

BRS Conventions COPs Highlights: Tuesday, 29 April 2025

The Stockholm Convention (SC) was the day's focus, from listing new persistent organic pollutants (POPs) to addressing financial support to meet the Convention's growing obligations. The Basel Convention (BC) discussions focused on the amendments to Annex IV (disposal operations) and the draft technical guidelines on waste lead-acid batteries. The [meeting documents](#) can be found on the BRS website.

Joint Issues

Venue and date of the next COPs: The COP considered Panama's offer to host the next TripleCOP in Panama City in 2027. Mexico, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), CUBA, the EU, CHAD, ETHIOPIA, and INDONESIA supported Panama's proposal.

Responding to a concern raised by CHAD, PANAMA assured delegates that their government would facilitate obtaining visas.

Programmes of work and budget: The Secretariat presented relevant documents, including a combined proposal (CHW.17/27; RC/COP.12/26; POPS/COP.12/29), proposed operational budgets for the two funding scenarios (CHW.17/INF/69/Rev.1; RC/COP.12/INF/39/Rev.1; POPS/COP.12/INF/58/Rev.1) and programmes of work activity fact sheets (CHW.17/INF/70; RC/COP.12/INF/40; POPS/COP.12/INF/59).

SWITZERLAND, the EU, and JAPAN expressed concern that neither the nominal zero growth scenario nor the Executive Secretary's scenario is in line with previous practices. SWITZERLAND urged harnessing synergies to avoid duplication of efforts, and the EU reiterated that the budget needs to appropriately cover all bodies and aspects of the Conventions, including scientific bodies and compliance committees.

BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA, CHINA, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION expressed concern over proposed budget cuts, especially on interpretation at the POPs Review Committee (POPRC) and translation of BC technical guidelines.

Isabell Mayr (Canada) and Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez (Chile) will co-chair the contact group.

Basel Convention

Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance of the Basel Convention: The Secretariat presented the relevant documents (UNEP/CHW.17/12/Rev.1 and UNEP/CHW.17/12/Add.1).

Jason Dunn (Australia), Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC) Chair, presented results of the ICC's work, including on the 13 submissions pertaining to national reporting and legislation and general issues on implementation and compliance, as well as on improved reporting rates. He also outlined key elements of the proposed draft decision, including on issuing a cautionary statement in relation to implementation by Togo, improving national reporting, combatting illegal traffic, and approving ICC work programme for 2026-2027.

The BC COP President suspended consideration of the item, informing the COP that it would resume in the morning on Friday, May 2.

Stockholm Convention

Listing of Chemicals in Annexes A, B, and/or C: Medium-chain chlorinated paraffins: The Secretariat introduced the POPRC's recommendation to list chlorinated paraffins with carbon chain lengths in the range C14-17 and chlorination levels at or exceeding 45 per cent chlorine by weight in Annex A (POPS/COP.12/13).

The UK, MALDIVES, BELARUS, THAILAND, BOTSWANA, VENEZUELA, NEW ZEALAND, and NIGERIA supported the proposal with its specific exemptions as presented. SERBIA, BRAZIL and NORWAY supported the proposal but called for further discussion in a contact group, with NORWAY emphasizing the complexity of this work for POPRC, particularly on chemical identity.

While agreeing with POPRC's conclusions, the EU reiterated the importance of addressing all chlorinated paraffins and avoiding complications from the ban, noting they would propose additional exemptions.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION questioned the criteria for proposing this listing and called for further assessment in line with its risk profile and consideration of technical capacities and alternatives. SINGAPORE, CHINA and the US pointed to difficulties in identifying parts and components, given these chemicals' widespread use and the complexity of supply chains. CHINA also asked questions regarding chemical identity. INDIA expressed concern about the lack of affordable alternatives and said it would need exemptions.

SWITZERLAND pointed to POPRC's comprehensive analysis and supported the listing as presented, but recognized that time-limited and well-defined exemptions might be needed to allow for transition.

ARGENTINA underscored cooperation with the World Customs Organization to address customs tariffs, especially for other, non-pesticide uses.

