

Summary of the Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions: 1-12 May 2023

Amid the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, the need for action on chemicals and wastes issues has never been more pressing. These crises are intertwined. There is growing evidence that climate change will amplify the toxicity of chemicals and their releases. Hazardous wastes add further stress to fragile ecosystems. People are as threatened as the planet. The sound management of chemicals and wastes could prevent at least 1.6 million deaths worldwide. While some modern chemicals and wastes issues garner more attention, notably plastics and “forever chemicals,” there are long-lasting problems associated with older chemicals that are persistent and present in stockpiles and wastes.

In this context, the profile of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions continues to grow. The 2023 meetings of the three Conferences of the Parties (TripleCOP) attracted a wide range and a significant number of participants as each treaty, together and individually, addressed issues at the core of their mandates. The COPs adopted joint decisions on technical assistance and financial resources, including a new resource mobilization strategy that aims to raise the funding commensurate to the challenges that countries face. The COPs also advanced work on the illegal traffic and trade of hazardous chemicals and wastes.

The Basel Convention adopted several decisions, the most significant of which was the technical guidelines on plastics wastes. This document sets out how to manage these wastes in an environmentally sound manner and is timely, given the ongoing negotiations for a new treaty on plastic pollution.

The Rotterdam Convention only listed one of the seven chemicals recommended by its scientific subsidiary body. In light of this long-running inability to list chemicals, there were extensive discussions on the effectiveness of the Convention. Parties agreed to establish an intersessional process to gather information from parties on their challenges regarding listing decisions, including potential direct and indirect effects of listing. Delegations considered a proposal to add a new Annex to the Convention that would list chemicals on which parties could not reach consensus. For those who ratified the new Annex, the listed chemicals would be subject to the Convention’s prior informed consent (PIC) procedure. After a vote, the proposal failed to garner the 3/4 majority required to amend the Convention by a slim margin.

The Stockholm Convention’s global monitoring report found that the Convention is contributing to the observed decreased concentrations of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in people and the planet. Parties agreed to eliminate the production and use of methoxychlor, a pesticide, Dechlorane Plus, a flame retardant, and UV-328, an ultraviolet filter used in plastics. For Dechlorane Plus and UV-328, there were specific exemptions for some equipment where production and use would be allowed until 2041, for medical devices, and 2044, for the other exempted uses. Perhaps more significantly, the COP adopted a compliance mechanism—something that had eluded parties since COP1.

The meetings of the BRS COPs convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1-12 May 2023. A total of 1206 people attended, representing 175 parties and 143 observer organizations, including 77 non-governmental organizations, five intergovernmental organizations, 16 regional centres, and 18 UN organizations.

A Brief History of the Chemicals and Wastes Conventions

The Conferences of the Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions have been meeting jointly since 2013. Each treaty has its own mandate and takes its own decisions. There are connections among the treaties. For example, the Basel Convention

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addresses the environmentally sound management of wastes contaminated or containing persistent organic pollutants (POPs) listed by the Stockholm Convention. The Rotterdam Convention has, in recent years, listed POPs covered by the Stockholm Convention.

Basel Convention

The Basel Convention (BC), adopted in 1989 and entered into force in May 1992, was created to address concerns over the management, disposal and transboundary movement of the estimated 400 million tonnes of hazardous wastes produced worldwide each year. The guiding principles of the Convention are that transboundary movements of hazardous wastes should be: reduced to a minimum; minimized at the source; managed in an environmentally sound manner; and treated and disposed of as close as possible to their source of generation. In September 1995, at BC COP3, parties adopted the Ban Amendment, which bans the shipment of hazardous wastes for final disposal and recycling from Annex VII countries (European Union (EU), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Liechtenstein) to non-Annex VII countries. The Ban Amendment entered into force on 5 December 2019 and currently has 103 parties. There are currently 190 parties to the Convention.

Recent Highlights: At recent COPs, the BC has added to or amended the Convention to increase controls over transboundary movements of wastes of increasing concern, such as plastics and electronic waste (e-waste).

At COP13 (24 April – 5 May 2017), delegates adopted guidance to assist parties in developing strategies for implementing the Cartagena Declaration on the Prevention, Minimization and Recovery of Hazardous Wastes and other Wastes. COP13 also adopted further technical guidelines on POPs wastes, mercury wastes, and e-wastes, established a new partnership on household waste, and agreed to include marine litter in the programme of work of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG).

At COP14 (29 April – 10 May 2019), parties took the first global action on plastics by adopting an amendment that made certain plastic wastes subject to the PIC procedure by listing these wastes in Annex II (wastes requiring special consideration) and clarifying which plastic wastes are hazardous in Annex VIII. The amendment became effective on 1 January 2021. The COP also adopted revised e-waste technical guidelines.

At COP15 (6-17 June 2022), parties agreed to amend the Convention to make all electronic and electrical waste subject to the PIC procedure. E-wastes are now included in Annex II (wastes requiring special consideration) and the listing in Annex VIII (wastes) was amended. Several technical guidelines were adopted, although some will require further work, notably, the plastic wastes technical guidelines. Work also began to improve the efficiency and efficacy of the PIC procedure.

Rotterdam Convention

The Rotterdam Convention (RC), adopted in September 1998 and entered into force in February 2004, promotes shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals to protect human health and the environment from potential harm. The RC contributes to the environmentally sound use of those hazardous chemicals by: facilitating information exchange about their characteristics; providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export; and disseminating these decisions to parties. When adopted,

the treaty had 27 chemicals listed. In 2006, the Mandatory PIC list expanded the number of listed chemicals to 39.

There are currently 165 parties to the Convention and 54 chemicals subject to the PIC procedure listed in Annex III, including 35 pesticides, 18 industrial chemicals, and one chemical in both the pesticide and the industrial chemical categories.

Recent Highlights: Long-standing issues that have eluded consensus include listing chemicals recommended by the Chemical Review Committee (CRC) for inclusion in Annex III, including carbosulfan, fenthion, and paraquat dichloride formulations, and chrysotile asbestos. The COP has agreed that each of these chemicals meets all criteria for listing but has not yet reached consensus to include them in Annex III. An intersessional process was established at COP7 (4-15 May 2015), including meetings, surveys, and a working group that reported to COP9 (29 April – 10 May 2019).

At COP9, parties agreed to include hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD) and phorate in Annex III. Parties also resolved a second long-standing issue by adopting a compliance mechanism that will facilitate parties' implementation of the Convention.

At COP10 (6-17 June 2022), parties agreed to list decabromodiphenyl ether and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts, and related compounds in Annex III. Both were previously listed in the Stockholm Convention. They were again unable to list pesticides acetochlor, fenthion ultra-low volume formulations, paraquat dichloride formulations, and carbosulfan. Chrysotile asbestos was also not listed due to a lack of consensus.

Stockholm Convention

The Stockholm Convention (SC), adopted in May 2001 and entered into force in May 2004, calls for international action on three categories of POPs: pesticides, industrial chemicals, and unintentionally produced POPs. The SC requires parties to prevent the development of new POPs and promote best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) for replacing existing POPs. The Convention, which initially addressed 12 substances (informally known as “the dirty dozen”), was designed to facilitate the review and addition of new chemicals through a three-stage scientific review process prior to consideration for listing by the COP. Since 2009, the COP has added 19 new POPs, including both pesticides and industrial chemicals, to the annexes of the Stockholm Convention. There are currently 186 parties to the Convention.

Recent Highlights: At its 2017 meeting the COP agreed to list short-chain chlorinated paraffins in Annex A (elimination) of the Convention. Due in part to its widespread use in a range of applications, this industrial chemical was under review by the POPs Review Committee (POPRC) for ten years before it was recommended for listing, and the COP agreed to allow several specific exemptions for continued production and use. Ongoing issues include work to: reduce stockpiles of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); review the continued need for dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) for disease-vector control; and achieve consensus to establish a compliance mechanism.

At COP9, parties agreed to list dicofol and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts, and PFOA and its related compounds in Annex A (elimination) of the Convention. For PFOA, a widely used group of industrial chemicals, the COP agreed to eight specific exemptions, including for use in firefighting foam for liquid fuel vapor suppression and liquid fuel fires (Class B fires) in installed systems.

At COP10, parties agreed to list perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), its salts, and related compounds without exceptions. A compliance mechanism again proved elusive as countries could not reach consensus on this issue outstanding since COP1.

Synergies

Simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm COPs (ExCOPs) have been held twice. The first, held 22-24 February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia, resulted from the work of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the BRS Conventions, which was mandated to prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination for submission to the three COPs. Delegates adopted an omnibus synergies decision on joint services, joint activities, synchronization of the budget cycles, joint audits, joint managerial functions, and review arrangements.

The second simultaneous ExCOPs was held in conjunction with the back-to-back meetings of the COPs from 28 April-10 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates adopted an omnibus decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the BRS Conventions. The ExCOPs, *inter alia*, decided to undertake a review of the synergies process and the organization of the Secretariats and to continue to present joint activities as an integral part of the proposed work programmes and budgets of the three Conventions. On facilitating financial resources for chemicals and wastes, the ExCOPs welcomed an integrated approach that includes mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance.

Joint Sessions of the Three COPs

After an alphorn performance, Katrin Schneeberger, State Secretary, Federal Office for the Environment, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Switzerland, opened the TripleCOP on Monday, 1 May, and encouraged delegates to list new chemicals in the RC and SC, adopt the plastic waste guidelines, improve the BC's PIC procedure, and adopt a proposed amendment to the RC.

Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), underlined the urgency of ensuring the environmentally sound management (ESM) of chemicals and wastes, stressing that "delayed action means delaying justice to ourselves."

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions, highlighted the considerable work ahead for each of the COPs. He pointed to the upcoming targets under the SC to eliminate PCBs by 2025 and achieve their ESM by 2028.

Christine Fuell, Executive Secretary ad interim of the RC, called for accelerated action on the sound management of chemicals and waste to contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Speaking also on behalf of the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), she highlighted ongoing work with UNEP to develop the Action Plan on Highly Hazardous Pesticides.

Reginald Hernaes, BC COP16 President, speaking on behalf of the three COP Presidents, underscored the interconnectedness of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. He highlighted the need for the BRS Conventions to address issues in an integrated and holistic manner.

The three Presidents opened their respective meetings and welcomed Solomon Islands as a new party to the BC and Italy to the SC.

Algeria, for the AFRICAN REGION, drew attention to illegal dumping of wastes and toxic substances and characterized the pace of remedial intervention as slow. He stressed that POPs should be eliminated, not recycled. He called for a working group on non-traditional financial resources and highlighted the importance of synergies.

El Salvador, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), cited as regional priorities: creating further synergies to prevent and combat the illegal trafficking of chemicals and wastes, such as with the World Customs Organization; and adopting BC technical guidelines on plastic, e-waste, and batteries.

The EU noted the need to adopt updated BC technical guidelines on plastic wastes. She supported listing the three proposed substances in Annex A of the SC and the seven proposed substances under the RC.

Saudi Arabia, for the ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, emphasized the importance of sustained financial support to BC and SC regional centres. On the proposed amendment to the RC, he noted that most of the parties in the region preferred reaching consensus.

Armenia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, called for establishing a compliance mechanism for the SC. Noting the challenges faced at recent RC COPs to reach a consensus on listing chemicals, he expressed willingness to discuss the proposed amendment.

Organizational Matters

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: The COPs adopted their respective agendas ([CHW.16/1](#); [FAO/RC/COP.11/1](#); [POPS/COP.11/1](#)). They also adopted the scenario note ([CHW.16/INF/1](#); [RC/COP.11/INF/1](#); [POPS/COP.11/INF/1](#)) and tentative schedule ([CHW.16/INF/2](#); [RC/COP.11/INF/4](#); [POPS/COP.11/INF/4](#)).

Election of officers: The Secretariat introduced the overview of elections ([CHW.16/2](#), [INF/4](#); [RC/COP.11/2](#), [INF/4](#), [5/Rev.1](#); and [POPS/COP.11/2](#), [INF/4](#), [6](#)). On 12 May, the COPs adopted their respective rosters on elections of officers (CHW.16/CRP.30; RC/COP.11/CRP.15; POPS/COP.11/CRP.19).

BC Election of Officers and Experts: Delegates elected to the COP17 Bureau: Magda Gosk (Poland), as President; Ole Thomas Thommesen (Norway), as Rapporteur; Katja Maria Larsen (Denmark); Artak Khachatryan (Armenia); Anthony Mai (Belize); Ángela Patricia Rivera Galvis (Colombia); Nawaf Essam Bilasi (Saudi Arabia); Abbas Torabi (Iran); Tampushi Leonard Leswam (Kenya); and Sheikh Ahmed Tunis (Sierra Leone).

For the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) Bureau, the COP elected: Lendita Dika (North Macedonia), as Co-Chair (Legal); Judith Torres (Uruguay), as Co-Chair (Technical); Nancy Allimadi (Uganda); Stéphane Bernaudon (France); and Mohamed Aman (Bahrain).

For the Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC), the COP elected: Nneka Nicholas (Antigua and Barbuda); Irina Talamoni (Argentina); Katrin Kaare (Estonia); Kristine Vardanashvili (Georgia); Sonja Dünnwald; (Germany); Jason Dunn (Australia); Hassan Azhar (Maldives); Sameera Mohamed Aldosari (Qatar); Thomas Ntumba Kasonga (Democratic Republic of the Congo); and Khawla Elbashir Awad Allah Mohamed (Sudan).

For the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE) the COP elected: Rene Rajasalu (Estonia); Assane Diop (Senegal); and Brian Heffernan (Ireland).

