

## *Foreword*

One of the priorities established within the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), which is a joint venture of the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization, and the World Health Organization, is the development of methodology.

As reviewed at the third IPCS Programme Advisory Committee in June 1982, three model approaches have been employed, so far, in the IPCS, in the area of methodology. For some topics, the IPCS is establishing Working Groups aiming at preparation of concise technical documents describing principles of evaluating health risks in certain specific areas. At present, three IPCS Working Groups are completing their work dealing with principles for evaluating health risks to progeny associated with exposure to chemicals during pregnancy, principles for evaluating health risks from chemicals during infancy and childhood, and principles of methods for assessing the neurobehavioural effects. In some areas, a more complex approach is needed involving international validation of certain methods. An example of such activity, within IPCS, is the collaborative study on short-term testing for mutagens and carcinogens, involving approximately one hundred institutions in nineteen countries.

Finally, for some other problems, there is a need to present views of experts in signed articles, before a joint report can be developed. This model has been used by SGOMSEC. The opinions expressed are those of the group of experts, advising in their own capacity, on an important issue.

This should explain the special position of the present report, and at the same time, the interest of the International Programme on Chemical Safety in the SGOMSEC activities and the reason why the IPCS is supporting present and future SGOMSEC work.

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