INTERNATIONAL POLLUTION ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) urged listing the POP with a comprehensive chemical identity and no exemptions.

The issue was mandated to the SC Listing contact group.

Long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs), their salts, and related compounds: The Secretariat introduced the POPRC recommendation to list LC-PCFAs, their salts, and related compounds in Annex A.

The UK, the EU, SERBIA, CANADA, PAKISTAN, SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, MOLDOVA, and BENIN supported listing LC-PFCAs with the specific exemptions recommended by POPRC.

The EU stressed the need to avoid substituting LC-PFCAs with other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION opposed the listing, arguing it is “necessary to carry out further scientific research to reach a safer alternative.”

IPEN reported that LC-PFCAs have been detected on every continent, do not degrade, and pass through the placenta. They warned that “continued use will escalate contamination,” and urged that the decision specify that LC-PFCAs should not be replaced by other PFAS.

The INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL, concerned about the high prevalence of LC-PFCAs in Inuit populations, supported the listing of LC-PFCAs without any exemptions.

UV-328: ETHIOPIA introduced its proposal (CRP.1) to amend the listing for UV-328 in Annex A by adding a 5-year specific exemption for the aerospace sector regarding adhesives and water-seal tape.

SWITZERLAND reminded that alternatives for these uses had been identified and the quantities involved are minimal. The EU stressed that the exemption’s duration should be as short as possible.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, SOUTH AFRICA, and BRAZIL supported further discussion, but expressed concern about the precedent the proposal could set. The UK acknowledged the complexity of global supply chains and the late information received from global industry stakeholders. CHILE requested delegates to “work in a pragmatic manner without overlooking the legalities of the process,” underscoring that countries need to adapt to a “constantly evolving reality.”

COLOMBIA, KYRGYZSTAN, and MEXICO opposed the amendment. TAJIKISTAN stressed that granting the exemption could create risks for developing countries with limited capacities to identify UV-328 in their environment. COLOMBIA warned that the proposed exemption could counter the SC’s goal to protect human health and the environment.

IPEN argued that the amendment would “jeopardize the integrity” of the SC, creating a “dangerous precedent” and disadvantaging companies and countries that have already phased out UV-328.

The COP could not agree on the contact group’s mandate and will revisit the issue on 30 April.

POPRC: The Secretariat introduced the developments for action by the COP (POPS/COP.12/11, INF/6/Rev.1), and report on options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes (INF/26).

Peter Dawson, POPRC Chair, reported on POPRC’s work to prepare a draft risk profile of polybrominated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans and mixed polybrominated/chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans, as nominated by Switzerland.

He also reported on POPRC’s other technical work, including on:

- indicative lists of substances covered by the listing of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds, as well as perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), its salts and PFHxS-related compounds;
- options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes;
- the evaluation and review of brominated diphenyl ethers (BDEs) listed in Annex A; and
- long-range environmental transport (LRET).

He relayed members’ identified needs for interpretation and support for effective participation.

The UK and NORWAY welcomed further work on options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes, with the UK highlighting a possible globally harmonized digital database for chemicals. KENYA drew attention to work on LRET, while CHINA underscored socioeconomic and other criteria in Annex F must be thoroughly considered.

The COP adopted the draft decision with an amendment by the EU on the election of the POPRC Chair at SC COP-13, pending confirmation from the budget group.

Effectiveness Evaluation: The Secretariat introduced the third evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention and the Global Monitoring Plan (POPS/COP.12/20 and 21).

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, the EU, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, and INDIA supported the draft decision. The EU and INDIA welcomed the interactive online version of the report for wide dissemination. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA underscored cooperation with the Minamata Convention.

UNEP elaborated on its support to the Global Monitoring Plan, which includes work in 54 countries, noting this is the first consolidated effort to carry out POPs monitoring simultaneously.

The COP adopted the decision.

Financial Resources: The Secretariat introduced the documents on the SC Financial Mechanism (POPS/COP.12/17, INF/32-39), and mobilization of resources from non-state actors (CHW.17/19, INF/52-53; RC/COP.12/19, INF/23-24; POPS/COP.12/18, INF/40-41). They highlighted the estimated USD 18,332 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding required for all persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in 2026-2030.