RC Election of Officers and Experts: Delegates elected to the COP12 Bureau: Syed Mujtaba Hussain (Pakistan), as President; Mariska Wouters (New Zealand), as Rapporteur; Andrejs Sisulins (Latvia); Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez (Chile); and Joseph C. Edmund (Ghana).

For the Chemical Review Committee (CRC), for terms commencing 1 May 2024, the COP elected: June Akinyi Aluoch (Kenya); Oarabile Serumola (Botswana); Sidi Ould Aloueimine (Mauritania); Daniel Ndiyo William (Tanzania); Dinesh Runiwal (India); Jeevani Prasadika Marasinghe (Sri Lanka); Yenny Meliana (Indonesia); Ahmad Heidari (Iran); Carlos Enrique Acevedo González (Guatemala); Stephen Sangster (Belize); Juergen Helbig (Austria); Mirijam Seng (Belgium); and Irene Beate Sørvik Malme (Norway). The RC COP agreed that the name of the Eastern European region's member would be communicated to the Secretariat after the COP.

For the Compliance Committee, the COP elected: Anahit Aleksandry (Armenia); Karmen Krajnc, (Slovenia); Karoliina Anttonen (Finland); Helen Roberts (UK); Jimena Nieto Carrasco (Colombia); Helges Bandeira (Brazil); Ibrahim Alboshi (Saudi Arabia); and Hamadjoda (Cameroon).

SC Election of Officers and Experts: Delegates elected to the COP12 Bureau: Cécile Siewe (Canada), as President; Miguel Eduardo R (Colombia), as Rapporteur; Rikke Holmberg (Denmark); Mario Vujić (Croatia); Ivan Đuričković (Serbia); Keima Gardiner (Trinidad and Tobago); Mohammad Oglah Khashashneh (Jordan); Yaser Khalil Abu Shanab (Palestine); Youssef Zidi (Tunisia); and Christopher Kanema (Zambia).

For the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC), for terms commencing 5 May 2024, the COP elected: Aoudou Joswa, (Cameroon); Bossou Bertin Dossa (Benin); Nosiku Sipilanyambe Munyinda (Zambia); Razaz Ibrahim Mohamed (Sudan); Xiao Xuezhai (China); Hassan Azhar (Maldives); Kazuhide Kimbara (Japan); Chalongsak Tangbanluesak (Thailand); Magdalena Frydrych (Poland); Karina Miglioranza (Argentina); Cecilia Aburto (Chile); Valentina Bertato (Belgium); Caren Rauert (Germany); and Andreas Buser (Switzerland).

For the DDT Expert Group, the COP elected: An Jamers (EU); Dragana Raonic Popovic (Montenegro); Nina Zovko (Croatia); Pablo Ernesto Roa Moraga (Chile); Jeannette Venegas (Costa Rica); Hussain Ali Ghanem (Bahrain); Nezar Abed AlRuof Ali Hddad (Jordan); Girma Gemechu (Ethiopia); and Amwele Rantila Hilma (Namibia).

Report on credentials: The parties to the Conventions adopted the report on the credentials on 5 May and, on 11 May, the COPs adopted the report on the credentials of Bahamas, eSwatini, São Tomé and Príncipe, Vanuatu, and Yemen.

Matters Related to the Implementation of the Conventions

Technical assistance: This item relates to the various forms of support that the BRS Secretariat and regional centres provide to developing countries to help them comply with their obligations. The topic was first taken up on [2 May](#). The Secretariat introduced the technical assistance and capacity-building documents ([CHW.16/17](#), [INF/28](#); [RC/COP.11/15](#), [INF/17](#); [POPS/COP.11/15](#), [INF/25](#)) and the reports related to the BC and SC regional centres ([CHW.16/18](#), [INF/29](#), [30](#); [POPS/COP.11/16](#), [INF/26](#), [27](#)).

In plenary, many developing countries raised specific technical assistance needs, while also recognizing the work of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), regional centres, and the BRS

Secretariat, among others. A technical assistance and financial resources contact group was established, co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia) and Toks Akinseye (UK). It met throughout the COP, taking up technical assistance issues first, including on [3](#) and [5](#) May.

In the contact group, parties agreed to form an omnibus decision on technical assistance as a way to help recognize the synergies among the BRS Conventions, while also noting that regional centres only have mandates to support work under the BC and SC. Parties debated funding for the regional centres, including if funding should be mobilized, or if sources of funding should be diversified.

On [5 May](#) and [11 May](#) the decisions were adopted respectively on technical assistance under the SC and the RC.

Final Decisions: In its final decisions (CHW.16/CRP.7; POPS/COP.11/CRP.5; RC/COP.11/CRP.5), the BRS COPs, *inter alia*:

- invite developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to provide information on their needs for technical assistance and technology transfer by 31 March 2024;
- invites developed country parties and others to submit to the Secretariat through an online questionnaire, information on the technical assistance and technology that they have available to be transferred to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition by 31 March 2024;

The COPs further decide to request the Secretariat to:

- develop a technical assistance plan for the period 2026-2029;
- develop online questionnaires to collect information from countries;
- continue to update the technical assistance needs database accordingly;
- ensure that information is available on the websites of the Conventions;
- prepare a report on the assessment of the information on the needs of developing country parties and parties with economies in transition for technical assistance and technology transfer;
- continue implementing the technical assistance plan for 2022-2025 with relevant actors; and
- report to the COPs at their next meeting.

On [11 May](#), the BRS COPs adopted the omnibus decision on the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

Final Decisions: In its final decisions (CHW.16/CRP.19; POPS/COP.11/CRP.12), the BC and SC COPs, *inter alia*, request the Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs) and the Stockholm Convention Regional Centres (SCRCs) to submit to the Secretariat:

- their activity reports for the period 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2024, by 31 December 2024, for consideration by the COPs at their 17th and 12th meetings, respectively; and
- their business plans or workplans for the period 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2027, by 30 September 2023, for consideration by the COPs at their 17th and 12th meetings, respectively;

The COPs request the Secretariat to, *inter alia*:

- prepare a report on the BCRCs and SCRCs for consideration by the COPs at their 17th and 12th meetings, respectively;
- prepare the draft evaluation reports on the performance and sustainability of all 14 BCRCs, and on the performance and sustainability of all 16 SCRCs, for consideration by the COPs at their 17th and 12th meetings, respectively;
- undertake the following activities to facilitate the work of the regional centres, subject to the availability of resources: organize two annual meetings of the SCRC coordinators and

BCRC directors, continue to facilitate project implementation, foster activities of the centres, and assist the regional centres in identifying and mobilizing sources of financial support.

The COPs also decide to evaluate the performance and sustainability of the SCRC for Capacity building and Transfer of Technology, Trinidad and Tobago (SCRC-Caribbean), and of the centres listed in the annex to the decision and reconsider their status as SCRCs for capacity building and the transfer of technology at COP13.

Financial resources: The SC has a financial mechanism through the GEF, which provides broader support where possible through the chemicals and waste cluster. This item was first taken up on [3 May](#) in plenary, then tasked to the Technical Assistance and Financial Resources contact group. It met throughout the week and focused on financial resources on [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), and [11 May](#).

In the contact group, there was extensive discussion of the African Region's proposal for a resource mobilization strategy, parties discussed the need for the strategy and the approach that would be effective under the BRS without duplicating the work of other funding mechanisms.

On the sixth review of the financial mechanism, there was an impasse on whether, and how, to reflect the changing needs of developing countries as new POPs are listed in the SC in the terms of reference for the review.

On [12 May](#), the BRS COPs adopted decisions on effectiveness evaluation as they relate to financial resources and mechanisms.

Final Decisions: In its final decisions (POPS/COP.11/CRP.18), the BRS COPs:

- adopt the terms of reference for the sixth review of the financial mechanism;
- adopt the terms of reference for the assessment of funding needed by developing country parties and parties with economies in transition for the implementation of the SC over the period 2026-2030;
- invite parties and others to provide, by 31 August 2024, the relevant information required to undertake the assessment of funding needs;
- invite developed country parties to use online questionnaires and other formats to provide information on ways in which they can provide support, including new and additional financial resources, for the implementation of the Convention;
- invite other sources, including relevant funding institutions, to provide information on ways in which they can provide contributions to the implementation of the Convention;
- request the Secretariat to prepare a report on the availability of financial resources that are additional to those provided through the GEF, and on ways and means of mobilizing and channelling such additional financial resources; and
- request the Secretariat to compile information relevant to the funding needed by developing country parties and parties with economies in transition for the implementation of the SC over the period 2026-2030 and to submit the draft report to COP12.

The COPs further request the Secretariat to:

- continue to engage with entities providing multilateral, regional and bilateral financial and technical assistance, including SCRCs, among other efforts, to strengthen their efforts to fund the elimination of the use of PCBs in equipment by 2025;
- update, subject to the availability of resources, the report on further options for addressing the needs, including funding

needs, and the challenges met to reach the targets related to the elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls; and

- in consultation with the Secretariat of the GEF, to prepare a report on the implementation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the SC COP and GEF Council.
- On 12 May the BRS COPs adopted the framework to develop a resource mobilization strategy.

Final Decisions: In its final decisions on the mobilization strategy, (CHW.16/CRP.3; RC/COP.11/CRP.2; POPS/COP.11/CRP.2), the COPs request the Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions to set up an intersessional working group mandated to review:

- UN Guidelines on a principle-based approach to the cooperation between the United Nations and the business sector;
- UN Partnership Fundamentals: A 10-step guide for creating effective UN-Business partnerships;
- UNEP Resource Mobilization Strategy 2014;
- UNEP Partnership Policy and Procedures;
- UNEP Strategy for Private Sector Engagement;
- GEF's Private Sector Engagement Strategy; and
- FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025.

The Secretariat was also mandated to develop a resource mobilization roadmap, potential elements of a strategy, and the strategy for the BRS Conventions.

Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the BRS Conventions

International Cooperation and Coordination: The BRS Conventions coordinate with a range of other, related international organizations. In plenary on [4 May](#), the Secretariat noted new developments that require further international cooperation, including negotiations for a plastics treaty and a science-policy panel for chemicals, wastes, and pollution.

Cooperation and coordination with the Minamata Convention on Mercury: The Secretariat introduced the report ([CHW.16/21/INF/36](#); [RC/COP.11/16](#), [INF/19](#); [POPS/COP.11/22](#), [INF/40](#)).

Cooperation and coordination with other organizations: The Secretariat introduced the report and draft decision ([CHW.16/22/Rev.1](#); [RC/COP.11/17/Rev.1](#); [POPS/COP.11/23/Rev.1](#)) and related reports (CHW.16/INF/37-40, 52, 58; RC/COP.11/INF/20-23, 36, 38, 41; UNEP/POPS/COP.11/INF/41, 43-45, 56, 59). She noted that the report on the interlinkages between the BRS Conventions and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer ([CHW.16/INF/59](#); [RC/COP.11/INF/37](#); [POPS/COP.11/INF/42](#)) is still a draft.

On [4 May](#), several international organizations outlined their contributions to the sound management of chemicals and wastes. The matter was referred to the contact group on joint issues, co-chaired by Ole Thomas Thommesen (Norway) and Jeannelle Kelly (Saint Kitts and Nevis), which discussed this issue several times, including on [7](#) and [9 May](#).

In the contact group, parties sought to clarify which bodies the Secretariat should collaborate with, and how. After a decision was cleared by the group, one party sought to re-open it. Countries opposed this, suggesting that the party bring its concerns to plenary.

On [11 May](#), the BRS COPs adopted the decisions.

Final Decisions: In their final decisions (CHW.16/CRP.17; RC/COP.11/CRP.8; POPS/COP.11/CRP.11), the COPs, *inter alia*:

- take note of the report entitled "Global governance of plastics and associated chemicals" and request the Secretariat to submit it

to the intergovernmental negotiating committee, along with other information of relevance to the mandate of the committee and to promote its dissemination;

- reiterate their invitation to parties participating in the *ad hoc* open-ended working group to develop a new science-policy panel to promote coordination and cooperation, as well as complementarity and no duplication between the work of the panel and that of the Conventions, and to ensure close cooperation with scientific and technical bodies under the Conventions, as appropriate, and that the extensive experience of science-based promotion of the sound management of chemicals and waste is made available to the *ad hoc* open-ended working group; and
- decide to accept the invitation by the heads of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) for the BRS Conventions to become a participating organization, and requests the Executive Secretaries of the BRS Conventions to sign the MoU concerning the establishment of IOMC; and
- requests the Executive Secretaries, within their respective mandates, to represent the conventions in the IOMC.

The COPs also request the Secretariat to:

- continue to work closely with other international organizations, within their mandates, on activities related to plastic pollution;
- enhance cooperation and coordination with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Secretariat and with other international bodies in areas of relevance to the BRS Conventions, including in the areas and with the organizations listed in the 2022 report by the Secretariat on international cooperation and coordination;
- enhance its cooperation and coordination with the Secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns on issues of common interest, subject to the availability of resources;
- enhance communication, subject to the availability of resources, related to the contributions of the BRS Conventions towards resolving the triple planetary crisis and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, and their interlinkages with the processes and instruments of other intergovernmental bodies, and to report back to the COPs at their next meetings; and
- reiterate the requests to the Secretariat to prepare, subject to the availability of resources, a report, including possible recommendations, on how the BRS Conventions could contribute to the post-2020 implementation of the 2030 Targets and 2050 Goals of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, for consideration by the COPs at their next meetings.

