

## POPS COP-3 HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 30 APRIL 2007

The third Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs COP-3) opened on Monday, 30 April, in Dakar, Senegal. During morning and afternoon plenary sessions, delegates heard opening statements and addressed organizational matters and rules of procedure. Plenary established the Committee of the Whole (COW) and the Budget Group, which met in the afternoon. The COW discussed the budget, technical assistance, regional centers and non-compliance. The COW established a contact group on regional centers and technical assistance and another one on non-compliance.

### OPENING PLENARY

COP-2 President Nick Kiddle (New Zealand) opened the plenary session, expressed appreciation to the Government of Senegal for hosting COP-3, and highlighted major developments relevant to POPs since COP-2, including: the activities of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) in receiving and analyzing information to make recommendations to COP on new controls for additional chemicals that were determined to pose significant risk of contamination of people and the environment; the work of the effectiveness evaluation group on the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and its required infrastructure; efforts at national level made by many parties in elaborating and submitting national implementation plans; and progress made on synergies among the chemical Conventions and on the Open-Ended Working Group on Non-Compliance (OEWG NC). He concluded by thanking all parties for their work and for having elected him COP-2 President.

Bakary Kante, on behalf of Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, noted the challenges faced by the Convention, including the need to deal with issues related to food and health, and the use of DDT for combating malaria, especially in Africa. He underscored the interlinkages among the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions and the need to establish regional centers that meet States' and people's needs globally. Highlighting the success of the Montreal Protocol, Kante urged parties to make further efforts on establishing the financial mechanism for the Convention. He stressed the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry and other partners in implementing the Convention.

Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal, welcomed participants and, recalling on the incident of toxic waste dumping in Côte D'Ivoire, noted that there is no mechanism in place to guarantee that toxic waste will not enter the African Continent. He underscored the contradiction of using products to increase agricultural outputs and improve living conditions,

while having adverse effects on the environment and human health. On DDT and agriculture, he reported on his country's experience in using organic, rather than chemical fertilizers. President Abdoulaye Wade underscored the need for parties, especially donor countries, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and partners to commit and mobilize technical and financial resources to allow the action defined in the national implementation plans to be undertaken.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Plenary elected Thierno Lô (Senegal) as COP-3 President and Jan-Karel Kwisthout (Netherlands) as Rapporteur, postponing nomination of other Bureau members to allow for further regional consultations.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:** Plenary adopted the agenda (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/1), with Uruguay, for The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group (GRULAC), supported by Benin, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressing the priority of the agenda items on regional centers and technical assistance.

**ORGANIZATION OF WORK:** Plenary established the COW, elected Karel Blaha (Czech Republic) as COW Chair and also created a Budget Group.

### RULES OF PROCEDURE

As some parties raised objections, plenary agreed to keep in bracketed text a provision for COP decisions to be taken, as a last resort, by a two-thirds majority vote of the parties (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/3). The issue was deferred to COP-4.

### REPORT ON THE CREDENTIALS

The Secretariat stressed the 24-hour deadline from the opening of COP-3 for parties to present their credentials and noted that the report will be presented to plenary on Wednesday.

### OTHER MATTERS

**STATUS OF RATIFICATION:** The Secretariat informed plenary that there are currently 143 States and one regional economic integration organization that have ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the Convention (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/22).

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**BUDGET:** The Secretariat introduced documents relating to the budget (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/27; INF/16; INF/17; and INF/25), and deferred the issue to the Budget Group.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** The Secretariat noted documents on: guidance for technical assistance (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/14); draft terms of reference (ToRs) for selecting regional and subregional centers for capacity building and transfer of technology (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/15 and INF/5); and compilation of submissions on technical assistance and transfer of technology

to assist developing countries to implement their plans for the elimination of POPs and other obligations under the Convention (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/11). Karel Blaha, COW Chair, noted the magnitude of the task ahead and opened the floor for discussions.

GRULAC referred to Decision SC-1/15 (Technical assistance) that requests action by the Secretariat. He questioned the selection of regional centers based on project distribution and the mandate of the Secretariat in developing a strategy for technical assistance. He said ToRs do not incorporate previously made recommendations and that the priority areas are not adequate for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

While emphasizing the importance of regional centers for technology transfer, BRAZIL proposed making use of an environmental sanitation technology company as a regional center in the Latin American and Caribbean region and committed to work together with other countries to initiate such a center. He also noted that the financial mechanism is a key element for the Convention's implementation to provide resources for capacity building and technology transfer.

INDIA and VENEZUELA lamented lack of support from developed to developing countries in technical assistance and technology transfer, and urged for more assistance to be provided. He proposed that the GEF consider developing a fast-track mechanism for funding the Convention's implementation.

