this manner. DGAC also takes this opportunity to propose that transport labels may not appear when package contents do not pose a hazard reflected by such labels; and

(c) Addition of a new provision in the Model Regulations prohibiting the display of a diamond shaped graphic on cargo transport units that may be confused with a transport placard. DGAC also takes this opportunity to propose that transport placards may not appear on a cargo transport unit when the contents do not pose a hazard reflected by such placards.

6. In a separate document to the GHS Sub-Committee, DGAC has proposed clarifying paragraph 1.4.10.5.1 of the GHS to extend its applicability to other cargo transport units not already addressed.

## Proposal

7. In light of the foregoing, DGAC proposes the following:

(a) Amend 1.2.1 of the Model Regulations by adding the following additional definition:

*"GHS Label means an appropriate group (i.e., two or more) of written, printed or graphic GHS information elements concerning a hazardous product, selected as relevant to the target sector(s) applying requirements of the GHS, that is affixed to, printed on, or attached to the intermediate container of a hazardous product, or to the outside packaging of a hazardous product;" Note: hazardous product is as defined by the GHS.*

- (b) Amend Chapter 5.2 of the Model Regulations by adding the following:

“5.2.3 Prohibited Labelling

5.2.3.1 The display of a label specified in this chapter on a package is prohibited unless the package contains dangerous goods or dangerous goods residues posing a hazard represented by the label.

5.2.3.2 The display on a package in transport of any graphic which by its color, design, or shape may be confused with or conflict with a label described in this chapter is prohibited irrespective of whether dangerous goods are contained in the package.

5.2.3.3 The restriction in 5.2.3.2 does not apply in the case of a GHS label displaying one or more pictograms and other GHS label elements provided the pictograms are of a proportionate size to other elements on the GHS label.”

- (c) Amend Chapter 5.3 of the Model Regulations by adding the following:

“5.3.3 Prohibited Placarding

5.3.3.1 The display of a placard specified in this chapter on a cargo transport unit is prohibited unless the cargo transport unit contains dangerous goods or dangerous goods residues posing a hazard represented by the placard.

5.3.3.2 The display on a cargo transport unit of any graphic which by its color, design, or shape may be confused with or conflict with a placard described in this chapter is prohibited irrespective of whether dangerous goods are being carried. This prohibition extends to GHS pictograms that are not part of a label.

**Note:** The location of a GHS label at the loading/unloading location of a cargo transport unit (e.g., a portable tank or MEGC) is not regarded as contravening the above requirement.”



Figure 1. Large GHS pictograms on a UN portable tank



Figure 2. GHS information provided on a tag at the loading/unloading location



Figure 3. GHS label posted on the rear door of a freight container