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## **REACH-LIKE LEGISLATION AROUND THE WORLD**

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Our current approach to the management of chemicals has led to unacceptable impacts to human health and the planet's environment. International, national, regional and local governments are making efforts to shift to a more comprehensive approach to managing industrial chemicals. Some industries and companies are also taking the lead.

Countries around the world have chemical regulations that require public disclosure on the safety of chemicals and require substitution with a safer alternative if one is available.

In 2007, the European Union's regulation on chemicals and their safe use, the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemical substances (REACH) entered into force. REACH shifted the burden of proof of safety of chemicals from government to chemical manufacturers. Under REACH, manufacturers and importers of chemicals are required to gather information on the chemical properties of their substances and submit the information to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). This chemical information will be publicly available and accessible to consumers and other downstream chemical users. Significantly, REACH calls for the substitution of the most dangerous chemicals when suitable alternatives have been identified.

A series of conventions, or international agreements, address specific chemical issues, including the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989), the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides (1998) and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001). The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and SAICM are all hosted by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The World Health Organization has convened the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) as a mechanism to implement chemical safety, which they define as «the prevention of the adverse effects, both short- and long-term, to humans and the environment from the production, storage, transportation, use and disposal of chemicals». The IFCS contributes to the implementation of other non-binding international agreements, such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), hosted by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) which was created to create a policy framework to meet the WSSD Generational Goal described above

The Lowell Institute for Sustainable Production at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell describes comprehensive chemicals policy as “a holistic approach that is integrated and prevention-oriented, ensuring protection of workers, communities, and consumer health while stimulating the development and use of non-hazardous and sustainable chemicals in production systems, materials, and products.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) created a Generational Goal that says that nations should «Renew the commitment, aiming to achieve, by 2020 and beyond, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, which says that threats posed by toxic chemicals should be eliminated within one generation».