

## **Bethesda Declaration**

### **Introduction**

Whereas consumer product safety is a vitally important public issue

Whereas there is growing consensus on the regulatory mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure a high level of consumer safety

Whereas consumer products are increasingly being sourced globally

Whereas regulatory agencies are limited in their resources

Whereas multi-lateral trade agreements have created a global economy, safety standards and technical regulations become issues of increasing international importance

Whereas regulatory reform and reducing the administrative burden on business is a priority for many governments around the world

Whereas there is a growing demand for the harmonisation for regulatory requirements

Whereas the mission of the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO) is to provide an international forum for individuals dedicated to consumer product safety

Therefore the participants of ICPHSO Annual Meeting and Training Symposium, held on the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in Bethesda, Maryland, United States agreed that

### **Shared values**

To improve the safety of products and thereby foster the health and safety of consumers

To improve the confidence of consumers in the products they buy

To encourage compliance with safety standards and requirements in order to achieve these improvements in the most cost effective way whilst building global trade to the benefit of consumers and business alike.

### **Implementation**

In pursuit of these shared values the participants of ICPHSO's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Training Symposium encourage

1. regulators and enforcers to follow-up their discussions in Arnhem and Bethesda with specific practical steps to deepen their international collaboration through extending the membership of the International Consumer Product Safety Caucus<sup>1</sup> as a key network for sustained cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> ICPSC is an initiative of regulatory authorities around the world to further collaboration and co-operation amongst themselves.

2. regulators and enforcers to make systematic use of ICPHSO as a prime opportunity for sustained dialogue between all stakeholders, involving producers, consumer groups, citizens, traders, regulators and standards making, testing and certification bodies.
3. regulators and stakeholders from other countries to become active and committed participants in ICPHSO processes and meetings. Furthermore to propose that some structured and positive outreach be undertaken to potential new voices and
  - With the aim of having more comprehensive global coverage in meetings beyond 2006 further steps to be taken to develop the co-operation should in the meantime be prepared and a roadmap should be agreed upon in the third European ICPHSO meeting in Brussels in November 2006 and followed up in future meetings.
  - The conference urges the regulatory agencies and other concerned stakeholders to make proper preparations in advance of the Brussels meeting to ensure the meeting's success.