

Chemical Dialogue: Report to AMM on Implementation Convergence of the GHS in APEC Economies

Executive Summary

Since its adoption in 2002, the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (or GHS) has been identified as one of the main tools to achieve sound management of chemicals and its implementation is consistently an issue on the international sustainable development agenda. The GHS is an internationally agreed-upon system created by the United Nations. It is designed to replace the various classification and labelling standards used in different economies by using consistent criteria for classification and labelling on a global level.

Consistent implementation of the GHS will not only reduce costs of doing business but will also promote health and environmental safety and enable APEC member economies to boost economic growth while addressing the region's environmental challenges.

The Chemical Dialogue (CD) conducts an annual survey to identify information that may assist in convergent implementation of GHS across the region. Based on the responses to the survey, APEC Economies are working towards some aspects of convergent implementation of GHS, primarily the basic elements of classifications, SDS formats, and labelling. However, collaboration across the APEC region is required to achieve better alignment.

The CD seeks a request from APEC Ministers that officials promote consistency of GHS implementation by encouraging economies to:

- Consider addressing the obstacles to adopting later revisions;
- Consider accepting later revisions, provided that the level of protection is the same or stronger with respect to a particular chemical;
- Consider accepting classifications based on building blocks that have not been adopted by the economy as long as all the adopted building blocks are included in the classification;
- Consider initiating conversations about best practice for GHS implementation for better mutual understanding of the rationales and improved addressing of differences.