Clearinghouse Mechanism for Information Exchange: On [10 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and workplan ([CHW.16/23](#), [INF/41](#); [RC/COP.11/18](#), [INF/24](#); [POPS/COP.11/24](#), [INF/46](#)) and drew attention to the request for a proposed joint clearinghouse mechanism for the biennium 2024-2025. The decision was adopted without amendment.

Final Decisions: In their final decisions ([CHW.16/23](#); [RC/COP.11/18](#); [POPS/COP.11/24](#)), the COPs, *inter alia*: request the Secretariat to:

- continue the work to implement the strategy in a gradual and cost-effective manner;
- implement the maintenance activities outlined in section II.A of the workplan for the biennium 2024-2025, while prioritizing

recurring activities, in particular with respect to the maintenance of existing systems;

- implement, subject to the availability of resources, the activities outlined in section II.B of the workplan for the biennium 2024-2025, in particular, activities aiming at expanding the clearinghouse mechanism to be an online collaborative platform for a community of stakeholders in line with the second goal of the clearing-house mechanism strategy and the recommendations of the SC effectiveness evaluation committee;
- continue to enhance cooperation and coordination activities with existing partners in the area of information exchange, to explore possible cooperative activities with new partners including academia, as appropriate, and to ensure complementarity with and avoid duplication of existing and future activities, tools and mechanisms;
- continue its collaboration with the Minamata Convention on Mercury Secretariat to exchange information and share experiences and best practices regarding the use of existing clearinghouse mechanism systems; and
- keep the strategy under regular review in order to take into account lessons learned and relevant developments regarding the international agenda on the sound management of chemicals and waste.

The COPs also invite parties and observers to participate, as appropriate, in the implementation and further development of the clearing-house mechanism strategy and in relevant activities of the workplan for the biennium 2024-2025.

Mainstreaming Gender: On [10 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and report ([CHW.16/24](#), [INF/42](#); [RC/COP.11/19](#), [INF/25](#); [POPS/COP.11/25](#), [INF/47](#)). There was support for the plan and Secretariat's activities. Consultations ensued after some concerns over the term "non-binary."

On 12 May, BRS Executive Secretary Rolph Payet proposed that the relevant activity read: "to improve Secretariat knowledge and practices of inclusion of woman and girls, in all their diversity, as appropriate" in the Secretariat's Gender Action Plan. In response to questions, the Secretariat responded that this is agreed UN language through General Assembly resolutions.

JORDAN, IRAQ, PAKISTAN, SAUDI ARABIA, the MALDIVES, and INDONESIA expressed their respect for the resolutions of the Arab League and the Islamic Conference on this issue, and asked for their interventions to be noted in the meeting report. The COPs then took note of the report on the Gender Action Plan.

Final Decisions: In their final decisions, as amended by the Executive Secretary, the COPs take note of the updated Gender Action Plan of the BRS Secretariat and request the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the Plan to the next COPs.

Synergies in Preventing and Combating Illegal Traffic and Trade in Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes: There is a significant illegal global market for hazardous chemicals and wastes. The three Conventions are attempting to help countries address these issues together. The issue was taken up in plenary on [4 May](#) and was referred to the Joint Issues contact group, co-chaired by Ole Thomas Thommesen (Norway) and Jeannelle Kelly (Saint Kitts and Nevis), which discussed this issue several times, including on [7](#) and [9 May](#).

The Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision ([CHW.16/25](#), [INF/43](#); [RC/COP.11/20](#), [INF/27](#); [POPS/COP.11/26](#), [INF/60](#), [48](#)). The Secretariat presented three options for

consideration in a revised decision to strengthen arrangements on synergies in preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes:

- extend the scope of enforcement to cover efforts related to illegal trade on hazardous chemicals and wastes;
- establish a new multi-stakeholder platform that covers the SC and RC; and
- strengthen current cooperative arrangements among relevant agencies.

CHILE noted its conference room paper (CRP), which adds an additional option to involve the regional centres in specific technical assistance and capacity-building activities. Several statements highlighted the need to strengthen enforcement and cooperation, both among the three Conventions and within countries, noting the need for domestic agencies to work together.

In the contact group, there was a preference for strengthening current cooperative arrangements, with a mandate to prevent and combat illegal trade in hazardous chemicals covered by the RC and SC. Several noted that this is not a “status quo” option, given the need to include the RC and SC to a greater extent, and there was interest in including aspects of Chile’s CRP.

On [11 May](#), the COPs adopted the decisions.

Final Decisions: In their final decisions (CHW.16/CRP.23; RC/COP.11/CRP.9; POPS/COP.11/CRP.13), there are three sections, on the RC and SC, the BC, and synergies. On the RC and SC, the RC and SC COPs, *inter alia*, request the Secretariat to:

- continue collecting information about confirmed cases by parties concerned with illegal trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes occurring in contravention of the RC and SC submitted by parties on a voluntary basis and to make such information available on the website of the RC and SC;
- develop, subject to the availability of resources, case studies on action taken by parties to implement and enforce the trade control measures of the RC and SC; and
- strengthen, subject to the availability of resources, its cooperation with relevant entities with a mandate to prevent and combat the illegal trade in hazardous chemicals covered by the RC and SC.

On the BC, the decision reminds parties to report cases of illegal traffic to the Secretariat using the prescribed form for confirmed cases of illegal traffic or through table nine of the format for national reporting for cases of illegal traffic that have been closed in the reporting year.

On synergies, the three COPs invite parties to provide best practices for preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes covered by the BRS Conventions and to voluntarily share information through the Secretariat on action taken to implement and enforce the trade control measures, as well as on challenges parties may be facing. They also request the Secretariat to:

- continue to provide advice and, subject to the availability of resources, undertake technical assistance activities to strengthen the capacity of parties to prevent and combat illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes covered by the BRS Conventions;
- collect best practices from parties for preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes covered by the BRS Conventions and to present a compilation thereof and lessons learned for consideration by the next COPs.

- provide parties, upon request, with assistance in identifying cases of illegal trade in hazardous chemicals as well as in identifying cases of illegal traffic in wastes;
- propose a workplan to strengthen parties’ capacities to provide information about confirmed cases and experience related to preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and waste, to be considered by the next COPs, respectively, for possible adoption. The workplan shall outline timelines and associated action;
- explore, subject to the availability of resources, the needs related to amending the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System to identify substances and products that contain the chemicals listed in Annexes A and B to the SC, taking into account the current work conducted under the BC and RC on these matters, and to present recommendations to be considered by the Conferences of the Parties at their 17th and 12th meetings, respectively; and
- report on the implementation of the decision to the next COPs.

From Science to Action: On [10 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and report on actions ([CHW.16/26](#), [INF/44](#); [RC/COP.11/21](#), [INF/28](#); [POPS/COP.11/27](#), [INF/49](#)). There was considerable support for the Secretariat’s activities to implement the roadmap. Several noted the ongoing negotiations for a new science-policy panel on chemicals, wastes, and pollution and encouraged coordination.

Final Decisions: In their final decisions, the COPs, *inter alia*, request the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake capacity-building and training activities to support parties in taking science-based action. They also request the Secretariat to continue to cooperate and coordinate with UNEP and, as appropriate, other relevant organizations, scientific bodies and stakeholders towards strengthening the science-policy interface, including in the context of the implementation of UN Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. The COPs request the Secretariat to report on the implementation to the next meeting of the COPs.

Programme of Work and Budget

On [2 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the documents ([CHW/COP.16/27](#), INF/45-48, 54; [RC/COP.11/22](#), INF/29-32, 40; [POPS/COP.11/28](#), INF/50-52, 18, 58). BRS Executive Secretary Payet noted that providing a scenario for zero nominal growth is becoming increasingly difficult without significantly reducing BRS Secretariat operations and services. On arrears, he said the number of parties and the overall amount has increased. Views differed on whether to support a zero nominal growth budget, or the Executive Secretary’s proposed budget.

The programme of work and budget contact group met throughout the meeting, co-chaired by Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez (Chile) and Přemysl Štěpánek (Czech Republic).

On 12 May, the COPs adopted their respective budgets. CHINA underlined that the costs of the RC compliance mechanism should not be borne by countries that are not party to it and said they would take this up with the Secretariat.

Final Decisions: The three COP adopted their respective programmes of work and budgets (CHW.16/CRP.13; RC/COP.11/CRP.13; POPS/COP.11/CRP.17), which have different total budget for the core and voluntary funds. Aspects shared among the Conventions include:

- approves the programme budget for the Conventions for the biennium 2024-2025;
- authorizes the Executive Secretaries to make commitments up to the amount of the approved operational budget, drawing upon available cash resources;
- decides to maintain the working capital reserve at the level of 15% of the annual average of the biennial operational budgets for the biennium 2024-2025;
- adopts the indicative scale of assessments for the apportionment of expenses for the biennium 2024-2025 and authorizes the Executive Secretary, consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, to adjust the scale to include all parties for which the Conventions enter into force before 1 January 2024 for 2024; and
- requests the Secretariat to work directly with the Permanent Missions, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and focal points of the parties in that situation so that they fully pay their arrears and assessed contributions as soon as possible, and to present at regional meetings information on the current situation regarding arrears and their consequences.

Memoranda of Understanding

Implementation of the MoU between UNEP and the COPs, and FAO for RC: On [2 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the documents ([CHW.16/28](#), [INF/49](#), [53](#); [RC/COP.11/23](#), [INF/33](#), [34](#), [39](#); [POPS/COP.11/29](#), [INF/53](#), [57](#)). UNEP introduced the proposed amendments to the MoU to clarify the provision of administration services to the BRS Conventions and UNEP's share of programme costs with the BRS Secretariat. On [11 May](#), the MoUs were adopted.

Final Decisions: In its final decision (CHW.15/CRP.27), the BC COP, *inter alia*, adopts the amended MoU between the Executive Director of UNEP and the BC COP, and requests the BC COP President, on behalf of the COP, and the UNEP Executive Director to sign the MoU as amended during or following the closing of COP16.

In its final decision (RC/COP.11/CRP.10), the RC COP, *inter alia*, adopts the amended annex to the MoU between the Director-General of the FAO, the Executive Director of the UNEP and the RC COP and requests the RC COP President, on behalf of the COP, the Director-General of the FAO and the Executive Director of UNEP to sign the memorandum of understanding as amended during or following the closing of the COP11.

Final Decision: In its final decision (POPS/COP.11/CRP.14), the SC COP, *inter alia*, adopts the amended MoU between the Executive Director of UNEP and the SC COP, and requests the SC COP President of, on behalf of the COP, and the UNEP Executive Director to sign the MoU as amended during or following the closing of the COP11.

Venue and Dates of the Next Meeting of the COPs

On [10 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the dates and venue and related information ([CHW.16/29](#), [INF/50](#); [RC/COP.11/24](#), [INF/35](#); [POPS/COP.11/30](#), [INF/54](#)), proposing that the next TripleCOP be held from 28 April – 9 May 2025 in Geneva, with arrangements for a high-level segment. The COPs adopted the decisions.

Adoption of the Report

The COPs adopted the report of the joint sessions (CHW.16/L.1) on 10 May with minor amendments from Saudi Arabia.

Basel Convention COP16

Matters Related to the Implementation of the Basel Convention

Strategic issues: Strategic framework: The BC strategic framework is to be improved based on the report and findings of a small intersessional working group (SIWG). On [5 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the documents, draft decision ([CHW/COP.16/3](#), [20/Add.1](#)) and recommendation to improve the strategic framework ([INF/5](#)). CANADA reported on the work of the SIWG on the Strategic Framework and presented its proposed recommendations. Several countries supported the work of the SIWG and its recommendations with a few countries suggesting changes to the timeline and ways to improve the framework. Another country proposed moving the deadline for nomination of experts from 31 July to 30 September 2023.

The BC COP then adopted the decision with the amended deadline.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/3](#)), the BC COP, *inter alia*, develops a renewed strategic framework, taking into account the SIWG's recommendations and invites parties to nominate experts to the SIWG before 30 September 2023.

Improving the functioning of the PIC procedure: The OEWG recommended the establishment of a SIWG by COP16 to identify challenges in the implementation of the BC PIC procedure and provide feedback to improve its functioning. On [5 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the documents and draft decision ([CHW/COP.16/4](#), [20/Add.1](#), [INF/6](#)). Several countries identified the need for capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support for developing countries and underscored the need to develop further recommendations on improving the functioning of the PIC procedure. A contact group was established based on the suggestion of a few countries to further discuss the creation of the SIWG.

On [9 May](#), the BC COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CHW.16/CRP.16), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- decides to establish a SIWG, open to all parties, to identify challenges in the implementation of the PIC procedure and best practices, possible approaches, and initiatives to improve its functioning, as well as to develop recommendations on improving the functioning of the PIC procedure; and
- requests the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the present decision to OEWG14 and COP17.

Development of guidelines for environmentally sound management: Information on ESM of hazardous wastes and other wastes is necessary to promote implementation and complement the toolkit on ESM. On [5 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision, noting that it did not receive any feedback on guidelines or information on activities and initiatives on ESM pursuant to BC-15/15. Participants were invited to continue providing information to the Secretariat on the ESM of hazardous wastes and other wastes as well as initiatives that promote its implementation.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/5](#)), the BC COP requests parties and others to continue to provide information to the Secretariat in accordance with the COP15 decision on this issue and the practical manual that it adopted.

Scientific and technical matters: Technical guidelines:

Technical guidelines intend to provide guidance to parties on the ESM of different types of wastes. Four technical guidelines were discussed at COP16: POPs wastes, e-waste, plastic wastes, and lead-acid and other waste batteries. All of the technical guidelines ([CHW.16/6](#)) were taken up in the BC Technical Matters contact group co-chaired by Patrick McKell (UK) and Magda Gosk (Poland). Most of the group's time, by far, was allotted to the plastic wastes technical guidelines.

