

## POPS COP4 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2009

The fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) convened for the first day of its high-level segment on Thursday.

In the morning and afternoon plenary sessions, delegates heard statements by ministers and heads of delegation. In the evening, plenary convened and adopted draft decisions.

Contact groups on new chemicals, financial resources and technical assistance, and budget convened throughout the day and into the evening.

### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

After the performance of a Swiss folkloric group, COP4 President Alireza Moayeri (Iran) opened the high-level segment themed "Meeting the challenges of a POPs-free future."

Stockholm Convention Executive Secretary Donald Cooper pointed at links between chemicals and other areas, such as climate change, emphasizing that problems are best addressed through inter-organizational cooperation. Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal), on behalf of the Minister of Environment, outlined key challenges, including, *inter alia*: abandoning production and use of POPs; supporting regional centers; and providing necessary financial resources for developing countries. Bakary Kante delivered an address by Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, emphasizing the great importance of synergies among the three chemicals conventions and cross-sectoral partnerships.

Maria Neira, Director of the Department of Health and Environment of the World Health Organization (WHO), highlighted the POPs-related work of the WHO. She emphasized the agency's commitment to improving knowledge on chemicals-related health problems, and reminded delegates that their decisions and actions can greatly benefit human health.

Robert Dixon, GEF, provided an overview of the GEF's work to assist parties with implementation of the Stockholm Convention, noting its investments in, *inter alia*: PCBs management, removal and disposal of obsolete stockpiles of pesticides, and DDT alternatives.

In his address, COP4 President Moayeri commended delegates for their commitment to the elimination of POPs. Welcoming the synergies among the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions, he underscored the need to increase technical assistance and financial support for developing countries for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. The high-level segment formally adopted the decision on synergies among the three conventions.

**COUNTRY STATEMENTS:** IRAN stated that illegal trafficking of POPs to developing countries impeded the effective implementation of the Convention. The EU emphasized

international cooperation for the effective elimination of POPs. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION stressed the need to eliminate PFOS and urged delegates to have the political courage to tackle substances still in use.

ARMENIA highlighted the need to manage production, use, and elimination of chemicals. GAMBIA underscored concern over the lack of progress on the Bamako Convention. GHANA stressed the need for facilities in the developing world for the environmentally sound disposal of POPs. LAOS drew attention to the need for widespread and lasting application of BAT and BEP. MADAGASCAR called for technical and financial assistance. MAURITIUS called for appointing a special envoy to convince countries, not yet parties to the Convention, to ratify. Citing reduction of dioxins and furans as a priority, SAMOA explained this is challenging as most Samoans depend on wood fuel.

THAILAND called on GEF and others to provide technical and financial support for the activities arising from the listing of new POPs. THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA outlined activities relating to managing PCB contamination and awareness raising. UGANDA underscored the importance of ensuring that proposed alternatives are easily accessible, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly.

UKRAINE reported on national progress and supported adding the nine new chemicals to the Convention. TANZANIA noted that a compliance mechanism was a basic tool for effective implementation. ANGOLA reported on legal and practical measures undertaken in his country to reduce POPs. INDIA noted the highest standards of scientific rigor have to guide the Stockholm Convention and warned against undermining the "spirit of voluntary compliance which is critical to the success of this Convention."

SWITZERLAND discussed the Ministers' Working Dinner and expressed hope that ministers could identify a solution to the impasse over key issues at COP4. MOZAMBIQUE said new approaches to technical assistance and capacity building were necessary. TOGO emphasized the need to identify regional solutions to POPs problems. BOLIVIA stressed that developed countries must meet their obligations on technology transfer and financial assistance. BRAZIL underscored that chemicals safety is a development issue and should be addressed accordingly.

TUNISIA reported on national projects to reduce POPs and POPs wastes. GABON supported the listing of the nine new chemicals. MOROCCO noted that the creation of regional and subregional centers is a vital tool for the implementation of the Convention, and called for the strengthening of focal points in developing countries. PAKISTAN noted that, while chemicals have contributed greatly to human wellbeing, they can have toxic effects on the environment. SOUTH AFRICA

commended the POPRC for recommending nine new chemicals, and supported their listing. SUDAN emphasized the importance of technical and financial assistance.

CHINA underscored the need to use "non-repressive measures" to implement the Convention. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the need to take into account the socioeconomic impacts of listing new POPs. GERMANY thanked NGOs and intergovernmental organizations for their support in implementing the Convention. DENMARK stressed that a compliance mechanism is as important as technical assistance and a financial mechanism, and FINLAND urged delegates to agree on non-compliance. Noting the importance of taking into account developing countries' needs, EGYPT supported listing the nine new chemicals. The PHILIPPINES urged the GEF to clarify and simplify processes, and to prioritize POPs clean up. RWANDA underscored ongoing challenges of capacity building, research and development, and risk evaluation.

