How is the **SOUND MANAGEMENT of CHEMICALS** related to the **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS?**

At the **SEPTEMBER 2000 MILLENNIUM SUMMIT,** world leaders adopted the **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS,** which set clear targets, to be achieved by 2015, for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, and environmental degradation, and promoting social objectives such as universal primary education and empowerment of women.

CHEMICALS play an important role with respect to human development. However, without good management practices they can pose significant risks to human health and the environment, with the poorest members of the global community most vulnerable to their negative effects. For this reason the **SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS (SMC)** is an important component of UNDP's efforts to reduce global poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Proper use of chemicals can contribute to poverty reduction, such as the application of fertilizers and pesticides that can boost the productivity of the agricultural lands on which poor communities depend. However, when poorly managed, chemicals can pose significant risks to human health and the environment. Sound management of chemicals is therefore essential for maintaining a healthy environment and safe working conditions while maximizing the benefits of chemicals.

IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Certain types of chemicals can build up to dangerous levels in humans, causing adverse reproductive, developmental, immunological, hormonal and carcinogenic effects. Exposure to these chemicals can also result in miscarriages, low birth weight babies and premature births. Women can pass on these toxic chemicals to their children, both prenatally and through breastfeeding. Sound management of chemicals can help safeguard women's health, and the health of future generations.

ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Children are particularly sensitive to adverse effects from the improper use of chemicals. Raising awareness about the importance of sound management of chemicals is essential to help safeguard children's mental and physical development and enable them to attend school. In addition, providing basic science education will help countries develop the skills needed to manage chemicals safely.

COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Insecticides, repellants and larvicides help prevent millions of deaths worldwide in the fight against vector-borne diseases. However, with over-exposure and improper use, these chemicals can cause adverse health effects. Sound management of chemicals reduces exposures to a minimum, maximizes the benefits of their use, and encourages the adoption of environmentally friendly vector disease control. SMC also promotes safe handling and disposal of expired medications and health care waste to help minimize negative impacts on the environment and human health.

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Sound management of chemicals can improve women's working and living conditions, increase their knowledge about health risks and proper handling of chemicals and thereby help protect them and their families. Proper integration of gender dimensions into SMC initiatives can promote women's participation in regulatory and policy decision-making processes on chemical safety, and enable women to play a more informed role in the management of chemicals.

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Production, use and handling of chemicals, if not properly managed, can cause severe environmental degradation and disruption of ecosystems by contributing to climate change, ozone depletion and chemical contamination of water, soil, air and flora and fauna. Sound management of chemicals can help prevent and/or minimize releases of harmful chemicals into the environment, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting chemicals, ensure a healthier environment and reduce the need for difficult and costly environmental remediation.

REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Every year many children die as a result of chemical poisoning in the home, or at work through their involvement in activities such as agriculture and mining. Sound management of chemicals plays a vital role in reducing children's exposure to hazardous chemicals and improving their working and living conditions. SMC also helps lower child mortality by ensuring that in the fight against vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, chemicals are used responsibly and information is made available on safer alternatives.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

International coordination and cooperation efforts towards improved chemicals management, such as through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) adopted at the first International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai in 2006, create global partnerships, efforts and initiatives that help countries build their capacity for sound management of chemicals, integrate chemicals objectives pertaining to SMC into national and local development policies and plans, and catalyze necessary finance.