POPs wastes: This item was first discussed in plenary on [1 May](#), and subsequently in the contact group on [2 May](#). The Secretariat introduced the POPs wastes technical guidelines ([CHW.16/6/Add.1.2](#); [INF/7, 8, 9](#))

Many developing countries called for capacity building considering the financial, technical, and other challenges in detecting and managing POPs wastes. CHINA called for balancing environmental protection and authorities' capacity when defining low-POP content values. The EU, NEW ZEALAND, and SWITZERLAND supported further work on defining low-POP content values and the INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) cautioned against losing control over chemicals listed by the SC due to weak low-POP content levels. During discussions in the contact group, the identification of low-POP content values was a contentious issue.

On [9 May](#), the BC COP adopted a decision on the general technical guidelines (CRP.10) and annexes to the decision containing the technical guidelines on the ESM of POPs wastes (CRP.12) and on perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), its salts, and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride (PFOSF), and on perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS) wastes (CRP.13).

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.10), the COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties and observers to submit comments on the low-POP content values included in the general technical guidelines; and
- requests the Secretariat to compile the inputs received for consideration by the OEWG and to continue providing training to developing country parties and other parties in need of assistance in using the adopted technical guidelines.

E-wastes: These technical guidelines were first discussed in plenary on [1 May](#), and subsequently in the BC Technical Matters contact group. In plenary, the Secretariat introduced the e-waste technical guidelines ([CHW.16/6/INF/10](#)). During contact group discussions, the distinction between waste and non-waste under the BC was a contentious issue.

On [8 May](#), the BC COP adopted the draft decision in CRP.15, with the e-waste technical guidelines (CRP.16).

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.15), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- adopts on an interim basis the revised technical guidelines on e-waste, in particular regarding the distinction between waste and non-waste under the Basel Convention; and
- invites parties and others to use and/or test the technical guidelines adopted on an interim basis.

Plastic wastes: These technical guidelines were first discussed in plenary on [1 May](#), and subsequently in the BC Technical Matters contact group every day from 3-12 May. In plenary, the Secretariat introduced the plastic waste technical guidelines ([CHW.16/6/Add.3](#); [INF/11](#) and [11/Rev.1](#)).

During discussions in the contact group, inclusion of chemical recycling and the creation of new concepts and terms in the guidelines were prevalent issues.

Many countries cautioned against the inclusion of chemical recycling, noting chemical recycling is an emerging technology with limited evidence about its merits and long-term impacts. Others highlighted the innovative potential of chemical recycling, concluding that the provision of information in the guidelines is an important step. The group discussed several options of inserting the section, including by means of a disclaimer or through an Appendix.

On the creation of new concepts and terms, the group discussed proposals made by one country aiming to introduce a "bottom-up approach" to plastic pollution. There were many questions about what a "bottom-up approach" means in the context of Extended Producer Responsibility and waste prevention and minimization. The group agreed not to reference the concept explicitly, but refer to its constituent ideas through "taking into consideration national resources, capabilities and circumstances, and priorities" and "participatory initiatives and solutions."

On Friday, 12 May, the BC COP adopted the draft decision (CRP.32), with the plastic wastes technical guidelines (CRP.31).

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.32), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- adopts the technical guidelines on the ESM of plastic wastes;
- acknowledges the need for further information on the ESM of plastic wastes through all the technologies listed in Section G and Appendix A (this list includes chemical recycling); and
- requests the Secretariat to disseminate the technical guidelines to parties and others in the six official UN languages.

Lead-acid and other waste batteries: These technical guidelines were first discussed in plenary on [1 May](#), and subsequently in the BC Technical Matters contact group on [2 May](#). In plenary, the Secretariat introduced the draft guidelines ([INF/12](#) and [13](#)).

On [8 May](#), the BC COP adopted the draft decision on waste batteries other than waste lead-acid batteries (CRP.4) and agreed to continue work on the revised technical guidelines on the ESM of waste lead-acid batteries (CRP.5) and other waste batteries (CRP.6).

Final Decision: In its final decision, the BC COP (CRP.4), *inter alia*:

- takes note of the draft updated technical guidelines on the ESM of waste lead-acid batteries and of the draft technical guidelines on the ESM of other waste batteries;
- decides to extend the mandate of the SIWG; and
- invites parties and others to nominate additional experts to participate in the SIWG.

Classification and hazard characterization of wastes: The Secretariat is required to cooperate with the World Customs Organization and submit a proposal for amending the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System to allow the identification of 13 types of wastes. On [7 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and report. Several countries supported the draft decision, with one country highlighting the importance of cooperation on plastics and e-waste. Two countries proposed minor amendments to the draft.

The BC COP then adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/7](#)), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- requests the Secretariat to continue developing the proposal for the World Customs Organization;

- requests the Secretariat to continue cooperating with the Harmonized Systems Committee and other relevant subcommittees to facilitate the inclusion of wastes covered under the Convention; and
- requests the Secretariat to provide a progress report on the implementation of the present decision in BC COP17.

National reporting: The decision requires parties to submit their national reporting, including previous ones, to the Secretariat through an electronic reporting system. On [7 May](#), the item was introduced in plenary. Many countries voiced their support for having accurate and up-to-date data. Some countries called for enhanced technical and financial assistance, which is important to maintain an inventory on e-waste, and for capacity building on the system.

The BC COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/8](#)), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties to include information on waste generation in their national reports;
- requests the Secretariat to continue developing the electronic reporting system; and
- requests the Secretariat to continue providing training to countries that require assistance with reporting obligations and to prioritize capacity building.

Electronic approaches to the notification and movement documents: The development of electronic approaches for notification and consent and issuance of movement documents aims to improve the efficiency of Article 6 of the BC (transboundary movement between parties). On [7 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the report and draft decision. Several countries supported the development of electronic approaches to exchange information and transfer of documents. Some countries pointed out that several national systems already exist and are operating well so future systems must be compatible with them.

The EU supported the draft decision but proposed changes to invite parties to consider serving as lead countries and, in the absence of a lead country, request the Secretariat to further work on electronic approaches.

The BC COP adopted the decision with the proposed amendment.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/9](#)), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties to consider serving as lead countries and to inform the Secretariat by 31 July 2023 of their willingness to do so;
- requests the Secretariat to organize technical assistance activities and awareness-raising events; and
- requests the Secretariat to make available on the Convention's website lessons learned and information about pilot projects, taking into account parties' and non-parties' experiences and the work of other international organizations.

Further consideration of plastic waste: Further consideration of plastic wastes must take into account activities that respond to the latest developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information related to plastic wastes. On [7 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and possible further actions ([CHW.16/10](#), [INF/18](#)). Several countries cautioned against the duplication of work and encouraged close cooperation with the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic

pollution. Other countries suggested measures to tackle plastic pollution. The BC technical group was mandated to prepare a draft decision.

On [11 May](#), the Secretariat presented CRP.26, noting that it has been cleared of budgetary implications. SAUDI ARABIA requested that the draft decision be postponed to a later stage.

On 12 May, the BC COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.26), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- decides to include the consideration of further activities that could be conducted under the Convention in response to developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information;
- invites parties to submit to the Secretariat, by 28 February 2024, comments on further activities that could be conducted under the Convention; and
- requests the Secretariat to make available the comments on further activities and to report on the implementation of the present decision OEWG14 and to BC COP17.

Amendments to Annexes II, VIII, IX on e-waste: There is a need to assess existing guidances, technical guidelines, and fact sheets to reflect the e-waste amendments. On [7 May](#), the Secretariat presented the proposed action ([CHW.16/11](#)). Several countries supported the draft decision and encouraged the need to update the documents. The Secretariat will consult with countries who provided their feedback and prepare a draft decision.

On [10 May](#), the BC COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CHW.16/CRP.21), the BC COP, *inter alia*: requests the Secretariat to prepare:

- a practical guidance for the development of inventories of waste electrical and electronic equipment;
- revised fact sheets on specific waste streams;
- technical guidelines on ESM of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with hexabromocyclododecane, hexabromodiphenyl ether and heptabromodiphenyl ether, or tetrabromodiphenyl ether and pentabromodiphenyl ether, or decabromodiphenyl ether, PCB, polychlorinated terphenyls, and polychlorinated naphthalenes or polybrominated biphenyls including hexabromobiphenyl;
- revised guidelines on environmentally sound testing, refurbishment and repair of used computing equipment;
- revised guidelines on environmentally sound material recovery and recycling of end-of-life computing equipment;
- a report with ESM criteria recommendations;
- a report on strategies, actions, and incentives to promote ESM of end-of-life computing equipment; and
- a manual on steps to establish and implement ESM for used and waste computing equipment.

Waste containing nanomaterials: Parties were invited to share information related to activities related to wastes containing nanomaterials and its management. On [7 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([CHW.16/12](#)). Two countries voiced their support for the proposed action. One observer shared his recommendations based on best practices on management of wastes containing nanomaterials.

The BC COP then adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([CHW.16/12](#)), the BC COP requests the Secretariat to, *inter alia*:

- make available on its website the information on activities designed to address issues related to wastes containing nanomaterials, including case studies and best practices on their management;
- organize awareness-raising activities related to wastes containing nanomaterials; and
- report on the implementation of this decision to BC COP17.

Legal, compliance and governance matters: Committee Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance: This item was first taken up in joint sessions on [2 May](#). The Secretariat introduced the BC Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC) documents ([CHW.16/13](#), INF/20-25). The ICC Chair presented on the Committee's work. The Secretariat was tasked to prepare a revised decision, in consultation with interested parties.

On [May 9](#), the COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CHW.16/CRP.18), the COP decides to, *inter alia*, encourage various policy measures, national activities and measures including:

- integration into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and dialogue with BC regional and coordinating centres and international bodies and organizations on national reporting;
- a scoping exercise, national coordination mechanisms and dissemination of guidance and tools on illegal trafficking;
- support activities by the Secretariat on national legislation to assist in implementation of the BC;
- dialogue with the BC on regional and coordinating centres and international bodies and organizations;
- review of national legislations; and
- obligation of parties to inform the Secretariat of changes regarding designation of focal point and competent authorities.

Regarding the work of the Committee, the COP decides to:

- approve the work programme of the Committee for the biennium 2024-2025 set out in the annex to the decision;
- request the Committee to establish priorities, work methods and schedules for the activities in its work programme;
- coordinate with the OEWG, the BC Secretariat and the BC regional and coordinating centres to avoid duplication of activities;
- consult parties, in advance of COP17, on a draft work programme for the biennium 2026-2027; and
- report to COP17 on the work it has carried out to fulfil its functions, as in the terms of reference of the mechanism for promoting implementation and compliance.

Providing further legal clarity: On [2 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft ([CHW.16/14](#)) on providing further legal clarity; on the review of Annex IV ([CHW.16/INF/26](#)); the review of Annexes I and III ([CHW.16/INF/27](#)).

During discussions in plenary, SWITZERLAND reminded that the Annexes were written some 30 years ago and, with CHILE, stressed the need to amend them to keep them relevant but cautioned, with SOUTH AFRICA, that the tabled proposals require more work.

On Annex IV, CANADA called for parties to discuss and engage with the expert group's recommendations. Several other countries called for further work, including on definitions, terminology, and the EU's proposal.

A contact group on BC Legal Matters was established, co-chaired by Katrin Kaare (Estonia) and Florisvindo Furtado (Cabo Verde), which met [3](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), and [9](#) May.

The contact group discussed the EU's proposal to add a new operation to Annex IV (disposal operations) for preparation for reuse, such as cleaning, testing, repair, or refurbishment. There was also a debate on whether COP17 should consider these Annexes.

This decision was adopted on [May 10](#).

Final Decision: In its final decision (CHW.16/CRP.22), the COP decides to request the expert working group to:

- consider the proposals by the EU to amend Annex IV and certain entries in Annexes II and IX to the BC;
- consider the recommendations and findings of the expert working group;
- continue to develop draft recommendations on the review of Annexes I and III, taking into account discussions at OEWG13 and COP16;
- consider at its COP17, the revised amendment proposals for Annex IV and the draft recommendations on the review of Annexes I and III.

National legislation, notifications, enforcement of the Convention and efforts to combat illegal traffic: On [7 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision ([CHW.16/15](#)). Some developing countries called on developed countries to halt the illegal movement of hazardous wastes. The decision was adopted.

Final Decision: In its final decision, the BC COP requests the Secretariat to:

- continue to maintain and update the collection of best practices for preventing and punishing illegal traffic, forms for reporting confirmed cases of illegal traffic, information on national definitions of hazardous wastes, and information on import or export restrictions or prohibitions, and to continue to make that information available on the Convention website;
- make information on national definitions of hazardous wastes, and information on import or export restrictions or prohibitions available in the six official UN languages, subject to the availability of resources;
- provide parties, upon request, with advice on matters pertaining to the implementation and enforcement of the Convention, including on the development and updating of national legislation or other measures, and assistance in the identification of cases of illegal traffic;
- continue to cooperate with enforcement organizations and networks;
- further develop tools, including e-learning tools, and organize enforcement training activities, subject to the availability of resources, in collaboration with the BCRCs, the Secretariats of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other international organizations, agencies or programmes and to assist parties, particularly developing country parties and parties with economies in transition, to develop national legislation and other measures to implement and enforce the Convention and to prevent and punish illegal traffic; and
- report on the implementation of the present decision to COP17.

