

Safety ISOPA's top priority

MAASTRICHT, THE NETHERLANDS — Isocyanates and polyols association ISOPA will be pushing out its Europe-wide initiative on safe handling of chemicals in the polyurethane sector at UTECH EUROPE 2006.

The group's 'Walk the Talk' programme aims to cut workplace accidents by sending representatives of member companies around the industry promoting active dialogue between workers and managers on safety behaviour.

"Safety is and remains our No. 1 priority," said ISOPA president Nick Webster, in an ISOPA statement. "We don't just 'talk' safety, we act on it."

Technical and commercial personnel from ISOPA member companies will



ISOPA

20 years of extraordinary growth - Webster

'Walk the Talk' by visiting hundreds of facilities throughout Europe, from Ireland to Poland and from Norway to Turkey.

Long term effort is needed to ensure continuous improvement, ISOPA said.

"By continuously promoting high professional stan-

dards we are helping our customers and our industry at large," said ISOPA secretary general Mike Jeffs.

"We're calling on all users of diisocyanates and polyols to contact their suppliers and join," Jeffs said.

20 years of UTECH!

ISOPA president Webster, who will give the opening presentation at the three-day international UTECH EUROPE 2006 conference, points out that this year is "a very special one... the 20th anniversary of the UTECH conference and exhibition, 1986-2006."

Webster says the last 20 years "have been an extraordinary period of growth."

As well as unprecedented growth in world population to its current 6.5 billion from 5 billion in 1986, Webster

highlights other dramatic changes since the 1980s.

Former communist countries in central and eastern Europe are moving to a free market system, while communist China and protectionist India have embraced open capitalism, he said.

But he points to environmental, health and safety issues, and sustainability as "definite challenges for us and our desire for our industry to grow."

UTECH in 1986 had only one paper on ES&H matters, Webster said. "Then came the Montreal Protocol, Kyoto and most recently the REACH (Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) and our world has changed."

REACH, likely to come into force in the EU in 2007, affects everyone in the polyurethanes value chain including downstream applications. "If you are not registered, you will not be able to sell," Webster stresses. **UT**