

POPS COP-2 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 3 MAY 2006

In the morning, delegates met in plenary to hear progress reports from contact groups and to discuss agenda items on national implementation plans (NIPs) and technical assistance. In the afternoon, delegates convened in plenary to address synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster. A contact group on financial resources met in the morning, a contact group on budget met in the afternoon and a contact group on effectiveness evaluation convened throughout the day. In the evening, delegates also met in contact groups on technical assistance and synergies.

Editor's Note: ENB coverage of the negotiations ended at 10:00 pm.

PLENARY

Effectiveness evaluation contact group Co-Chair Wallstrom reported that the group had divided into two subgroups to address elements of a draft decision and the modalities of an effectiveness evaluation panel. Following concerns expressed by BRAZIL, INDIA, CHINA and MOROCCO, delegates agreed that the contact group would continue deliberations as a single group to ensure adequate developing country participation. While INDIA suggested that the POPRC could perform the work of an effectiveness evaluation panel, SWITZERLAND noted that POPRC and the effectiveness panel would deal with different technical matters, and the EU highlighted the full workload of the POPRC.

Financial resources contact group Co-Chair Buys reported on the group's progress, noting the quantity of work the group faced and the positive tenor of the discussions.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS: The Secretariat introduced the documents on NIPs (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/10, UNEP/POPS/COP.2/11 and UNEP/POPS/COP.2/29/add.1), noting that only 14 countries had submitted their NIPs to date and reminding parties of the 17 May 2006 deadline. CHILE, NORWAY, LEBANON, BARBADOS, the PHILIPPINES, JORDAN, DJIBOUTI, MAURITANIA, TUNISIA, TURKEY and MAURITIUS said that their NIPs would be submitted before the deadline, while TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, KENYA, CHINA, BENIN, COTE D'IVOIRE, MEXICO, RWANDA, THAILAND and SUDAN said that their NIPs would not.

The EU requested that the Secretariat prepare an analysis of submitted NIPs for consideration at COP-3. CHILE suggested that a group of experts was not needed to help with NIPs implementation, as the Secretariat could fill this role and, supported by the PHILIPPINES, called for South-South cooperation. VENEZUELA advocated drawing on existing

regional expertise. The Secretariat said that the list of experts for NIPs assistance requested by COP-1 would soon be made available.

CHINA and TUNISIA called for accelerating the formulation of guidelines on socioeconomic impact evaluation. BARBADOS drew attention to delays in receiving financial and technical assistance, which have hindered NIPs development in the Caribbean. UGANDA requested guidance on risk assessment studies. In response to Thailand's comments on difficulties assessing baseline costs, the Secretariat said that additional guidance was being developed.

COTE D'IVOIRE called for prioritization of financing national implementation activities, especially public awareness campaigns. MEXICO reported on parallel efforts to eliminate POPs through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The Secretariat introduced documents related to guidance on technical assistance (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/14), regional centers for capacity building and technology transfers (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/15), Terms of Reference (ToR) for regional and subregional centers, and criteria for evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/INF/7), noting that the proposed COP actions were based on Decision SC-1/15 (Technical assistance).

On technical assistance, ETHIOPIA, supported by MOROCCO and BRAZIL and opposed by the EU, proposed wording that explicitly calls for information sharing on experiences providing technical assistance for developing countries in implementing NIPs and Convention obligations.

On regional centers, SWITZERLAND, with URUGUAY, NORWAY, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND and others, cited the need to build on existing structures, particularly the Basel Convention's centers, while MOROCCO distinguished between cooperation and fusion. EGYPT and others supported language noting that funding for the centers should come from the Convention. A contact group was formed to address these issues.

SYNERGIES: Monique Barbut, Director of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics and UNEP Officer-in-Charge of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat and the UNEP part of the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, reported on the Secretariat's study on improving cooperation and synergies between the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/INF/12), which was undertaken in response to Decision SC-1/18 (Enhancing synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster). She emphasized the need to move forward in a timely way, the opportunity to improve services to parties, and the larger context of the UN's effort to explore a coherent approach to global environmental governance.

SENEGAL agreed with the need to promote a life-cycle approach and underlined that the chosen options should not weaken any of the three Conventions. The EU put forward a draft decision calling for a joint meeting among the Bureaus of the three Conventions (UNEP/POPS/COP/CRP.3), and stressed the importance of transparency, inclusiveness, and the sovereignty of the respective COPs. CHILE questioned the necessity of an extreme reform of the three Secretariats and, with ETHIOPIA, supported the EU draft decision. SWITZERLAND, supported by NORWAY, noted the need to act soon to avoid decisions being imposed on parties to the Stockholm Convention by others, and opposed the EU proposal. CANADA agreed that the process should be accelerated, but, with URUGUAY, noted that the EU proposal offered a path forward. CANADA also called for further analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery under common leadership.

NIGERIA, BRAZIL, INDIA, MOROCCO and URUGUAY called for clearly defining "synergy." NIGERIA proposed that the contact group develop a process for achieving synergy and cautioned against rushing to take decisions on establishing a common secretariat. INDIA articulated doubts as to how a combined secretariat would better serve the Conventions, and expressed concerns about the proposed joint working group's inclusiveness. MOROCCO, NAMIBIA and MEXICO raised concerns about the legal implications of combining Secretariats, recalling that not all parties are party to all three Conventions. URUGUAY drew attention to existing regional networks, and SOUTH AFRICA said that synergies would be better implemented by regional centers. SOUTH AFRICA added that establishing synergies should be a "step-wise" process.

NORWAY said that a common "figurehead" could better attract financial resources and promote common efforts and interests in the chemicals and wastes cluster. The AFRICAN GROUP requested an evaluation of the negative aspects of synergies.

GHANA urged parties to be proactive, noting that the need to take advantage of synergies has been agreed to for some time. IRAN proposed an inter-secretariat mechanism through which the three Secretariats could objectively develop joint proposals for the three COPs to consider. JAPAN suggested that the first step should be to streamline any common functions of the three Conventions.

Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention, reported on the results of the 5th Session of the OEWG for the Basel Convention, which included: a call for enhanced regional synergies, especially in technology transfer, capacity building and technical assistance; and a request that any relevant decisions made by POPs COP-2 be submitted to the Basel COP and the Basel Secretariat for information.

COP-2 President Kiddle noted that the enhancement of governance structures is a difficult task, and suggested that options for achieving administrative and management-level synergies are available. He said that this COP should take action.

COP-2 President Kiddle established contact groups on synergies and technical assistance. He requested that the contact group on synergies consider: ways that the Secretariats of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions could collaborate to achieve administrative and management efficiencies; a process that would review existing cooperative activities; and further collaborative activities that could enhance achievement of the objectives of the three Conventions.

COP-2 President Kiddle further requested that the contact group on technical assistance consider: instructing the Secretariat to collate a report of parties' experiences in implementing guidance on technical assistance and technology transfer, to be considered by COP-3; terms of reference for regional and subregional technical assistance centers; and criteria for evaluating the performance of the centers.

CONTACT GROUPS

BUDGET CONTACT GROUP: The Secretariat presented a paper with revised operational budgets for 2006 and 2007, taking into account the questions raised on Tuesday. She noted additions to the budgets, including provisions for consultants and staff travel costs for activities related to DDT, clearing house and effectiveness evaluation. Delegates questioned the Secretariat on issues relating to, *inter alia*: a clearing-house mechanism; electronic reporting; and a future meeting of the OEWG on non-compliance. The contact group will resume on Thursday.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES CONTACT GROUP: The contact group on financial resources continued discussions on financial resources and mechanisms, and on guidance to the GEF. After a discussion on the respective responsibilities of the GEF and the COP with regard to the ToR for work on modalities on the needs assessment (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/18), the contact group: refined ToR objectives, specifying that the COP needs to regularly assess funding needs including and beyond those met by the primary financial mechanism; agreed that the sources of, and means of seeking, information were generally acceptable, with a few minor changes; and amended text to call for a preliminary needs assessment, thereby allowing for more information to be gathered and for refinement of the methodology prior to a full and comprehensive assessment.

EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION CONTACT GROUP: The effectiveness evaluation contact group continued discussions on, *inter alia*: minimum requirements for the first evaluation, including baseline monitoring data on air and human exposure, and the strategic involvement of other partners; a plan for future evaluations, including enhanced core regional data and possible additional monitoring elements; capacity building to increase participation; and approaches to setting up an evaluation panel. Discussions continued into the night.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTACT GROUP: The technical assistance contact group, co-chaired by Frederik Sikabonjo (Namibia) and Karel Blaha (Czech Republic), discussed guidance on technical assistance (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/14). Following Ethiopia's suggestion in plenary of adding language requiring parties and other organizations to provide information on their experience with technical assistance and technology transfer to developing countries, various developed countries opposed this language, while a few developing countries favored it. The text was bracketed.

Participants discussed the ToRs for regional and subregional centers for capacity building and transfer of technology (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/15), including their mandate, objectives and working plan.

SYNERGIES CONTACT GROUP: In the contact group on synergies, co-chaired by Osvaldo Alvarez (Chile) and Anne Daniel (Canada), delegates worked from a draft decision on the matter put forward in the plenary by the EU (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/CRP.3), focusing on the operative paragraphs. A consensus emerged among the majority of participants that operationalizing cooperation would be a gradual process, although a few delegates continued to push for clear action to emerge from COP-2 on the matter. Discussions continued into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Talk in plenary of enhancing synergies among the three chemicals-related Conventions left many delegates nodding in agreement that three "motors" would be more effective than one, and that consolidation would result in increased efficiency. But despite assurances that none of the Conventions would be weakened and human and financial resources would not decrease, some developing country delegates could not shake their apprehension that consolidation would result in a further shrinking of the pot of money for implementation, and technical assistance being stretched even thinner.