Proposal by the Russian Federation to amend paragraph 2 of Article 6 of the Convention: On [7 May](#), the Secretariat invited the Russian Federation to introduce the proposal ([CHW.16/16](#)). The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted the key elements of the

proposal to improve the PIC procedure, which includes a single time period for exchanging information between parties and a 30-day limit for a written notification response. He said they would defer the work to the intersessional period and return with another proposal.

Countries had varied views on the proposal and whether or not to engage in further discussions on it. Noting that parties were not ready to discuss the proposed amendment, BC COP President Hernaus deferred the matter to be included in the provisional agenda of the next COP meeting.

Basel Convention Partnership Programme: The BC engages in several public-private partnerships with the aim to support the work of the convention. On [7 May](#), activities relating to the Partnership for Action on Challenges relating to E-waste (PACE II), the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE), the Household Waste Partnership, and the Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP) were presented and discussed.

CANADA, the EU, PAKISTAN, SWITZERLAND, KENYA, and IRAN called for further consideration of the Household Waste Partnership and the Secretariat was tasked to prepare a revised draft.

On [9 May](#), the EU proposed subscription fees be amended for PACE II and the Household Waste Partnership, noting challenges in the financial management of these partnerships.

With minor adjustments concerning additional activities to be undertaken, on [7 May](#) the COP adopted Parts I, II, and IV of the omnibus decision on the BC Partnership Programme ([CHW.16/19](#)).

On [10 May](#), the COP adopted Part III (Household Waste Partnership) of the decision (CRP.20) and on [11 May](#), the subscription system of PACE II and the Household Waste Partnership (CRP.25).

Final Decision: In its final decision (CHW.16/19), the BC COP adopted three parts of an omnibus decision. Part III, on the Household Waste Partnership, was amended and adopted separately.

In Part I (PACE II), the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties and others who have not yet nominated members to the working group and who wish to do so to inform the Secretariat of their nominations;
- approves the programme of work of the Partnership for the biennium 2024-2025 and requests the working group of the Partnership to implement it; and
- requests the Secretariat to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the OEWG14 and COP17.

In Part II (ENFORCE), the BC COP, *inter alia*,

- invites entities with a specific mandate to deliver implementation and enforcement capacity-building activities that could assist BC parties in preventing and combating illegal traffic of hazardous wastes and other wastes to consider sending a duly motivated request to the Chair of the Network regarding admission as members of the Network; and
- requests the Secretariat to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to COP17.

In Part IV (Plastic Waste Partnership), the BC COP, *inter alia*,

- invites parties and others who have not yet nominated members to the working group and who wish to do so to inform the Secretariat of their nominations;
- approves the workplan of the Partnership for the biennium 2024-2025 and requests the working group of the Partnership to implement it;

- requests the working group to continue to approve the work products and reports prepared by the project groups in accordance with its workplan, and to widely disseminate such information and knowledge gathered and generated through the activities of the Partnership; and
- requests the Secretariat to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the OEWG14 and COP17.

In its final decision (CRP.20) on the Household Waste Partnership, the BC COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties and others to provide comments on the revised draft overall guidance document to the Secretariat by 30 September 2023; and
- requests the Secretariat to make available on the Convention website the comments received of the present decision.

The COP also requests the working group to implement the following activities, which constitute the workplan of the Household Waste Partnership for the biennium 2024-2025:

- preparation of a further revised draft of the overall guidance document, taking into account the comments received prior to COP16, the discussions at COP16, and any additional comments received, for consideration by OEWG14;
- activities for awareness-raising and training relating to ESM of household waste, coordination of outreach activities, and cooperation with other organizations working on household waste management; and
- continued coordination of outreach activities and cooperation with other organizations working on household waste management, including the Partnership on Plastic Waste, to prevent overlap between programmes and to share lessons learned.

The COP requests the Secretariat to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to OEWG14 and COP17.

On subscription fees (CRP.25), the BC COP, *inter alia*, considers it necessary to withdraw the requirement to apply annual subscription fees for business and industry, NGOs, and academia partnerships for PACE II and the Household Waste Partnership.

Work programme of the Open-ended Working Group for the period 2024-2025: On [7 May](#), the work programme of the OEWG for the period 2024-2025 was presented in plenary and adopted with minor amendments on 12 May.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.24), the COP mandates work to the OEWG, including:

- strategic issues, such as work to improve the functioning of the PIC procedure;
- scientific and technical matters, such as updating the technical guidelines for the ESM of POPs wastes and considering possible revisions to the national reporting format;
- legal, governance and enforcement matters, such as providing further legal clarity and consultation with the ICC; and
- international cooperation and coordination, such as consideration of the outputs from the Basel Convention Partnership Programme.

Adoption of the Report

On [10 May](#), the BC COP adopted its report (CHW.16/L.1/Add.1).

Rotterdam Convention COP11

Rules of Procedure for the COP

On [10 May](#), RC COP President Ana Berejiani noted the bracketed text in the rules of procedure, which means that, until decided otherwise, the COP will continue to adopt substantive decisions by consensus. She proposed deferral of the matter to COP12, with brackets remaining in place, and it is noted in the report of the meeting.

Several countries, including CHILE, COLOMBIA, CANADA, and NIGERIA supporting discussion and resolution at this COP. The EU said it is important for the COP to reach important decisions and, as such, a 3/4 majority voting should be available to parties, noting they are open to informal discussions.

CHINA, SAUDI ARABIA, ARGENTINA, and BRAZIL supported consensus decision making.

The matter was referred to RC COP 12.

Matters Related to the Implementation of the Convention

Status of implementation: The RC's implementation is monitored through several national activities. On [10 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision and it was adopted.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([RC/COP.11/4](#)), the COP, *inter alia*:

- encourages parties to adopt a national definition for the term “pesticide”;
- encourages parties to submit notifications of final regulatory action, proposals for listing severely hazardous pesticide formulations and import responses for listed chemicals; and
- urges parties to ensure proper implementation of Articles 11 and 13 of the Convention, and that the shipping document for chemicals listed in Annex III bears the respective customs code of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System when exported.

Listing of chemicals in Annex III to the Convention: Listing chemicals in Annex III of the Convention makes the pesticide or industrial chemical subject to the Convention's PIC procedure. The chemicals were taken up in plenary on 8 and 9 May. Iprodione and carbosulfan were referred to a contact group, co-chaired by Marit Randall (Norway) and Caroline Theka (Malawi), which met over two evenings.

Acetochlor: On [8 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/6](#)) and decision guidance document ([6/Add.1](#)). Many countries expressed support for listing and five expressed their opposition. The COP added acetochlor to the mandate of the RC listing contact group, which was unable to reach agreement.

On [11 May](#), the RC COP agreed to add acetochlor to the agenda of COP12.

Carbosulfan: On [8 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/7](#)) and decision guidance document ([7/Add.1](#)). Many countries expressed support for listing and two expressed their opposition.

The COP added carbosulfan to the mandate of the RC listing contact group, which was unable to reach agreement.

On [11 May](#), the RC COP agreed to add carbosulfan to the agenda of COP12.

Paraquat: On [8 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/11](#)) and decision guidance document ([11/Add.1](#)). Discussion in plenary continued on [9 May](#). Many countries expressed support for listing and seven expressed their opposition.

Since no consensus was reached, RC COP President Berejiani proposed, and countries agree, that its listing be included in the provisional agenda of the next COP.

Fenthion: On [9 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/9](#)) and decision guidance document ([9/Add.1](#)). Many expressed support to list fenthion, while two expressed their opposition. RC COP President Berejiani suggested that parties consult.

On [11 May](#), the RC COP agreed to add fenthion to the agenda of COP12.

Chrysotile Asbestos: On [9 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/8](#)) and decision guidance document ([8/Add.1](#)). Many countries expressed support to list chrysotile asbestos, while six expressed their opposition.

Since no consensus was reached, RC COP President Berejiani proposed, and countries agreed, that its listing be included in the provisional agenda of the next COP.

Iprodione: On [8 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/10](#)) and decision guidance document ([10/Add.1](#)). Many expressed support for listing, and six expressed their opposition. The RC listing contact group took up the issue, but was unable to find agreement. Those in opposition expressed doubt that the notification of final regulatory action met the listing criteria. One questioned the work of the CRC directly.

On [11 May](#), the RC COP agreed to add iprodione to the agenda of COP12.

Terbufos: On [8 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the draft decision ([RC/COP.11/12](#)) and decision guidance document ([12/Add.1](#); [INF/8/Rev.1](#), [11](#), [12](#)). With widespread support, the RC COP agreed to list terbufos in Annex III as a pesticide.

Final Decision: In its decision ([RC/COP.11/12](#)), the RC COP lists terbufos in Annex III, decides that this amendment shall enter into force for all parties on 22 October 2023, and approves the decision guidance document.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention: There were two proposals on how to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention: a proposal to add a new Annex to the Convention, and a proposal for interessional work. The debate was divisive throughout the COP.

Proposal to add a new Annex VIII to the Convention: This item was first introduced on [3 May](#), with subsequent discussions throughout the COP until 12 May when the matter was put to a vote in plenary. The item focused on the introduction of a new Annex that lists chemicals that were approved by the CRC but not by the COP for listing in Annex III. Discussions around this item were highly contentious as it proposes that decisions among ratifying parties could be approved by a 3/4 majority vote, instead of the consensus-based approach required by the Annex III listing process.

On [3 May](#), RC COP President Berejiani invited Switzerland to introduce their proposal on behalf of the 14 co-sponsors (CRP.4). SWITZERLAND explained that CRP.4 revises the proposal submitted six months before the COP, to take into account comments received from parties. He outlined the main changes, which include:

- if a chemical is listed in the new proposed Annex VIII and is subsequently listed in Annex III, the listing in Annex III shall prevail;
- explicit consent to an import provided by the designated authority of an importing country directly to the exporting party is sufficient for an export to be allowed;

- when deciding whether to list a chemical in Annex VIII, parties may also approve the decision guidance document;
- Annex VIII decisions are taken through consensus, however, if it cannot be achieved, a 3/4th majority vote will apply.

Many countries welcomed the proposal to address the impasse in the Convention, citing the growing number of chemicals recommended for listing by the CRC and not listed by the COP. Several countries signalled their preference for consensus decision making to list chemicals in Annex III.

A debate ensued over which countries should co-chair the contact group. Some countries objected, with IRAN, PAKISTAN, and ECUADOR querying the appropriateness of both Co-Chairs being proponents of the proposal. Others, including RC COP President Berejiani, underscored that Co-Chairs are impartial.

Discussion continued on [4 May](#), RC COP President Berejiani proposed Angela Rivera (Colombia) and Glenn Wigley (New Zealand) co-chair the contact group on enhancing the effectiveness of the RC. Opposed by some parties, the selection of the Co-Chairs was discussed in plenary for two days, with some proposing the replacement of the Co-Chair from Colombia with a nominated Co-Chair from China. The President proposed three Co-Chairs to accommodate the request, but many parties disagreed, citing the principle of the impartiality of Co-Chairs. New Zealand and Colombia then withdrew their candidates. RC COP President Berejiani proposed, and parties endorsed, Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Martin Lacroix (Canada) as Co-Chairs.

The contact group met [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#) May to review CRP.4 to amend Articles 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 22 of the Rotterdam Convention and to add a new Annex VIII. Discussions were highly polarized. Those opposing the amendment questioned its legality and raised procedural issues. They also said two Annexes would lead to parallel processes that would be too confusing to implement. Proponents and the legal advisors of the Secretariat answered questions. On 10 May, it was suggested to close the contact group, citing the lack of constructive progress.

On [11 May](#), the RC COP President invited Switzerland to introduce CRP.11. On behalf of the co-sponsors, SWITZERLAND explained that the new CRP is a revised proposal, taking into the account the comments received on CRP.4. Many spoke in support of the proposal, emphasizing the need to break the impasses on a growing number of chemicals where countries cannot reach agreement. Others opposed, citing a range of legal and procedural concerns.

Noting the lack of consensus, RC COP President Berejiani proposed suspending consideration of CRP.11. This suggestion was opposed by COLOMBIA and supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and SAUDI ARABIA.

Discussion resumed on 12 May in plenary. RC COP President Berejiani suggested deferring consideration of the proposal to the next COP, given the lack of consensus.

NIGERIA observed that it is “obvious” that parties are deadlocked. In line with Article 21.3 (amendment of the Convention), he called for a vote on the proposal to amend the Convention. This was supported by SAMOA, SWITZERLAND, the EU, COLOMBIA, AUSTRALIA, CHILE, MALAWI, COSTA RICA, the MALDIVES, JORDAN, PERU, ESWATINI, the UK, PANAMA, COOK ISLANDS, ZAMBIA, MEXICO, HONDURAS, and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, noting that all efforts to

achieve consensus have been exhausted. Many countries noted that discussions on RC effectiveness started a long time ago, with the EU noting “we have little to no more option to move forward.”

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and SAUDI ARABIA said that the proposal is substantively different from the one originally submitted and, therefore, would have to be re-submitted six months before a COP in line with the rules of procedure. CHINA said that this proposal amends Annex III, which means consensus is required in line with Article 22 (adoption and amendment of annexes) and therefore, she stressed, a vote is not appropriate because Article 21 (amendment of the Convention) does not apply. ARGENTINA, INDONESIA, and BRAZIL also considered voting on the amendment proposal to be procedurally unsound.

QATAR, KAZAKHSTAN, GUINEA, SAUDI ARABIA, PAKISTAN, INDIA, NICARAGUA, GUATEMALA, IRAQ, SYRIA, KYRGYZSTAN, ZIMBABWE, INDONESIA, ARGENTINA, VENEZUELA, CHAD, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, LESOTHO, MALAYSIA, OMAN, PARAGUAY, KENYA, JAPAN, ETHIOPIA, BRAZIL, BOLIVIA, KUWAIT, IRAN, CUBA, and CHINA supported deferral of this matter to COP12. Many of these countries disputed that all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted, noting that this proposal was brought only to this COP.

