



SC COP6 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 2 MAY 2013

The Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the COPs to the BC, RC and SC convened for a fifth day on Thursday, 2 May 2013. Delegates met throughout the day in plenary to consider issues under Stockholm Convention COP6.

Contact groups on Compliance and Legal Matters, Budget and Synergies, and Technical Assistance and Financial Resources convened throughout the day.

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION (SC) COP6

The plenary session was chaired by SC COP6 President Álvarez. On Thursday afternoon, Joint Executive Secretary Willis informed COP6 that Italy's contribution of EUR 892,860 to the RC has been received by UNEP.

Noting the financial crisis and a political transition delayed their payment, ITALY thanked delegations for their understanding.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Credentials: President Álvarez noted that 9 additional parties that had submitted copies of their credentials would be provisionally accepted as participants in decision-making. The Joint Secretariat reported that of the 162 parties present: 141 had submitted credentials or copies thereof; 18 had submitted insufficient documentation; and 3 did not submit credentials.

MEXICO objected to the decision to exclude from decision-making those parties that had not yet submitted credentials, saying they should be able to participate on a provisional basis. GABON highlighted the difficulty of presenting credentials.

The Joint Secretariat explained that the Rules of Procedure allow all parties to participate provisionally until the Bureau reviews credentials and makes its report, and said that only accredited parties may take decisions. MEXICO said it would participate as a provisional delegation and rejected any future written reference to its status as being that of an observer. Supported by BRAZIL, MEXICO also said credentials should be accepted until the moment of definitive decision-making and said they would not "take note" of the Bureau's report. He also said excessively restrictive application of the Rules of Procedure would inhibit the presence of high-level representatives, and close the door on any "spirit of synergies."

President Álvarez clarified that the decisions taken in the plenary session would be "definitively," as opposed to "virtually," adopted.

After reviewing Rule 16, President Álvarez said without agreement on the Bureau's report, he would have to assume that every party is attending provisionally, and that no final decisions could be taken; rather, COP6 would "virtually" adopt some of the outstanding decisions. CHINA suggested countries submit credentials within two weeks of the meeting's closure, and said taking only provisional decisions would be a "big loss" for SC COP6.

In response, President Álvarez confirmed draft decisions would be only "virtually" adopted.

MATTERS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: Measures to reduce or eliminate releases from intentional production and use: DDT: President Álvarez invited SC COP6 to consider "virtual" adoption of SC CRP.15, on DDT.

The EU: said UNEP should be invited to conduct work related to DDT, in consultation with the Secretariat and parties listed in paragraph 13; said the COP should focus on the deployment and development of alternatives; and proposed deleting paragraph 14(b), on activities related to the sound management of DDT.

Zambia, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested bilateral discussions with the EU regarding paragraph 14(b), and VENEZUELA said the EU position could be incorporated but 14(b) needed to be revised, as opposed to deleted.

INDIA objected to setting 2025 as a target date for the availability of DDT alternatives, refuted the findings of the Global Alliance on development and deployment of products, and said paragraph 14(b) should be omitted.

President Álvarez requested the EU, Zambia, India and Venezuela to collaborate on an alternative text to be presented to plenary in the afternoon.

In the evening plenary, the Joint Secretariat introduced a compromise draft decision omitting the 2025 target (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.20), and parties adopted it without amendment.

Exemptions: Bjorn Hansen (EU), Co-Chair of the Contact Group on Listing of Chemicals, and on New POPs, outlined the group's changes to SC CRP.10, on the process for evaluation of the continued need for PFOS, its salts and PFOSF for acceptable purposes and specific exemptions. He highlighted a paragraph reminding parties needing exemptions to notify the Secretariat, and also noted the revised deadline for the report on assessment. SC COP6 "virtually" adopted the decision.

BDEs, PFOS, its salts and PFOSF: Co-Chair Hansen (EU) outlined the group's changes to SC CRP.12, on the work programme on BDEs and PFOS, its salts and PFOSF. He highlighted a change to paragraph 5(b) recommending that COP6 encourage parties to stop using PFOS, its salts and PFOSF where safer alternatives exist. SC COP6 "virtually" adopted the decision.

Endosulfan: Co-Chair Hansen outlined the group's changes to SC CRP.9, on the work programme on endosulfan. Co-Chair Hansen highlighted the introduction of a paragraph requesting the Secretariat to undertake activities to support parties in evaluating information on alternatives to endosulfan. SC COP6 "virtually" adopted the decision.

Listing of chemicals: The Joint Secretariat introduced the draft decision on listing HBCD (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.17). THE AFRICAN GROUP supported the proposed text.



CANADA suggested replacing a reference to “material” with “article,” and removing a reference to Article 4 on exemptions. The Joint Secretariat clarified that the paragraph sets the length of the exemption, as per Article 4. CANADA responded that, as currently worded, the paragraph could weaken Article 4.

CHINA suggested changing “take necessary measures” to “take possible measures” to identify material containing HBCD.

Co-Chair Hansen, with NORWAY, clarified that “material” referred to EPS and XPS, as in the chapeau, and that “take necessary measures” is from Article 3 of the Convention.

Mexico, on behalf of GRULAC, supported by CUBA, underscored concerns over adding POPs without adequate technical and financial assistance.