The US noted progress toward its ratification of the Convention. Noting a shift from NIP preparation to implementation, UNDP called for technical assistance and technology transfer. IPEN expressed concern about the outcome of COP4, notably on PFOS and BDEs, and reminded delegates that expenditures to comply with the Convention will be repaid through benefits to human health and the environment. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHEMICAL ASSOCIATIONS urged that any newly listed POP meet, based on the scientific method, the Convention threshold that global action is warranted.

AFRICAN INSECT SCIENCE FOR FOOD AND HEALTH questioned the need for reintroducing DDT since environmentally safe, effective and efficient alternatives are available. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS called for the greater inclusion of indigenous peoples in the Convention, including through a working group on effective implementation.

#### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OR ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

##### **MEASURES TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE RELEASES**

**FROM INTENTIONAL PRODUCTION AND USE:** The draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.28) on exemptions and the draft decision on evaluation of the continued need for the procedure under paragraph 2(b) of Article 3 were adopted without amendment. The draft decision on DDT (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.27) was adopted with the understanding that the paragraph containing guidance to the GEF would be integrated into the COP's omnibus decision on guidance to the GEF. On PCBs (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.32), adoption of the draft decision was postponed until Friday.

**MEASURES TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE RELEASES FROM WASTES:** Adoption of this draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.29) was postponed until Friday.

**MEASURES TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE RELEASES FROM UNINTENTIONAL PRODUCTION:** The draft decisions on BAT and BEP (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.22) and on the toolkit (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.23) were adopted without amendment.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLANS:** The draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.13) was adopted with the understanding that the paragraph containing guidance to the GEF would be integrated into the COP's omnibus decision on guidance to the GEF.

**INFORMATION EXCHANGE:** The draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.26) was adopted without amendment.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** Adoption of the draft decision on guidance on technical assistance (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.14) was postponed until Friday.

**REPORTING:** The draft decision on reporting (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.30) was approved without amendment.

**EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION:** The draft decision on the global monitoring plan for effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.25) was adopted without amendment. The

draft decision on the terms of reference for the *ad hoc* working group on effectiveness evaluation was adopted with minor amendments (UNEP/POPS/COP.4/CRP.31).

#### **CONTACT GROUPS**

**NON-COMPLIANCE:** Issues of non-compliance were discussed in a Friends of the Chair session throughout the day, and according to participants, progress was not made. Contact group Chair Anne Daniel presented the issue to the Ministers' Working Dinner.

**NEW CHEMICALS:** The contact group met throughout the day.

On lindane, the group agreed to send a draft decision to plenary which includes in square brackets a proposed exemption for continued use for seed treatment in Kenya.

On alpha and beta HCH, the group agreed to recommend the COP list both isomers with no exemptions for production or use.

On PFOS, the group discussed a list of possible acceptable uses and specific exemptions, with some parties requesting that a number of uses which had been removed be re-added.

The group also discussed the elements of an interessional work program to address the waste and waste recycling obligations associated with listing BDEs, PFOS, and other new POPs.

#### **FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL**

**ASSISTANCE:** The contact group met throughout the day and late into the evening.

On regional centers, participants completed their review of the nominated centers and prepared a draft decision that, *inter alia*: identifies those nominated centers to be endorsed by COP4, and invites four others, those hosted by Algeria, Iran, the Russian Federation, and Senegal, to be considered for endorsement at COP5. In the afternoon, IRAN asked that its center be endorsed by COP4, but delegates disagreed, and the issue was forwarded to the Ministers' Working Dinner.

On financial resources, the group considered a proposal by CHINA and other developing countries containing: specific guidance to the GEF relating to, *inter alia*, the scale of the allocation of support to the POPs focal area and co-financing ratios, and a proposed subsidiary financial mechanism committee to improve communication and coordination between the COP and the GEF. Many participants raised concerns over the budgetary implications of the latter. The contact group also discussed draft decisions on financial resources and on guidance to the financial mechanism.

**BUDGET:** The budget group met all day on Thursday and worked late into the night, finally agreeing to use the zero percent scenario as a basis for negotiation. On the provision of legal policy advice, the BAHAMAS stressed the need for a legal officer to cater to the needs of the Secretariat and the parties. Regarding regional centers, NIGERIA requested that the budget include capacity building for the centers that are yet to be endorsed. The EU stressed that the core budget is not meant to cater to such activities.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates mingled on the sunny terrace at the reception hosted by the Swiss Government to celebrate the adoption of the synergies decision on Thursday evening. Some marveled at the gorgeous spring weather, others at the wave of irony apparently sweeping over the terrace. In the midst of the celebratory atmosphere, delegates were faced with a lack of resolution on key issues, and a long night ahead in concurrent contact groups and an evening plenary. While several clutched their glasses enthusiastically, many were in quiet huddles across the terrace, preparing to reenter the fray.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of COP4 will be available on Monday, 11 May 2009 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/cop4/>