RC COP President Berejiani announced that, according to Article 21.3, the proposal to amend the Convention shall, as a last resort, be adopted by a 3/4 majority of parties present and voting.

SAUDI ARABIA raised a point of order questioning the validity of the proposal, saying that it was not communicated at least six months before the COP. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION appealed the RC COP President’s proposal and asked for a vote by secret ballot on its appeal.

After a break to distribute ballots, Berejiani posed the question: do you agree with my ruling, which is for the meeting to proceed with the motion of Nigeria to vote on the adoption of CRP.11 on the amendment to Articles 1, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 22 and to add a new Annex VIII? The Secretariat clarified that only parties with credentials that were accepted as in order were given ballots, and that parties can vote yes or no, or abstain.

While voting was taking place, SAUDI ARABIA called a point of order. Berejiani stated that countries can only take the floor during a vote if they are questioning the conduct of the vote. SAUDI ARABIA said it was a point of order on the vote and then raised their previous point of order about the timing of the submission of the CRP. The vote continued, as Berejiani said that, at this time, the appeal by the Russian Federation was the only matter on the table.

After the ballots were counted, the results were announced: 141 parties present and voting, with 90 in favor of the President’s proposal. Berejiani again put forward the proposal that parties vote on CRP.11.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION appealed the proposal, stating that the CRP.11 is not translated into all UN languages. Berejiani explained that only official, pre-sessional meeting documents must be translated and that proposals made during a meeting do not. After the RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for a secret vote on its appeal, another vote was held. The result was that with 141 present and voting, 95 parties supported the RC COP President’s proposal.

Berejiani again put forward the proposal to vote on CRP.11. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested a secret ballot. CHINA objected and called for a no-action motion to close the debate,

saying substantive matters should not be voted on, making the minority subject to the majority as it harms all parties.

Berejiani requested the Secretariat to proceed with the secret ballot.

After the voting, Berejiani announced that, of 132 parties present and voting, 92 supported the amendment, which failed to reach the 75% majority required.

NIGERIA welcomed that a decision as taken at this time. SWITZERLAND was “humbled” that 70% of parties supported the proposal. With the EU, he lamented the divisions evident among parties. AUSTRALIA and the EU expressed resolve to improve the PIC procedure so a few cannot block listing chemicals. PERU stressed that the vote shows that the majority of countries demand improvements to the Convention’s effectiveness, and said that, now, the majority remain frustrated.

INDIA cited that 40 countries opposed the amendment, and that they, together represent more than half the world’s population. With INDONESIA, he supported the spirit of consensus. INDONESIA said procedural issues raised by some parties were ignored, stressing this cannot be a precedent.

RC COP President Berejiani closed this agenda item.

Proposal for intersessional work: On [3 May](#), BRAZIL introduced CRP.3, supported by ARGENTINA, CUBA, VENEZUELA, IRAN, PAKISTAN, and ETHIOPIA, among others. The CRP proposes the establishment of an intersessional working group to address the undesirable indirect economic and trade effects arising from the inclusion of new substances in Annex III or other annexes. Brazil’s proposal also tasks the intersessional working group to develop an action plan to be submitted to RC COP 12. Several of these countries highlighted the need for consensus and expressed concern about the potential confusion that two lists could cause.

There was a lengthy debate on [9](#) and [10](#) May on whether to discuss this CRP in the contact group on RC effectiveness or on RC listing. On [11 May](#), a new contact group was established to discuss this CRP. On 12 May, the COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (CRP.3), the RC COP:

- urges parties and observers to provide information to the Secretariat on the potential direct and indirect trade and socio-economic impacts, as well as the financial implications, caused or anticipated by the listing of chemicals in Annex III, including the costs of inaction, by 30 June 2024;
- urges parties and observers to provide information to the Secretariat on the benefits and challenges in introducing alternatives to chemicals recommended for listing in Annex III, and on actions to address such challenges, by 30 June 2024;
- further urges parties and observers to provide information to the Secretariat on challenges in implementing legislative or administrative measures for the sound management of chemicals recommended for listing in Annex III and their alternatives, including challenges relating to technological and scientific capability, by 30 June 2024;
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to compile the information from parties and prepare a report for consideration, and discussion on a way forward, by COP12; and
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to organize a webinar before COP12 to present and discuss the information compiled by the Secretariat.

Compliance: On [2 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the compliance procedures and mechanisms and RC Compliance Committee membership ([RC/COP.11/14](#), [INF/16](#)). Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez, RC Compliance Committee Chair, reported on the Committee’s first year of work.

Final Decision: The RC COP welcomed the note by the Secretariat (RC/COP.11/14) approving work undertaken by the Compliance Committee since COP10. The COP also:

- asks parties that believe that, despite their best efforts, they are, or will be, unable to comply with certain obligations under the RC to consider making submissions to the Compliance Committee;
- requests the Secretariat to organize awareness-raising activities aimed at improving understanding among parties of the Committee and other mandates; and
- requests parties to provide the Secretariat with the texts of national legislation or other measures that they have adopted to implement and enforce the Convention.

Adoption of the Report

On 12 May, the RC COP adopted its report (RC/COP.11/L.1/Add.1).

Stockholm Convention COP11

Rules of Procedure for the COP

On [4 May](#), the Secretariat introduced a note on the rules of procedure ([POPS/COP.11/3](#)) that contains brackets around paragraph 1 of Rule 45 on voting procedures.

CHILE suggested informal consultations to resolve the issue, noting that qualified majority voting could be a way forwards when consensus cannot be reached. Many supported the suggestion to consult informally, with INDONESIA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and INDIA querying how informal consultations would be carried out. SC President Keima Gardiner suspended the agenda item, saying it will be returned to later.

On 12 May, CHILE lamented that informal consultations were difficult, given the very heavy workload of the COP. He hoped for a resolution of this matter at the next meeting.

The COP agreed to put this issue on the agenda for COP12.

Matters Related to the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention

Measures to Reduce or Eliminate Releases from Intentional Production and Use: Exemptions: Parties to the SC are allowed to register, for a specified time frame, specific exemptions concerning the reduction or elimination of POPs listed in Annex A and B, for which alternatives do not yet exist. On [2 May](#), the COP adopted the draft decision, with minor editorial changes suggested by the EU and CANADA.

Final Decision: In its final decision (POPS/COP.11/4), the COP, *inter alia*:

- notes that no specific exemptions for the production and use of short-chain chlorinated paraffins and for polyurethane foam for building insulation and for textile products that require anti-flammable characteristics, excluding clothing and toys, exist and no new registrations may be made with respect thereto as of 18 December 2023; and

- requests the Secretariat to continue undertaking awareness-raising activities to improve parties' understanding of the procedures for registering specific exemptions and acceptable purposes and notifying other exemptions, and to provide information on alternatives to the listed POPs.

DDT: Listed in Annex B to the SC, DDT is restricted for disease vector control purposes in cases where no equally effective and efficient alternative is available. On [2 May](#), the COP adopted, with minor amendments, the decision on the evaluation of the continued need for DDT for disease vector control and the promotion of alternatives to DDT.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/5](#)), the COP *inter alia*:

- concludes that there is a continued need for the use of DDT for malaria vector control in specific settings;
- encourages parties using DDT to adopt alternatives in the context of insecticide resistance management strategies; and
- requests the Secretariat to assist parties in reporting on DDT and promoting locally safe, effective and affordable alternatives for a sustainable transition away from DDT.

Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB): Listed in Annex A to the Stockholm Convention, production and new uses of PCB are banned. Parties to the SC must eliminate the use of PCB in equipment by 2025 and ensure the environmentally sound waste management of liquids containing PCB and equipment contaminated with PCB by 2028. This item was discussed on [3 May](#) in plenary. Many illustrated national efforts to meet the 2025 and 2028 targets, with some, like the MALDIVES, noting they were on track to meet the targets, while others, like the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, drew attention to the large quantities of PCB they still had to deal with. Several delegates welcomed the support from the GEF project but noted that more funding and technical assistance was necessary. The draft decision ([POPS/COP.11/6](#)) was adopted with edits from CHINA and the EU.

Final Decision: In its final decision, the COP, *inter alia*:

- urges parties to implement measures to meet their obligations relating to PCBs;
- decides to undertake, at its thirteenth meeting, a review of progress towards the elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls;
- decides to re-establish a SIWG to assist the Secretariat in preparing, for consideration by COP13, a report on progress towards the elimination of PCBs, a revised strategy for parties to meet the 2025 and 2028 goals of the SC, and a revised guidance for the development of inventories of PCBs and analysis of PCBs and revised versions of other guidance relevant to PCBs available under the SC; and
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen national or regional capacities for the elimination or irreversible transformation and reporting of PCBs and to participate in the activities of the PCB Elimination Network.

Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonate: Listed in Annex B to the SC, there are acceptable purposes and specific exemptions for the production and use of PFOS, its salts and PFOSE, which are continuously evaluated by the COP. On [2 May](#), the COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/7](#)), the COP, *inter alia*: encourages parties to undertake additional research on the

development of alternatives to PFOS, its salts, and PFOSE. The COP requests the Secretariat to provide support to parties, in particular developing country parties and parties with economies in transition, to:

- build capacity to collect information on PFOS, its salts and PFOSE;
- adopt and strengthen measures on the management of those chemicals throughout their life cycles; and
- introduce safer, effective and affordable alternatives to those chemicals.

Measures to Reduce or Eliminate Releases from Unintentional Production: This agenda item addresses the guidelines and guidance on best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP). On [3 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the guidance. One country suggested changes related to source inventories and reviewing strategies as included in Article 5.a (iii) of the Convention.

The SC COP then adopted the decision with the amendments.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/8](#)), the SC COP, *inter alia*:

- urges parties to develop full and complete source inventories and release estimates of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans using the toolkit and other available guidance;
- requests the Secretariat to organize a meeting of experts on the toolkit and on BAT and BEP
- requests the Secretariat to support parties in the updating and implementation of action plans under Article 5 of the Convention; and
- requests the Secretariat to implement awareness-raising and technical assistance activities to promote the toolkit and guidance on BAT and BEP.

Measures to Reduce or Eliminate Releases from Wastes: Parties to the SC are required, by Article 6, to ensure that stockpiles and wastes containing POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner. The item was discussed on [1 May](#). Ghana, for the AFRICAN REGION, called for capacity building, stressing the need for technical and financial support. Taking into account previously adopted decisions by SC COP11 (CRP.12 and CRP.13, on technical assistance), the newly listed POPs, and the work done by the BC COP on POPs wastes technical guidelines, the SC COP adopted the decision on [11 May](#).

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/9](#)), the COP, *inter alia*:

- reminds parties to take into account the updated technical guidelines on the ESM of POPs wastes when implementing their obligations under SC Article 6;
- encourages the introduction and demonstration in developing countries and countries with economies in transition of cost-effective methods selected from those listed in the updated technical guidelines in a section on environmentally sound disposal of POP wastes; and
- requests the Secretariat to undertake capacity-building and training activities, such as in relation to the sound management of persistent organic pollutant stockpiles and wastes, and to develop guidance and tools to support parties in meeting their obligations under SC Article 6.

Implementation Plans: National Implementation Plans (NIPs) outline how parties will implement their obligations under the Convention, and are essential to monitor parties' progress and are required to be transmitted to SC COP.

On [3 May](#), the Secretariat noted that with each subsequent amendment to the Convention, fewer parties have submitted their updated NIPs. One country proposed establishing longer timelines for the submission of comments. Several developing countries shared their experience in updating their NIPs and called for further support.

The SC COP then adopted the decision with the amendment on longer timelines.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/10](#)), the SC COP, *inter alia*:

- requests the Secretariat to continue to support parties in developing, reviewing, and updating their NIPs;
- requests the Secretariat to consult on BAT and BEP and further review guidance on inventories and alternatives to the newly listed POPs;
- requests the Secretariat to identify further need for guidance and tools to support parties in developing and updating their NIPs; and
- requests the Secretariat to develop guidance on preparing inventories of newly listed POPs and guidance on alternatives to the newly listed POPs.

Listing of Chemicals in Annex A, B or C to the Convention:

Listing of chemicals in Annexes A (elimination), B (restriction), and/or C (reducing unintentional production) is one of the core areas of work for the COP. Three chemicals were suggested for listing at COP11: methoxychlor, DDT, and UV-328. The item was first introduced in plenary on [1 May](#), when the Secretariat introduced the POPRC's recommendation ([POPS/COP.11/13](#)) and comments received ([INF/24](#)). After considerable support for listing methoxychlor in plenary, countries agreed to list it in Annex A without exemptions.

DDT and UV-328 were discussed in a contact group co-chaired by Rikke Holmberg (Denmark) and Patience Nambalirwa Nsereko (Uganda), which met several times, including on [2](#), [3](#), and [4 May](#). Discussions in the contact group focused on exemptions and labelling, with delegates expressing a preference for the texts on the two chemicals to mirror one another.

On exemptions, delegates discussed both the need for specific exemptions, in addition to those recommended by the POPRC, and the timelines for the expiry of those exemptions. A few parties asked for additional exemptions, including in automotive paints, but ultimately the contact group did not add these exemptions. The contact group agreed to a narrow exemption for use of both chemicals for some medical devices.

There was further discussion on the meaning of "replacement parts" in the context of exemptions. Countries sought to narrow the definition of replacement parts to only those parts where the chemicals were originally used, to prevent additional uses of the chemical after listing under the guise of "replacement" parts.

