

Plan of action to implement the WHO Chemicals Road Map in Jordan

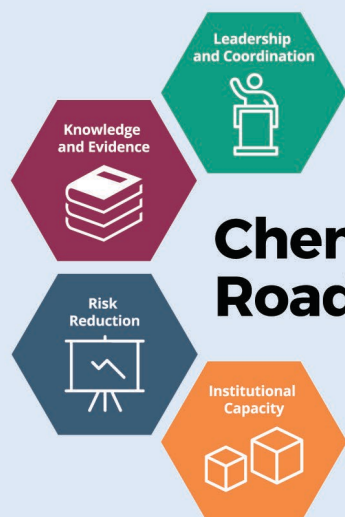
Jordan

In order to enhance health sector engagement in the SAICM towards the 2020 goal and beyond, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and CEHA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Jordan, developed a national plan of action to implement the WHO Chemicals Road Map.

Goals and Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- draw a road map at the national level to enhance health sector engagement in the SAICM towards the 2020 goal and beyond;
- provide a forum to discuss, implement and draft a work plan for implementing the Road Map;
- increase awareness of the health impacts related to exposure to chemicals; and
- identify the current situation for the country related to chemicals management for discussion and determine gaps and challenges faced.



Chemicals Road Map

Project Overview

Context

WHO data estimate that 1.6 million lives (2.7% of total global deaths) and 45 million disability-adjusted life years were lost in 2016 due to exposure to selected toxic chemicals. Data are, however, only available for a small number of chemical exposures, and people are exposed to many more chemicals every day.

In order to minimize these huge health impacts, the WHO Chemicals Road Map was approved by the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017. It is designed mainly for enhancing health sector engagement in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) towards the 2020 goal and beyond. Therefore, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Jordan, conducted a national workshop to develop a plan of action to implement the WHO Chemicals Road Map in Jordan.

Approach

Representatives from different sectors were engaged in the two-day workshop to develop and finalize the national plan, including from the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply; Jordan Food and Drug Administration; Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization; Directorate of Civil Defense; Royal Scientific Society; National Poison Center; and other stakeholders. During the first day, participants identified the chemicals of concern to Jordan, and the gaps and challenges that need to be tackled to lower the huge burden of these toxic chemicals. On the second day, stakeholders developed the national plan of action. The proceedings of the workshop consisted of a mix of technical presentations from WHO staff and national experts, panel discussions and working group sessions guided by WHO staff. The number and scope of the technical sessions were determined based on the nature and number of synopses received from national affiliations concerned with chemicals management.



Results

Results and suggested actions of the workshop were reached by consensus. The main outputs of the workshop were:

- (1) A list of hazardous chemicals that are of priority concern in Jordan, including: highly hazardous pesticides, especially aluminium-phosphide; drugs; phthalates; dioxin; lead; cadmium; mercury; nano-materials; persistent organic pollutants (POPs); and unknown chemicals.
- (2) A list of the highest priority actions needed to implement the WHO Chemicals Road Map in Jordan.
- (3) A list of suggested additional activities to develop and/or sustain the highest priority action, taking into consideration Jordan's capabilities and capacities, flexibility, as well as feasibility and risks of these actions.
- (4) A national plan of action to implement the suggested activities related to the highest priority actions for Jordan, including the time frame and the role of each stakeholder.

The workshop highlighted some areas/actions that should be taken to develop and sustain the management of chemicals at the national level. These include implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); reinforcing control and inspection processes of chemicals of concern, including hazardous substances added to domestic products; strengthening chemical, medical and electronic waste management; raising awareness of the health impact of chemicals of concern among decision-makers and the public; supporting research on the relationship between exposure to chemicals of concern and the health effects at the national level; and engaging the risk assessment approach in taking chemicals management decisions.

Lessons Learned

One of the added values of this workshop was that each stakeholder was able to elaborate on their roles and responsibilities in chemicals management, thereby giving the participants a clear vision of one another's purview. They talked about overlapping responsibilities and how to collaborate, communicate and transfer the data among each other if needed.

One of the challenges raised was the need to engage other sectors that play a significant role in chemicals management, such as the drug industry and Ministry of Education, to participate in drawing and finalizing the national plan of action. The representatives suggested engaging them at a later stage.

The case study was authored by the Ministry of Health. The named authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this publication.

Recommendations

- *Conduct an enhanced risk assessment of the chemicals of concern in Jordan, and of any new chemicals allowed to be distributed and used in the country.*
- *Establish a specified route for enhancing coordination and data exchange between different sectors.*
- *Conduct regular awareness campaigns about the health impact related to exposure to chemicals for the public, especially for school students.*
- *Conduct regular awareness campaigns and training workshops for workers in the health sector and other sectors about how to handle chemicals in general and chemical incidents.*

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