

International Labour Organization

1989 International Labour Conference Resolution concerning harmonization of systems of classification and labelling for the use of hazardous chemicals at work

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Considering the importance of chemicals in industry, agriculture and services;

Recognizing the common concern for avoiding risks associated with the use of chemicals at work;

Stressing the need to provide information to the user about hazardous properties of chemicals;

Recognizing the value of existing systems of classification and labelling for transport of dangerous goods by road, rail, ship and air and also of several national and regional classification systems for the protection of the general public, marketing and use of chemicals at work;

Noting the existence of an International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals - IRPTC - established by the United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP;

Bearing in mind the cost of establishing individual national classification and labelling systems for the use of chemicals at work;

Considering the large volume of trade of chemicals between countries and regions;

Expressing concern about the varying systems for the classification and labelling for the use of chemicals at work and for the transport of dangerous goods;

Noting that many governments in their replies to the questionnaire of the ILO on Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work in connection with the envisaged adoption of international instruments by the International Labour Conference have stressed the need for international harmonization of systems for classification and labelling as incorporated in Report VI (2) to the International Labour Conference's 76th Session 1989;

Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to request the Director-General -

1. to assess the size of the task of harmonizing national and regional criteria and classification systems established for the use of chemicals at work, consistent with the United Nations classification system for the transport of dangerous goods, in co-operation with UNEP and WHO within the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), with other relevant international organizations, and with government, employers' and workers' organizations;
2. to prepare a report on the result of this assessment and present this report as soon as possible;
3. to establish co-operation with other international bodies to ensure a system of harmonized national and regional criteria and classifications which protect workers using chemicals.