Later in the evening, CANADA outlined the amended decision, highlighting inclusion of references to Article 4 and EPS and XPS.

SC COP6 then “virtually” adopted the draft decision as amended (SC CRP.17).

Technical assistance: The Joint Secretariat introduced the draft decision on technical assistance (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.15). Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan), Co-Chair for the Technical Assistance and Financial Resources Contact Group, noted that repetitive text in one paragraph should be deleted. With that amendment, the SC COP “virtually” adopted the draft decision as contained in SC CRP.15.

On regional centres, the Joint Secretariat introduced the revised draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.16). Co-Chair Khashashneh added two amendments: to change SC COP8 to SC COP6 in Annex I; and to make clear that in Annex II the group endorses one new regional centre (Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for South-East Asia, Indonesia).

With those amendments, the SC COP “virtually” adopted the decision on regional and subregional centres (SC CRP.16).

Financial Resources: The Joint Secretariat introduced the draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.19).

Parties “virtually” adopted the document (SC CRP.19) without amendment.

Effectiveness evaluation: The Joint Secretariat introduced the effectiveness evaluation draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/CRP.13). Bettina Hitzfeld (Switzerland), on behalf of the Friends of the President group, highlighted the appendix outlining the Terms of Reference for the Effectiveness Evaluation Committee established by the decision. Delegates agreed to return to this issue on Friday.

OTHER MATTERS: Draft MOU between UNEP and the SC: President Álvarez invited delegates to consider the item on the draft MOU between UNEP and the SC COP (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/32).

Recognizing the usefulness of the MOU and need for the MOU between UNEP and the three conventions to be addressed together, the EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, stressed the need for further consultations on the issue and suggested deferring the decision to SC COP7. Delegates agreed that a draft decision be prepared to defer the matter to SC COP7.

Admission of observers: The Secretariat introduced the document outlining the procedures for admission of observers (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/31 and INF/34/Rev.1).

Supporting the involvement of observers, SWITZERLAND, the EU, LEBANON, LIBYA, VENEZUELA, the PHILIPPINES, YEMEN and the US noted changes in the procedures for admission of observers, including in the application form, and suggested the issue be further examined and deferred to the next COP for a decision.

President Álvarez reported there is no change in the procedures for observers to the SC proposed in the draft decision, and said the Secretariat was only suggesting harmonizing the procedures for the three conventions. He suggested looking at this issue at BC COP11 and RC COP6, aiming to agree to a uniform draft decision, instead of deferring it to the next COP.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT: During the evening plenary, Karel Blaha (Czech Republic), SC COP6 Rapporteur, introduced the reports of the SC COP6 (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/L.1, L.1/Add.1, L.1/Add.2 and L.1/Add.3), which the COP considered section-by-section and adopted with minor amendments.

CONTACT GROUPS

BUDGET AND SYNERGIES: The group, co-chaired by Gregor Filyk (Canada) and Karel Blaha (Czech Republic), completed a detailed review of the budget and continued work on the draft omnibus synergies decision, focusing particularly on coordination with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Some parties highlighted the legal autonomy of the four conventions. One party suggested identifying specific areas of cooperation while others favored more general cooperation. In the afternoon, the group considered the budgetary implications of numerous decisions that the SC had “virtually” adopted.

COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL MATTERS: Co-chaired by Anne Daniel (Canada) and Jimena Nieto (Colombia), the group convened throughout the day to discuss matters related to the RC compliance mechanism. Disagreements ensued over who should trigger the compliance mechanism. Developed countries supported the Secretariat trigger while developing countries generally favored a party trigger. Some countries proposed a compliance committee trigger.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES: The group, co-chaired by Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan) and Reginald Hernaes (the Netherlands), convened throughout the day and reached agreement on the draft decision on consolidated guidance to the financial mechanism.

In the afternoon, delegates expressed divergent views on whether to retain and negotiate the draft decision on facilitating work with regard to financial resources and mechanisms, or to consider it in the context of the ExCOPs discussion on integrated finance. With some expressing reservations on the discussion, the group began consideration of the EU’s proposed ExCOPs document about enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/CRP.3). Both draft decisions were left in square brackets.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Thursday saw participants sing a spontaneous, spirited rendition of Happy Birthday to Executive Secretary Willis. The harmonies inside plenary contrasted with the atmosphere of growing disharmony and frustration outside. Some delegates worried that the swell of work on synergies issues had drawn the meeting’s focus away from the Stockholm Convention and POPs. One delegate pointed to ongoing negotiations in the contact group on budget and synergies, under the purview of the ExCOPs, and another mentioned the new group on the proposed Ministerial Declaration, a potential outcome of the High-Level Segment, with both delegates saying work in these groups had taken valuable time needed for discussions on listing of HBCD and work on DDT. On the Declaration, tentatively titled the “Geneva Statement on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste,” some participants were unenthusiastic about engaging in the lengthy negotiations needed to craft a Ministerial statement, while others emphasized the importance of making a declaration appropriate to the “historic precedent” set by the combined COPs.

Despite the wishes of many for matters of substance to trump those of administration, in the evening plenary SC COP6 was prevented from moving from “virtual” to “definitive” adoption of decisions after a lengthy debate on credentials, postponing formal adoption of all SC COP6 decisions until the close of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.