The GEF Secretariat presented its report (POPS/COP.12/17, Annex I), highlighting that the GEF-8 replenishment allocated USD 413 million of its USD 800 million chemicals and waste budget to support the SC. They reported that GEF support reached 35 countries, including nine least developed countries.

BELARUS, BRAZIL, MALDIVES, BANGLADESH, CHINA, and NAMIBIA thanked the GEF for supporting PCB elimination and national inventories.

BELARUS, TUNISIA, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, SOUTH AFRICA, ETHIOPIA, LIBERIA, BURUNDI, INDIA, CHINA, PAKISTAN, and NAMIBIA called for increased funding to support developing countries in phasing out hazardous chemicals. SRI LANKA emphasized the need for substantive infrastructure investment in developing countries.

Ghana, for the AFRICAN REGION, introduced a conference room paper (CRP) proposing the development of a non-state actor resource mobilization strategy to complement traditional funding mechanisms. BRAZIL argued that private and philanthropic funding may complement but should not replace grant-based public financial flows. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored that funding and resources from non-governmental entities must be provided in strict compliance with the Convention.

BANGLADESH stressed target 7 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on “reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half” by 2030. They urged the GEF to increase grants for the BRS Conventions and other agreements with pesticide-related objectives.

The IPEN noted the substantial funding needs for the 2026-2030 period, including to address newly listed chemicals.

The ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (ESDO) argued that the SC financial mechanism should include support for research, technical assistance, monitoring, and reporting.

The COP established a financial resources contact group, co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia) and Toks Akinseye (the UK).

Compliance: The Secretariat presented the document on procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Stockholm Convention (UNEP/POPS/COP.12/22).

BRAZIL supported the work programme for 2026-2027 as presented and proposed estimating the costs of the full implementation of the SC for a “realistic” understanding of needs. The EU and TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO also supported the draft decision. SWITZERLAND stressed building on the experience of Compliance Committees.

Noting concern with PCB elimination deadlines, KAZAKHSTAN suggested consideration of extensions in this regard.

Sonja Dünnwald (Germany) and Keima Gardiner (Trinidad and Tobago) will co-chair the contact group.

Rotterdam Convention

Financial resources: The Secretariat presented relevant documents on the mobilization of resources from non-state actors and possible development of a strategy (CHW.17/19, INF/52; RC/COP.12/19, INF/23; POPS/COP.12/18, INF/40). UNEP presented a report on implementing the special programme (CHW.17/INF/53; RC/COP.12/INF/24; POPS/COP.12/INF/41).

ZAMBIA called on all parties to support the African Region's CRP on resource mobilization from non-state actors, citing the need to explore alternative sources of finance in light of dwindling public resources.

SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, and CHILE thanked the Secretariat for the report and African Region for the CRP, looking forward to the contact group discussions. INDIA, echoed by IRAN, expressed concern that resource mobilization from non-state actors should not dilute the responsibilities of developed countries in providing financial resources.

PAKISTAN, INDIA, and NEPAL reported on special program activities. NEPAL called for adequate technical and capacity-building support, technology transfer, and financial resources.

RC COP President suggested referring the CRP to the contact group on financial resources for further consideration.

Compliance: The Secretariat presented the report on procedures and mechanisms on compliance (RC/COP.12/17). They reported that the COP is to elect seven new members of the Compliance Committee and approve a new programme of work. Osvaldo Álvarez-Péres (Chile), Chair of the Compliance Committee, reported that the Committee has successfully dealt with its first submission and completed recommended activities on systemic issues in compliance with areas for further technical support identified.

The RC COP President suspended consideration of the item and informed the COP that it would resume on Monday, May 4.

Contact Groups

SC Listing: The morning contact group, co-chaired by Lamin Jaiteh (the Gambia) and Timo Seppälä (Finland), focused on chlorpyrifos. The group attempted to reduce the list of 14 specific exemptions for agricultural use in the draft decision, which included 11 new exemptions in addition to the ones proposed by POPRC. The new exemptions include some for particular crop pests in cotton, eggplant, sugarcane, wheat, barley, teff, maize and sorghum, sugar beet, chickpea, cabbage, and onion, as well as control of locusts and leaf-cutting ants.

