



**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON CHEMICAL SAFETY**

**GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE-OF-THE-SCIENCE OF  
ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS**

*An assessment prepared by an expert group on behalf of the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation, and the United Nations Environment Programme.*

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## *Preface*

Global concerns have been raised in recent years over the potential adverse effects that may result from exposure to chemicals that have the potential to interfere with the endocrine system. Wildlife and human health effects of EDCs were first proclaimed by Rachel Carson in 1962 and based on a growing body of knowledge those concerns have increased. This concern regarding endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) is directed at both humans and wildlife. In response to these concerns, the Second Session (February 1997) of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety made a number of recommendations to the Member Organization of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), notably IPCS and OECD, concerning approaches and means for coordinating and/or supporting efforts to address the issues internationally including the development of an international inventory of research and coordinated testing and assessment strategies. This endorsed earlier recommendations from an international workshop at the Smithsonian (January 1997) and was followed by the 1997 Declaration of the Environmental Leaders of the Eight on Children's Environmental Health, which specifically addressed the issue of EDCs in their declaration. The environment leaders encouraged continuing efforts to compile an international inventory of research activities, develop an international assessment of the state-of-the-science, identify and prioritize research needs and data gaps, and develop a mechanism for coordinating and cooperating on filing of the research needs. The Fiftieth World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHO 50.13 in 1997, which called upon the Director-General of WHO to "take the necessary steps to reinforce WHO leadership in undertaking risk assessment as a basis for tackling high priority problems as they emerge, and in promoting and coordinating related research, for example, on potential endocrine-related health effects of exposure to chemicals".

In response to these recommendations, the WHO/UNEP/ILO International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) assumed responsibility for developing this global assessment of the current state of scientific knowledge relative to environmental endocrine disruption. Concurrently, IPCS assisted in the development of a Global Endocrine Disruptor Research Inventory (see <http://endocrine.ei.jrc.it>), which serves as a tool to foster complementary research efforts and identify strengths and weaknesses of current global research efforts.

IPCS (in collaboration with OECD) convened an informal consultation in 1997 and a Scoping Meeting in 1998 to outline the objectives, scope, and development process for the assessment document. IPCS established a Steering Group of the following scientific experts to provide oversight, expertise, and guidance for the project, and to evaluate the accuracy, significance and relevance of the information in the document.

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This Steering Group met seven times over a three-year period to evaluate and revise various drafts of the document. Several of the Steering Group Members served as chapter coordinators and editors, and provided significant text contributions. Their continuing commitment to this document was essential for its completion.

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