

## **Proposed new network on Chemicals Management in Sub Saharan Africa**

Yogeshkumar Naik  
National University of Science and Technology  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.  
[yoginaik@nust.ac.zw](mailto:yoginaik@nust.ac.zw)

The economies of Sub Saharan countries are based on agriculture and mining. With increased globalisation there is also increased industrial activity. In addition, the quantity and variety of imports of commodities from the East is increasing. All these activities impact on the environment. Agriculture requires the use of various agrochemicals particularly pesticides. Mining activity causes pollution due to the use of various chemicals such as mercury. Acid mine drainage also affects various aquatic ecosystems. The mine dumps are usually rich in various metals and these can impact on aquatic as well as terrestrial ecosystems. Industrialisation results in the release of large variety of chemicals ranging from dyes (textiles) to food flavours/colourants and pharmaceuticals. Importation of various goods ranging from foods to clothing and electronic equipment results in the release of numerous other categories of chemicals into the environment. Terrestrial as well as aquatic ecosystems are slowly being threatened over time. The developed countries have a good and growing information and knowledge base and are beginning to address many of the issues related to chemicals management. Developed countries lag behind in identifying chemical threats as well as their potential impact on their local ecosystems. Currently some of the networks and related activities address some of the shortcomings in developed countries. e.g. ANCAP (African Network for Chemical Analyses of Pesticides) and ANLAP. However, these activities are operating in isolation and are far from achieving a comprehensive approach to the issue of chemicals management. UNEP has initiated the SAICM and ICCM programmes. These address pertinent issues globally. However, the participants at these meetings are usually those from state regulatory bodies who tend to obtain their data and information from already available literature such as USEPA or OECD. Little is done to 'tailor make' regulations for local situations. There is also a very limited dialogue between academia (information generation) and government (policy development and implementation) A network, in Sub Saharan Africa, that is devoted to chemicals management would help to focus activities on a comprehensive range of activities related to chemicals management and pollution control. The activities would include thematic workshops and conferences as well as training programmes for relevant stakeholders. Where possible, dialogue could be initiated at workshops between government and academia so as to synergise their approach and to share information. If the network was to have direction from an advisory board composed of members from academia, government and industry then all stakeholders in chemicals management would be represented and provide direction on the way forward. Such a network would then address relevant issues in chemicals management and in the long term provide training on relevant issues as well a forum for discussion of pertinent issues related to chemicals management and environmental pollution. In order to assess the "outputs" and the "outcomes" of the proposed network the evaluation process would need to focus on and assess the interactions between academia and government as well as society in general.