After considering chemical alternatives to the exemptions identified by POPRC, the parties proposing specific exemptions explained the reasons for their proposals and why alternatives were found lacking. In response, other parties pointed out that countries with similar agricultural conditions had successfully banned chlorpyrifos or are using alternatives for those crops. Several expressed concern with the overly long and broadly defined list of exemptions in light of the harmful impacts of POPs and the existence of alternatives.

The contact group reconvened in the evening to address the MCCPs listing.

BC Technical Matters: The contact group, co-chaired by Nawaf Bilasi (Saudi Arabia) and Martien Janssen (the Netherlands), focused on the draft technical guidelines for waste lead-acid batteries to collect views and inform the future work of the small intersessional working group (SIWG).

To guide the SIWG, several highlighted the need to clarify how to inform national legislation since these batteries could arrive in

a country on their own, as part of e-waste, or within end-of-life vehicles. Some preferred focusing only on end-of-life vehicles, while others saw value in highlighting that these batteries could be part of e-waste to support safe management. After a group of countries opposed that national inventories of these batteries could include POPs wastes, the issue was left for the SIWG.

Some called for the Co-Chairs to request more time to finish a complete read-through of the document, but not at the expense of time allotted for other technical guidelines.

BC Legal Matters: Co-chaired by Perine Nkosi Kasonde (Zambia) and Jason Dunn (Australia), this contact group discussion focused on final disposal operations in Annex IV.

Turning to open burning, delegates discussed whether to include operations that are not environmentally sound management (ESM). Others said Annex IV should include all disposal operations, even the non-ESM operations, because it would bring them under the Convention's control. There was general agreement on this principle.

Views varied on whether open burning should be its own disposal operation or included as an example of thermal treatment. Arguments to include open burning as a stand-alone operation included its prevalence as an activity, including for textile and plastic wastes, and that exporters could prosecute shipments destined for open burning as illegal traffic. Others worried that the standalone option could be misinterpreted as legitimizing the operation as an acceptable practice.

Financial Resources: Co-Chair Toks Akinseye (the UK) proposed to start with the draft decision on the financial mechanism, contained in paragraph 12 of UNEP/POPS/COP.12/17, and then move to the CRP on resource mobilization from non-state actors submitted by the African Region. Delegates then completed the first read of the draft decision on recommendations for the financial mechanism, with many edits introduced throughout the text to better reflect differentiated responsibilities. In particular, some delegates expressed worry that initial language on the developing parties' contributions and private sector and financial institutions dilutes the responsibilities of developed parties in providing financial resources.

On the CRP, a group of countries opposed its consideration, saying documents should be published six weeks before the meeting. The CRP proponents clarified that the proper process for CRP submissions was followed, and that this proposal is not in any way related to one on plastics tax under consideration in the plastics treaty negotiations. The contact group continued work on the draft decision on the financial mechanism.

In the Corridors

"Pragmatism" seemed the watchword of the day. Amending Annex IV of the BC could mean years of outreach and regulatory work to get stakeholders to use the new codes consistently. One wondered if the "pain would be worth it." The SC's chlorpyrifos discussions started with frustrations that the "broadly-defined" specific exemptions amounted to allowing all agricultural use because of the chemical's efficacy.

The watchword was invoked in the SC plenary. UV-328 was introduced, marking a highly anticipated moment for this meeting. It's the first time a party has asked to reopen an agreed listing. Worries of setting damaging precedents abound. Some viewed this as a "too little, too late" request from the industry. An observer worried that industries could ask for more exemptions when eliminating a POP proved "inconvenient." Others had a bit more sympathy, since supply chains are complex and opaque: "there are thousands of parts in a plane, and the companies making those parts rarely share their chemical formulas," one expert opined. In a side event, a message rang clear: "We need high-quality development and we need high-quality protection." In other words, pragmatism and ambition can go hand-in-hand.

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