For exemptions, many noted the long-life spans of the equipment and requested more time than the "5+5" timeline in the Convention. Some noted that the only country currently producing DDT is phasing out production and wondered if an extended period is necessary. Countries agreed to the end of service life, or 2044 for some exemptions, and 2041 for medical devices.

On labelling, there was recognition of the challenges of identifying both chemicals in articles in use. Without a clear way forward for these chemicals, the contact group drafted a new decision that tasks the POPRC with taking the issue forward.

On [5 May](#), the SC COP adopted three decisions on labelling, listing DDT, and listing UV-328.

Final Decisions: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/12](#)), the SC COP decides to amend part I of Annex A to the Convention to list methoxychlor without specific exemptions.

In its final decision (CRP.8), the SC COP decides to list **UV-328** in Annex A with specific exemptions.

The first specific exemption is for replacement parts for articles where UV-328 was originally used in the manufacture of those articles and may be available, limited to the following applications, until the end of the service life of the articles or 2044, whichever comes earlier:

- motor vehicles (covering all land-based vehicles, such as cars, motorcycles, agricultural and construction vehicles and industrial trucks);
- stationary industrial machines (such as tower cranes, concrete plants, and hydraulic crushers) for use in agriculture, forestry, and construction; and
- liquid crystal displays in instruments for analysis, measurements, control, monitoring, testing, production and inspection (such as recorders, infrared radiation thermometers, digital storage oscilloscopes, and radiographic testing instruments) other than for medical applications.

The second specific exemption is for the use of UV-328 for replacement parts for articles for the following applications for medical purposes shall apply where UV-328 was originally used in the manufacture of those articles and may be available until the end of the service life of those articles, subject to review by COP no later than 2041:

- liquid crystal displays in medical and in-vitro diagnostic devices (such as ultrasound diagnostic devices, flexible endoscopes, immunoassay analysers, clinical chemistry analysers, and blood coagulation analysers); and
- liquid crystal displays in instruments for analysis, measurements, control, monitoring, testing, production, and inspection (such as recorders, infrared radiation thermometers, digital storage oscilloscopes, and radiographic testing instruments).

In its final decision (CRP.9), the SC COP agrees to list **DDT** in Annex A with specific exemptions.

The first specific exemption is for replacement parts for, and repair of, articles where DDT was originally used in the manufacture of those articles and may be available, limited to the following applications, until the end of the service life of the articles or 2044, whichever comes earlier:

- aerospace (such as aircraft engine fan case rub strip products and voidfilling and edge-sealing products, aircraft engine manufacturing repairs, electrical items, structural panels, and aircraft cabin interiors);
- space (such as satellites, probes and other exploration equipment, manned cabins and laboratories, heat-insulating materials for rocket motors, and ground support equipment);
- defence (such as naval vessels, missiles, launch platforms, ordnance, communication equipment, radar and lidar systems, and support equipment);

- motor vehicles (covering all land-based vehicles, such as cars, motorcycles, agricultural and construction vehicles, and industrial trucks; applications include cables, wire harnesses, connectors, and insulation tapes);
- stationary industrial machines (such as tower cranes, concrete plants, and hydraulic crushers; applications include cables, wire harnesses, connectors and insulation tapes) for use in agriculture, forestry and construction;
- marine, garden, forestry and outdoor power equipment; and
- instruments for analysis, measurements, control, monitoring, testing, production, and inspection.

The second specific exemption is for replacement parts for, and repair of, articles shall apply where Dechlorane Plus was originally used in the manufacture of those articles and may be available, limited to the following applications, until the end of the service life of those articles, subject to review by the Conference of the Parties no later than 2041:

- medical devices (such as ultrasound diagnostic devices, magnetic resonance imaging systems, X-ray imaging systems, flexible endoscopes and radiotherapy devices and installations); and
- in-vitro diagnostic devices (such as immunoassay analysers, haematology analysers, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing systems, genetic analysers, clinical chemistry analysers, blood coagulation analysers, and urinalysis analysers).

In its final decision on **POPs in stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes** (CRP.10), the SC COP, *inter alia*:

- requests the POPRC to consider options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes and issues related to the production, import and export of products and articles containing POPs, and to report on the outcome of that exercise to COP12; and
- invites parties and observers to submit to the Secretariat, by the date to be decided on by the POPRC, information on experiences with, and challenges encountered in, developing and implementing appropriate strategies for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products and articles in use and in wastes and other relevant information and requests the Committee to consider this information.

POPRC: The SC COP heard a report on the POPRC's developments by POPRC Chair Peter Dawson (New Zealand) on [2 May](#). It subsequently adopted the decision, with a note to stress the importance of interpretation.

Final Decision: In its decision ([POPS/COP.11/11](#)), the SC COP:

- appoints the 14 designated experts listed in the annex to the decision to serve as members of the Committee with terms of office from 5 May 2024 to 4 May 2028;
- elects Peter Dawson (New Zealand) as the Chair of the Committee;
- requests the Secretariat to facilitate the involvement of experts from the Basel Convention, as appropriate;
- requests the Secretariat to continue, subject to the availability of resources, to assist the Committee in collecting information on POPs in products as necessary for its review of chemicals and to provide parties with guidance on labelling for the chemicals listed in Annexes A and B and to collaborate, as appropriate, with relevant international efforts such as the UNEP Chemicals in Products programme; and
- requests the Secretariat to continue, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake activities to support parties, incoming

members, and newly appointed experts in participating effectively in the process for reviewing and listing new chemicals under the Convention and the work of the Committee and to report on the results of those activities to the COP12.

Reporting pursuant to Article 15: Reporting parties' national reports are required under Article 15 of the Convention. Measures are being taken to assess the submission of national reports and improve it. On [3 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision. CHINA proposed changing the submission date for the sixth national reports from 28 February 2026 to 31 August 2026. Several countries called for technical assistance to facilitate data collection. The EU suggested that national reports need not be complete before they can be submitted, owing to the possible challenges involved.

The SC COP then adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision ([POPS/COP.11/18](#)), as amended, the SC COP, *inter alia*:

- decides that parties shall submit their sixth national report to the Secretariat by 31 August 2026;
- requests the Secretariat to update the electronic reporting system to include newly listed chemicals;
- requests the Secretariat to provide feedback to parties regarding the submission of their national reports;
- requests the Secretariat to continue providing capacity-building and training activities to support parties; and
- requests the Secretariat to evaluate the effectiveness of its strategy to increase the rate of submission of national reports.

Effectiveness Evaluation: Pursuant to Article 16 of the SC, the effectiveness evaluation assesses whether the SC is an effective tool to protect human health and the environment from POPs. On [2 May](#), the second effectiveness evaluation and the global monitoring report ([POPS/COP.11/19](#), [Add.1](#), [20](#), [Add.1](#), INF/36-39) were introduced to plenary and discussed. The report found that the SC be an effective and dynamic framework to regulate POPs that is contributing to the observed decreased concentrations of POPs in people and the planet.

The EU suggested increasing the visibility of the report's findings. El Salvador, for GRULAC, Sierra Leone, for the AFRICAN REGION, PAKISTAN, URUGUAY, ZAMBIA, and other developing countries called for technical assistance and financial resources to support the implementation of the global monitoring plan.

The COP then adopted the decision on the effectiveness evaluation with the amendments suggested by the EU, submitted in CRP.4, and the decision on the global monitoring programme, pending confirmation from the budget group.

Final Decisions: In its final decisions ([POPS/COP.11/20](#) and CRP.4), the COP, *inter alia*, requests:

- the Secretariat to visualize the achievements of the Convention and other findings by making the second evaluation report broadly available, including a short summary of the report;
- the Secretariat to continue supporting training and capacity-building activities to assist parties, in particular developing country parties and parties with economies in transition, in implementing the global monitoring plan for subsequent effectiveness evaluations; and
- the regional organization groups and the global coordination group to continue implementing the global monitoring plan according to the revised terms of reference and mandate.

Compliance: On [2 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the document related to the SC compliance mechanism ([POPS/COP.11/21](#)). Many delegates voiced support for establishing a compliance mechanism, with several noting that they had been waiting since 2004. The SC compliance mechanism discussions continued in a contact group, co-chaired by Tuulia Toikka (Finland) and Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana), which met throughout the meeting.

In the contact group, countries worked through the bracketed text from previous years and only re-opened agreed text if it would help them toward agreement. Some of the primary sticking points were on whether to reference Articles 12 and 13 (technical assistance and financial resources) in the objective of the committee and the scope of the Committee's trigger review. Countries also debated whether to have a Secretariat trigger. There was substantial discussion on the measures that the Committee could recommend to the COP and the actions that the COP could take. Some developing countries strongly preferred only facilitative measures and actions. The last debate was on the decision-making procedures for the Committee. With further consultations, the contact group cleared the decision to applause.

On [11 May](#), the COP adopted the compliance mechanism. Gaveling twice during the historical moment, SC COP President Gardiner observed that the decision puts in place the only outstanding mechanism required by the Convention to support countries in meeting their obligations.

BRS Executive Secretary Payet reflected on the long history of the decision and lauded the respective Presidents, Co-Chairs, sponsors, supporters, and negotiators who contributed to this success over time. He said: "You have shown the world that you are committed and want to address the issue of POPs on our planet."

Final Decision: In the final decision (CRP.15), the SC COP adopts the compliance procedures and institutional mechanisms under Article 17 of the Stockholm Convention, as set out in the annex.

Adoption of the Report

On 5 May, the SC COP adopted its report (POPS/COP.11/L.1/Add.1).

Closure of the Meeting

On 12 May, Ghana, on behalf of the AFRICAN REGION, thanked colleagues for the collaborative spirit during the meeting of the COPs. He expressed gratitude for the GEF, noting increased funding to the chemicals and wastes cluster and urged all parties to make the compliance mechanism under the SC fully operational.

Armenia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, applauded major successes, including adoption of the SC compliance mechanism, listing chemicals under the SC and RC, and progress achieved on e-waste technical guidelines. He expressed his concerns about unsuccessful listing of chemicals under the RC and effectiveness of the RC, hoping that it will be possible to take steps to strengthen implementation in the future.

Pakistan, for the ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, welcomed decisions taken at this COP, including on the technical guidelines for POPs waste, the technical guidelines on plastic wastes, and the SC compliance mechanism.

The EU applauded the successful adoption of the SC compliance mechanism "after 15 years of discussion," noting a "true spirit of compromise." She pointed to the inability to list new chemicals under the RC, expressing regret that a proposal to move out of the

impasse did not find sufficient support, reinstating her willingness to resolve the issue.

El Salvador, on behalf of GRULAC, was delighted with the progress made in the Stockholm Convention and Basel Convention. He expressed his concerns that some draft decisions and guidelines were not adopted but assured everyone of GRULAC's commitment to the implementation of the BRS Conventions.

IPEN shared his appreciation for the progress made in this COP and noted that reform of the Rotterdam Convention is needed to achieve its objectives.

Several delegations thanked various retiring members of the "BRS family" for their contributions to the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

INDONESIA, on behalf of CHINA, IRAN, GUATEMALA, SAUDI ARABIA, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, expressed his disappointment in the proposed process for the amendment of the Rotterdam Convention. He pointed out that the incident was very serious and must not happen again.

BC President Reginald Hernaes expressed his gratitude to everyone and believed that there will always be a resolution to matters. He gavelled the BC COP to a close at 10:50 pm.

RC President Ana Berejiani expressed her gratitude to everyone and welcomed the decisions made under the three conventions. She gavelled the RC COP to a close at 10:52 pm.

SC President Keima Gardiner stated that it was an honor to have served as SC President for the past 11 months and enumerated the achievements in the SC COP. She gavelled the SC COP to a close at 10:57 pm.

A Brief Analysis of the Meetings

Life is a perpetual instruction in cause and effect – Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions exist because scientists, activists, and developing countries raised alarms about the effects of dangerous chemicals and wastes. Decades on, the question has changed, and now we are asking what effect the treaties have on the problems they are designed to solve. We are facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Several planetary boundaries have been crossed, including for "novel entities," such as chemical pollution. The picture doesn't seem promising.

For many, this growing gap between global action and environmental degradation signals an efficacy problem. The rules do not have the intended effect. At the 2023 meeting of the Conferences of the Parties (COP), the BRS Conventions each tackled this effectiveness question. Despite meeting together, each Convention arrived at a different answer. This brief analysis explores how each Convention strove, in its own way, to bolster its effectiveness to realize better outcomes to protect health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes.

Effectiveness as Functioning

Delegates tackled the "what is effectiveness" question head on under the Rotterdam Convention (RC). The treaty has long been plagued by the COP's inability to list chemicals recommended by its scientific subsidiary body, the Chemical Review Committee. This year, only one chemical was listed of the seven proposed. There are now six substances that parties consider at every meeting and—because a handful of parties object—countries cannot reach

consensus to place the chemicals in Annex III. And consensus is required in the RC, unlike its sister Conventions. As a result, these chemicals are not part of the RC's prior informed consent (PIC) procedure, which many developing countries stress denies them information of the risks and management options.

Because of the inability to add a growing list of chemicals to Annex III, for years many have viewed the RC as ineffective. Some delegations set their sights squarely on this COP to bring the RC into line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions that are seen as more effective. One delegate referred to the RC as "the poor cousin" of the BRS Conventions; several said that their governments paid little attention to it before the TripleCOPs started a decade ago. Shortly after, there were initiatives explicitly aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Convention. There have been two intersessional meetings, initiatives, and (so far failed) proposals to allow voting on listing or to add a financial mechanism. But for many, these efforts are insufficient.

