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### **South Africa joins the OECD system for Mutual Acceptance of Chemical Safety Data**

South Africa will be the first non-member country to sign on to the OECD's Mutual Acceptance of Data in the assessment of chemicals when it takes part in the OECD Chemicals Committee meeting in Paris 4-6 February.

The OECD Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD) system saves governments and chemical producers approximately US \$60 million every year by allowing the results of a variety of safety tests done on chemicals and chemical products such as industrial chemicals and pesticides to be shared across OECD. The MAD requires that testing be carried out using OECD standards for test methods (OECD Test Guidelines) and for data quality (OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice - GLP). Governments need to verify compliance of laboratories with the latter standard by using the OECD agreed procedures. All OECD countries – and now South Africa - have implemented this system via the appropriate legislative and administrative procedures.

A provisional adherent to the system in 1999, South Africa worked with OECD countries to make its compliance monitoring programme acceptable to all members. A team of experts from three OECD country governments evaluated the South African GLP authority (South African National Accreditation System) on site. Based on the outcome of this evaluation, the OECD Council invited South Africa to become a full member of the system, with the same rights and obligations as OECD countries.

South Africa's adherence to the OECD system means that it will accept data from OECD countries generated under MAD conditions. Equally, as South Africa can now ensure that its laboratories produce safety data work with comparable rigour and quality as the laboratories throughout OECD, member countries will accept its data. This removes a potential non-tariff trade barrier between South Africa and OECD countries for marketing chemicals that would have been caused by different standards and verification procedures. It also opens up the possibility for producers in OECD countries to have safety tests for their chemicals undertaken in South Africa.

Several other non-member countries are at various stages in the process of adherence to the MAD system.

For further information, journalists are invited to contact Dian Turnheim in the OECD's Environment Directorate (tel: + 33 1 45 24 97 77 or e-mail: [dian.turnheim@oecd.org](mailto:dian.turnheim@oecd.org)).

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