CHINA, supported by IRAN, BENIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, the AFRICAN GROUP, URUGUAY, JORDAN and the UNITED STATES (US), suggested making use of the existing Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres (BCRCCs) as regional centers for the Stockholm Convention to avoid duplication, and improve efficiency, cooperation and coordination between the two Conventions. He supported the Secretariat's suggestion, as contained in UNEP/POPS/COP.3/14 to develop a draft strategy on priority areas, including alternatives and disposal of POP wastes. He urged COP-3 to propose to GEF that it allocate adequate resources and requested the Secretariat review the status of technical assistance and funding and report to COP-4.

MOROCCO stressed the need for a clear and tangible system for technical assistance and reinstated Morocco's offer to host a regional center. Germany, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), supported GEF placing greater emphasis on capacity building and stressed the Secretariat should focus on capacity building and technical assistance, as opposed to process. He said regional and subregional centers should be existing centers or institutions and that selection should be based on method and purpose.

Citing the efficacy of BCRCCs, IRAN supported integrating future Stockholm Convention regional centers into these. SENEGAL underscored the advantages of synergies between the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

URUGUAY introduced UNEP/POPS/COP.3/CRP.2 prepared by countries currently hosting BCRCCs and stressed that compliance rests on adequate technical assistance and effective regional centers.

Supporting the use of existing BCRCCs, NORWAY and NEW ZEALAND expressed concerns about selection, while TANZANIA was worried about the pace of implementation.

JORDAN emphasized that technical assistance forms the backbone of the Convention. While stressing the importance of compliance discussions, JAPAN noted the opportunity to identify potential recipients of available GEF funds for technical assistance.

The International Pesticide Elimination Network (IPEN) suggested that observers be encouraged to submit case studies to support the Convention's work.

The COW established a contact group on regional centers and technical assistance to meet on Tuesday at 10am.

**NON-COMPLIANCE:** Anne Daniel (Canada), Chair of the OEWG NC, noted the second OEWG NC meeting made good progress, with brackets eliminated from most of the text,

some provisions having been deleted and others streamlined. She said that outstanding issues included: how to invoke procedures (triggers); measures to take in response to compliance difficulties; and the committee's composition. On regional centers, she noted the correlation between compliance, and technical and financial issues. She underscored that OEWG NC recommended a contact group be established during COP to further address the issue.

INDIA joined COW Chair Blaha in congratulating the group on its work and in urging continued action during the week. IRAN noted that parties were equal in their obligations but not in their capacities, calling for resources and experience to be taken into account. CHINA noted the existence of divergent opinions on non-compliance, underscoring the need for the transfer of technologies and resources.

Delegates established a contact group on non-compliance, which will report back to COW on Wednesday.

**EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION:** The Secretariat introduced documents on effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/22, 23, INF/14 and INF/15), reviewed agreements of previous COPs and outlined future steps to be taken by the *Ad Hoc* Technical Working Group on Global Monitoring Plan (TWG). TWG Co-Chair Ivan Holoubek (Czech Republic) presented the group's work over the intersessional period, underscoring key issues, such as: the drafting of work plans and schedules; responses to capacity needs questionnaires; financial implications; and the interpretation and assessment of data pertaining to human health. He called for COP to extend the Group's mandate.

MEXICO, supported by many, complimented the work of the TWG, and joined by AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, CANADA and the EU, suggested the use of the existing five UN regions rather than the six regions as suggested by the TWG in its report.

INDIA reported that eight laboratories had already been identified as regional centers for the implementation of GMP in the Asia Pacific.

CHINA, joined by CHILE, emphasized that substantial effectiveness evaluation is dependent on the availability of financial resources, and that implementing GMP. The EU supported the establishment of a global coordination group to replace TWG, and drew attention to the long-term need of developing countries for increased capacity in monitoring.

NEW ZEALAND noted the importance of cooperation with the Commission of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources in implementing GMP.

AUSTRALIA, supported by JAPAN, expressed reservation on the proposed global coordination group, saying that any arrangements should be cost effective, practical and achievable.

IPEN emphasized: a strategy on monitoring at global, national and regional levels; funding for global monitoring; transparency; and full stakeholders' involvement.

#### **WORKING GROUP**

**BUDGET:** Maged Younes, Secretariat, urged parties to volunteer for the position of the Budget Group Chair. He suggested, and delegates agreed, to postpone group discussions until Wednesday, since there were not enough party representatives in the room to hold negotiations.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates, some dressed casually due to an unusually high amount of lost luggage, were in good spirits as they enjoyed the Senegalese sunshine on the opening day of COP-3. Whilst several sought information on the outcomes of the OEWG on non-compliance, others anticipated that the issues of finance, criteria for selection of regional centers and technology transfer would emerge as contentious throughout the week. Others, who scurried off to the WHO lunchtime side event on DDT, buzzed positively throughout the afternoon about WHO's renewed commitment to the eventual elimination of DDT.