A bold proposal was brought to this meeting to amend the Convention to add a new Annex VIII. This Annex would be a home for chemicals that parties cannot agree by consensus to list in Annex III. Voting would be permitted for this new Annex. The PIC procedure would apply only among countries that are party to it. The 14 proponents, representing countries from all regions, argued it was "an additional tool" to promote the shared responsibility for safe trade in chemicals. For them, this move was necessary. Failure to list, the logic went, is a failure to be effective.

Lines were quickly and deeply drawn between supporters and opponents. Those in between had questions. How would this affect countries that do not ratify the new Annex? Can an Annex VIII chemical later be listed in Annex III? And, most often, isn't there another way? The answer to this last question was "We've tried everything else, for a decade." The central problem, they argued, is a few countries blocking listing decisions. This would overcome that obstacle.

Opponents repeatedly raised procedural issues and questioned the legality of the proposal. They argued the treaty is effective. They cited the 54 chemicals listed in Annex III. This argument ignores, (and one delegate suggested purposively so), that the Convention was adopted with 27 chemicals already in Annex III. A further 12 were added in 2006 by the interim CRC, completing the Mandatory PIC List. Over the past 17 years, the RC has listed 15 chemicals, mostly industrial chemicals, with a few pesticides mixed in.

For the opponents, the RC is perhaps too effective, with repercussions beyond simply providing information. They cited private certification schemes, such as highly hazardous pesticide classifications or the Better Cotton Initiative, that, among other criteria, cite an RC listing as a sign that the chemical is dangerous and should be managed. They also intimated that an RC listing raises the price or reduces the availability of a chemical. The EU repeatedly referred to its study of four pesticides that showed limited, or no impact on price or availability, but this provided little comfort.

The proposal, unsurprising to most, went to a vote. The Russian Federation, supported by others, appealed whether or not the motion to vote was procedurally sound. Both of these appeals went to a secret ballot. Finally, there was a vote on the amendment itself. The proponents lost, by seven votes, capturing 70% of those present and voting and falling short of the 75% majority necessary. By losing the vote, those opposed to the amendment won the day. One

NGO left the room angry, wearing her "Right to Know" pin and "disgusted that industry would cheer so shamelessly." The six-hour voting episode was as divisive as the debate had been throughout the meeting.

This leaves the RC with some intersessional information gathering and analysis on the effects of listing chemicals, and many questions. How can the RC overcome the blockages and list chemicals? Is listing all there is to effectiveness, or just a first step? Even if listed, countries sometimes fail to provide their import responses for chemicals and the database of such cases continues to grow. How can the RC live up to its goal to provide information to countries to manage imported chemicals, and continue to adapt in light of new concerns about chemicals?

Effectiveness as Responding

The Basel Convention (BC) took up the questions of effectively providing information and responding to new issues, through work on its PIC procedure and on modern waste streams that increasingly litter lands and seas.

BC parties took a careful look at their Convention's PIC procedure for the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes. They adopted two decisions, each taking steps toward making the PIC procedure work better in practice. Parties agreed to a new intersessional process that will consider how to improve the PIC procedure, gathering information from countries, operators, and others as a first step. Countries recognized "this might be a long road," but, as one put it, "We have to get this right, it's the central mechanism of the Convention."

Parties also agreed on a way forward to modernize the implementation of the PIC procedure. Unlike the RC's PIC procedure, which is chemical-by-chemical, Basel's is shipment-by-shipment. Import responses, sometimes still on paper, are required by importing countries and transit countries. Bringing the PIC procedure to the digital age could be crucial to improve effective communication among states engaged in the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.

Effectiveness for the BC also means being responsive to modern waste streams that harm human health and the environment. Following recent landmark steps to incorporate plastic wastes and e-waste streams into the Convention's PIC procedure, the COP turned its attention to providing guidance to its parties on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes. Exporters must ensure that wastes will be handled in an environmentally sound manner by the importing country. The technical guidelines help define what environmentally sound management (ESM) is. The guidelines can help countries to build capacity to manage waste in an environmentally and efficient way and develop detailed procedures, waste management plans, or strategies.

The discussions leading to the adoption of the technical guidelines on plastic wastes, however, were more political than technical. With the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution scheduled just two weeks after the BRS COPs, there was a strong desire to finish these guidelines now. For some, it was a way to claim institutional turf. One long-time participant thought this was only appropriate. He worried that plastic waste issues "belonged" to the BC and risked being watered down if negotiated at the INC.

But not everyone agreed. Some delegates came with the intention to return to the fundamental principles underlying what is ESM and how countries should interpret the guidelines, which slowed

and strained the process for reaching agreement. One party insisted on a “bottom-up approach” to plastic pollution, terminology that confused many. Finally, there was agreement that implementation of policies needs to “take into account national resources, capabilities and circumstances, and priorities.”

Similarly, the insistence of a few that chemical recycling should be in the guidelines required lengthy negotiations. There is uncertainty over this new technology. It is not yet widespread and, for many, is largely unproven. Many options were considered to accommodate the few parties that are keen to see chemical recycling included as an ESM technology. They agreed, essentially, to not agree. The adopted guidelines have two placeholders: one in the body of the text and another in the Appendix for the same text on chemical recycling. If in the body, it’s part of ESM; if in the Appendix, it’s less clear. Currently it’s both and neither.

This solution avoided a potential vote, which some thought could create “ripples” at INC-2. They expected the negotiations there to be difficult and didn’t want to start off on the wrong foot. Discussions on the underlying principles of the international response to plastic pollution are to be continued at INC-2. Many delegates stressed the need to constructively cooperate to form this new puzzle piece so it fits into the chemicals and waste cluster.

Effectiveness as Reducing the Threats

While the RC and BC manage global trade flows in chemicals and wastes, respectively, the Stockholm Convention (SC) seeks to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). At this meeting, delegates had a rare treat in global environmental cooperation: evidence their efforts are working.

The Global Monitoring Programme concluded that, in general, concentrations of POPs are declining, in the environment and in people. The report is clear that we’re not out of the woods. These chemicals are toxic and persistent, requiring vigilance and continued action. Still, it’s a strong sign that the SC is working. Delegates agreed to strengthen communications around this. Several seemed baffled why a large-scale comms effort wasn’t already underway, “We may not have the visual, like a closing ozone hole, but we have the message,” said a negotiator.

The SC also listed all of three chemicals that were recommended by its scientific body, the POPs Review Committee (POPRC). There was some tinkering with the specific exemptions for Dechlorane Plus (a flame retardant) and UV-328 (a UV filter used in plastics). Medical devices were added, and the timelines debated. These exemptions will last until 2041, for medical devices, and 2044, for the other exempted uses. Both POPs are used in plastics. Thinking of the call to ban chemical additives to plastics, one veteran pointed out, “We can’t just ban production outright, or planes might burst into flames. We have to manage all this carefully.”

Adding three more chemicals brings the list of POPs under the controls of the SC to 34. The SC COP is clearly effective at listing chemicals and following the scientific advice it is provided. But this efficacy brings new challenges. Throughout the meeting, delegates from developing countries raised concerns about the provision of technical and financial support. Each new chemical, they stressed, brings new obligations and challenges. They must develop new national implementation plans, new inventories, and work out how to handle the wastes. Increasingly, the listed POPs are used in consumer products, from Teflon pans to plastic. For national

regulators often juggling multiple portfolios of work, the SC is becoming more time and resource intensive.

It’s understandable in this context that several developing countries have long resisted a compliance mechanism under the SC. The issue has been on the table since COP1 in 2005. At times, agreement seemed near at hand; other years, SC COP Presidents thought the positions were too intractable and preferred to put the focus elsewhere. At this COP, the mechanism was finally adopted, prompting widespread applause. One of the orchestrators of the agreement likened the process to “boiling a frog;” a few difficult issues were packaged together, and delegates managed to agree. Then, another package linked other issues, and so on, “until they had agreed to the whole thing, maybe before they realized it” he explained. With this agreement, the last mechanism in the SC is in place. Some thought it was “watered down,” because it is purely facilitative. The measures will help countries to comply, they won’t hold them to account or even necessarily publicly share which countries are not in compliance. But for developing countries, this was a red line. As the obligations grow at every COP, they underlined the challenges in keeping up. For one, “it’s a structural issue, not a problem of will.”

The drive to eliminate polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) from equipment and stockpiles is a microcosm of the structural challenges associated with effectively listing new chemicals. For all its successes, SC parties won’t meet their goals to eliminate the use of PCB in equipment by 2025 or to ensure ESM of PCB-containing liquids and equipment contaminated with PCB by 2028. One developing country delegate cited the funding gap from the needs assessment tabled at this meeting. It found that, with average disposal costs of USD 3,316/ton, the projected funding gap for PCB disposal amounts to about USD 1.7 billion. She wondered why, given all the pledged funding for the climate, developed countries can’t come up with such a relatively small amount.

Ever More Effective?

The past two weeks demonstrate there is a strong drive for an effective response to chemicals and wastes challenges, although the definition and demonstration of effectiveness varies. For the next two years, the task of safeguarding, or rebuilding, the effectiveness of the Conventions falls to their subsidiary bodies. The CRC faces a backlog of work on a range of chemicals. The POPRC has been tasked with extra, new areas of work related to labelling articles containing POPs. The BC’s Open-ended Working Group will take forward nearly all the areas of work, from making the PIC procedure efficient in the modern world to tackling new waste issues such as lithium-ion batteries.

Realizing effectiveness, in all its forms, may be a more pressing issue for the BRS Conventions than ever before. There is more evidence of the dangers posed by hazardous chemicals and wastes, and that climate change amplifies these toxic effects. And yet, 2000 new chemicals are placed on the market every year and the World Bank warns that waste volumes will grow 70% by 2050 without urgent action. The BRS Conventions face a tsunami of chemicals and wastes challenges that will test the efficacy of their mechanisms.

There is also a coming enlargement of the chemicals and wastes governance cluster. Hopefully, within two years there will be a plastic pollution treaty and a science-policy panel on chemicals, wastes, and pollution. The BRS Conventions are currently central governance bodies in both areas. Enhancing, maintaining, and, vitally, communicating the effectiveness of the Conventions, may

help the Conventions maintain their key role as “go to” bodies to help protect the planet and people from the hazards faced by chemicals and wastes.

Upcoming Meetings

Plastics Pollution INC 2: The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will continue negotiations with a view to complete the treaty by 2024. The meeting will be preceded by regional consultations on 28 May 2023, at the same venue. **date:** 29 May - 2 June 2023 **location:** Paris, France **www:** unep.org/events/conference/second-session-intergovernmental-negotiating-committee-develop-international

Montreal Protocol OEWG 45: The 45th meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Montreal Protocol will consider reports from the assessment panels and engage in preparatory work for the 35th Meeting of the Parties. **dates:** 3-7 July 2023 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **www:** ozone.unep.org/meetings/45th-meeting-open-ended-working-group-parties

International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) 5: The ICCM will undertake reviews and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), a multi-stakeholder policy platform to promote chemicals safety. **dates:** 25-29 September 2023 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** saicm.org/About/ICCM/tabid/5521/Default.aspx

CRC 19: The Rotterdam Convention’s Chemical Review Committee (CRC) will review notifications of final regulatory action and proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations for potential inclusion in the Rotterdam Convention. **dates:** 3-6 October 2023 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** pic.int

POPRC 19: The Stockholm Convention’s Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) is due to consider the draft risk profile for chlorpyrifos and the draft risk management evaluation for medium-chain chlorinated paraffins and long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids, their salts and related compounds. **dates:** 9-13 October 2023 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** pops.int

Montreal Protocol MOP 35: MOP 35 will discuss issues related to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. **dates:** 23-27 October 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** ozone.unep.org/meetings/thirty-fifth-meeting-parties

Minamata Convention COP5: The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury will review implementation of the convention. **dates:** 30 October – 3 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** mercuryconvention.org/en/meetings/cop5

Plastic Pollution INC 3: The INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will continue negotiations with a view to completing the treaty by 2024. **date:** 13-17 November 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/about-un-environment/inc-plastic-pollution

OEWG 2: The second meeting of the OEWG to establish the science-policy panel for chemicals, waste, and pollution will convene in the last quarter of 2023, if possible. **dates:** TBA **location:** TBA **www:** unep.org/oewg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution

UNEA-6: The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly will convene under the theme “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.” It will be preceded by the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, which will take place from 19-23 February 2024. **dates:** 26 February – 1 March 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly/unea-6

Basel Convention OEWG14: The 14th meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention will review technical guidelines, including for POPs wastes and waste batteries. It will also take up issues related to reviewing the Annexes of the Convention and improving the PIC procedure. **dates:** TBA **location:** TBA **www:** basel.int

Basel COP17 Rotterdam COP12 and Stockholm COP12: The next TripleCOP will address the listing of chemicals under the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as well as technical guidelines for the sound management of wastes under the Basel Convention. Technical and financial support, among other issues, will also be addressed. **dates:** 28 April – 9 May 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** brsmeas.org

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

BAT	Best available technique
BC	Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
BEP	Best environmental practice
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRC	Chemical Review Committee
CRP	Conference room paper
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
ENFORCE	Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic
ESM	Environmentally sound management
e-waste	Electronic and electrical waste
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
ICC	Implementation and Compliance Committee
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPEN	International Pollutants Elimination Network
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OEWG	Open-ended Working Group
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyl
PFOS	Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid
PFOSF	Perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride
PIC	Prior informed consent
POP	Persistent organic pollutant
POPRC	POPs Review Committee
RC	Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
SC	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
SIWG	Small intersessional working group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme