

THIRD MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: 30 APRIL - 4 MAY 2007

The third Conference of the Parties (COP-3) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) convenes today at the Méridien President Hotel, in Dakar, Senegal. The objective of the meeting is to adopt decisions related to: evaluation of the continued need for DDT for disease vector control and alternative strategies to replace DDT; criteria for the review process for entries in the register of specific exemptions; measures to reduce or eliminate releases from unintentional production of dioxin and furan and releases, including guidelines on best available techniques (BAT), provisional guidance on best environmental practices (BEP), and identification and quantification. Other issues to be addressed by the COP include: guidance on technical assistance; national implementation plans; listing chemicals in Annexes A (Elimination), B (restriction) or C (unintentional production) of the Convention; the report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the COP of the Convention and the Council of the GEF, the report of the GEF on its activities in support of the implementation of the Convention and other issues related to the financial mechanism; effectiveness evaluation; reporting; procedures and institutional mechanisms for determining non-compliance and for the treatment of parties found to be in non-compliance; enhancing synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster, and the supplementary report on cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; and adoption of the 2008-2009 budget. Other matters scheduled for discussion include official communications with parties and observers, and the list of official contact points and national focal points for information exchange.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

The Stockholm Convention calls for international action on 12 POPs grouped into three categories: 1) pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; 2) industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and 3) unintentionally produced POPs: dioxins and furans. Governments are to promote BAT and BEP for replacing existing POPs while preventing the

manufacturing of new POPs. Provision has also been made for a procedure identifying additional POPs and the criteria to be considered in doing so. Key elements of the treaty include: the requirement that developed countries provide new and additional financial resources; measures to eliminate production and use of intentionally produced POPs, eliminate unintentionally produced POPs, where feasible, and manage and dispose of POPs wastes in an environmentally sound manner; and substitution involving the use of safer chemicals and processes to prevent unintentionally produced POPs. Precaution is operationalized throughout the Stockholm Convention, with specific references in the preamble, the objective and the provision on identifying new POPs. The Stockholm Convention entered into force on 17 May 2004 and currently has 144 parties.

BACKGROUND: POPs are chemical substances that persist, bioaccumulate in living organisms, and can cause adverse effects to human health and the environment. With further evidence of the long-range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced, and the consequent threats they pose to the environment worldwide, the international community called for urgent global action to reduce and eliminate their release into the environment. In March 1995, the UNEP Governing Council (GC) adopted decision 18/32 inviting the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) and the International Programme on Chemical Safety to initiate an assessment process regarding a list of 12 POPs. In response, the IFCS convened an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on POPs, which developed a workplan for assessing available information on the chemistry, sources, toxicity, environmental dispersion and socioeconomic impacts of the 12 POPs.

In June 1996, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group convened a meeting of experts in Manila, the Philippines, and concluded that sufficient information existed to demonstrate the need for international action to minimize risks from the 12 POPs, including a global legally binding instrument. The meeting forwarded a recommendation to the UNEP GC and the World Health Assembly (WHA) that immediate international action be taken on the 12 POPs. In February 1997, the UNEP GC adopted decision 19/13C endorsing the conclusions and recommendations of the IFCS. The GC requested that UNEP, together with relevant international organizations, convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) with a mandate to develop, by the end of 2000, an international legally binding instrument for implementing international action, beginning with

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the list of 12 POPs. Also in February 1997, the second meeting of the IFCS decided that the *Ad Hoc* Working Group would continue to assist in the preparations for the negotiations. In May 1997, the WHA endorsed the recommendations of the IFCS and requested that the World Health Organization (WHO) participate actively in the negotiations.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: The first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) was held from 29 June to 3 July 1998, in Montreal, Canada. INC-1 requested the Secretariat to prepare a document containing material for possible inclusion in an international legally binding instrument. The second session of the INC was held from 25-29 January 1999, in Nairobi, Kenya, where participants discussed a Secretariat-prepared outline of a convention text. The third session of the INC met from 6-11 September 1999, in Geneva, Switzerland, with delegates considering the revised draft text. They adopted a procedure establishing a review committee to apply screening criteria and to prepare a risk profile and risk management evaluation for proposed substances as a basis for further negotiation. The fourth session of the INC (INC-4) met from 20-25 March 2000, in Bonn, Germany. Delegates drafted articles on technical assistance and on financial resources and mechanisms, addressed control measures, and made headway on language on unintentionally produced POPs. The fifth session of the INC (INC-5) met from 4-10 December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa, with delegates concluding negotiations on the Convention on Saturday, 10 December.

CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES ON THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: The Conference of the Plenipotentiaries convened from 22-23 May 2001, in Stockholm, Sweden. During the Diplomatic Conference, delegates adopted: the Stockholm Convention; resolutions adopted by INC-4 and INC-5 addressing interim financial arrangements and issues related to the Basel Convention; resolutions forwarded by the Preparatory Meeting; and the Final Act.

INC-6: The sixth session of the INC (INC-6) met from 17-21 June 2002, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates adopted decisions on: DDT and the register of specific exemptions; the POPs Review Committee; a clearing-house mechanism; technical assistance; financial resources and mechanisms and the interim financial mechanism; regional and subregional centers for capacity building and technology transfer; effectiveness evaluation; and non-compliance. INC-6 also established an Expert Group on BAT and BEP.

INC-7: The seventh session of INC (INC-7) was held from 14-18 July 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates focused on addressing a number of "housekeeping" issues in preparation for the first COP. Decisions were adopted on, *inter alia*: offers to host the permanent Secretariat; technical assistance; national implementation plans; exempted use; party reporting; specific exemptions; DDT; interim financial arrangements; a standardized toolkit for the identification and quantification of dioxin and furan releases; measures to reduce or eliminate releases from stockpiles and wastes; effectiveness evaluation; the budget; and the financial mechanism.

COP-1: The first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the Stockholm Convention was held from 2-6 May 2005, in Punta del Este, Uruguay. To set the Convention's implementation in motion, delegates adopted a broad range of decisions related to: providing for the evaluation of the continued need for DDT use for disease vector control; establishing a review process for entries in the register of specific exemptions; adopting guidance for the financial mechanism; establishing a schedule for reporting; establishing arrangements for monitoring data on POPs; adopting rules of procedure and financial rules; adopting

the budget for the Secretariat; and establishing the POPRC. Other matters scheduled for discussion included: the format for the DDT Register and the Register of Specific Exemptions; the process for developing guidelines to assist parties in preventing the formation and release of unintentionally produced POPs; and guidelines on BAT and BEP.

COP-2: The Second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) took place from 1-5 May 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. COP-2 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate, and adopted 18 decisions on, *inter alia*: DDT; exemptions; financial resources and mechanisms; information exchange; BAT/BEP; identification and quantification of releases; measures to reduce or eliminate releases from wastes; implementation plans; listing chemicals in Annexes A, B and/or C of the Convention; reporting; technical assistance; synergies; effectiveness evaluation; and non-compliance.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

AD HOC TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING: On effectiveness evaluation COP-2 agreed to implement the elements for the Global Monitoring Plan and to establish a provisional *Ad Hoc* Technical Working Group (TWG) to oversee the plan. The first meeting of the TWG was held from 9-12 October 2006, in Brno, Czech Republic and the second meeting from 30 January to 3 February 2007, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates agreed on, *inter alia*, the TWG workplan and the criteria for evaluation of the monitoring programmes. Participants also proposed to amend some elements of the guidance document for the Global Monitoring Plan related to quality procedures to obtain comparable data for the first assessment.

POPRC-2: The second meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-2) of the Stockholm Convention took place from 6-10 November 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. POPRC-2 considered several operational issues, including the treatment of isomers and precursors, confidentiality arrangements, and submission of information specified in Annex F of the Convention (Socioeconomic information). Delegates approved a roster of experts to assist the Committee in its work, as well as a standard work plan for the intersessional preparation of a draft risk profile and a draft risk management evaluation. COP-3 will consider POPRC-2 report and suggestions.

EXPERT GROUP ON BAT-BEP: The second meeting of the Expert Group on Best Available Techniques and Best Environmental Practices (BAT-BEP) was held in Geneva, from 19-24 November 2006. Delegates completed work on the enhancement or strengthening of the guidelines on

BAT and provisional guidance on BEP relevant to Convention's Article 5 (Measures to reduce or eliminate releases from unintentional production), and discussed the process for presenting the report of the Expert Group's work for COP-3 consideration.

AD HOC JOINT WORKING GROUP ON ENHANCED COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE BASEL, STOCKHOLM AND ROTTERDAM CONVENTIONS: The *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group held its first meeting from 26-28 March 2007, in Helsinki, Finland, developed guiding principles for its work, and identified the national needs to be addressed in promoting cooperation and coordination. The report of this meeting will be presented to delegates at COP-3.

OWEG ON NON-COMPLIANCE: The second meeting of the Open-Ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Non-Compliance (OWEG NC) was held from 25-27 April 2007, in Dakar, Senegal. Delegates addressed issues, including trigger systems and completed a draft text to be presented at COP3.