

BRS Conventions COPs Highlights: Thursday, 1 May 2025

Delegates heard back from the ministers' roundtable discussions. The Stockholm Convention (SC) discussed all the chemicals related to listing, while the Basel Convention (BC) continued work on technical guidelines and legal matters. The [meeting documents](#) can be found on the BRS website.

High-Level Segment

Ministerial interactive discussions: Moderated by BRS Conventions Executive Secretary, Rolph Payet, discussions started with a report back from the round tables, followed by panel discussions among ministers.

On pollution, ministerial roundtables stressed global solidarity, including support for developing countries through fair trade, capacity building, technology transfer, and finance, including support aligned with climate finance. Others cited robust regulatory frameworks, information sharing, cross-sectoral coordination, and stakeholder engagement as key to addressing legacy and emerging contaminants.

The intersections with other processes, particularly climate and biodiversity, were raised. EL SALVADOR, KYRGYZSTAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, MAURITIUS, and CHINA highlighted the importance of whole-of-government approaches, respect for climate equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and small island states' unique challenges. Other points included the need for legal clarity, challenges with transporting persistent organic pollutants (POPs) for disposal, and the lack of local capacities and unified standards on treatment.

Circularity discussions focused on data needs, such as robust data systems and digital trade platforms. A range of economic measures were mentioned as needing to work in combination, including extended producer responsibility (EPR), landfill taxes, green procurement, and recycled material content requirements. Targeted support for hazardous material recovery and addressing rapidly growing waste streams, such as e-waste, textiles, and batteries, was another focus.

TÜRKIYE and LESOTHO highlighted zero-waste initiatives and upstream measures, such as sorting waste at collection points to ensure recycling. Implementation of the BRS Conventions was seen as beneficial for plastics recycling. BURKINA FASO, SEYCHELLES, GHANA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and GERMANY pointed to, *inter alia*, the importance of youth, endogenous technologies and local materials, whole-life cycle assessment, and knowledge on POPs and hazardous materials.

On means of implementation, ministers mentioned a range of instruments, from unlocking domestic resources through progressive taxation and environmental levies to innovative finance. Harnessing co-benefits and using cross-sectoral funding models, as well as regional cooperation and regional centres, emerged as key themes.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE, BRAZIL, and PAKISTAN stressed the importance of local and national initiatives in the face of dwindling resources, support for research and development, subsidies, financial needs assessments, and multilateral engagement, particularly with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS, SOMALIA, MOROCCO, TAJIKISTAN, PALESTINE, SOUTH AFRICA, ANGOLA, and IRAN brought up the need for better balance between technical

assistance and tangible on-the-ground results, EPR, equitable access to finance, and technology.

In closing remarks, Inger Anderson, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), stressed the need for a "broad-spectrum approach" as opposed to chemical-by-chemical, adding that not managing chemicals "shaves digits off GDP" through losses in health and the environment.

Stockholm Convention

Implementation Plans: The COP continued discussing national implementation plans (NIPs). MALDIVES, SRI LANKA, JORDAN, SEYCHELLES, and BARBADOS reported being in the process of updating their NIPs. They cited numerous challenges, including a lack of national expertise compounded by gaps in data, limited monitoring capacity, and under-resourced infrastructure. Many urged the Secretariat to provide further technical assistance.

BOTSWANA reported that they submitted their updated NIP in April 2025 and thanked the UN Industrial Development Organization for its assistance.

GUYANA explained that their updated NIP is completed and will be submitted soon to the Secretariat.

RAPAL URUGUAY characterized NIPs as the basis for the effective implementation of the SC and lamented that parties are "very slow" in complying with their obligation to update their NIPs. They stressed that these delays lead to a shortage of information on the quantities of POPs produced, imported, exported, and destroyed.

The COP adopted the decision (POPS/COP.12/10/Rev.1) pending confirmation of budgetary implications.

Reporting pursuant to Article 15: The COP considered a draft decision (POPS/COP.12/19) and progress made by the Secretariat in improving the electronic reporting system and revising the national reporting template (INF/74).

The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC stressed that resources are needed to update the electronic reporting system. The EU affirmed its support for all work aimed at facilitating reporting and increasing the quality of reports and supported the proposed decision. SOUTH AFRICA requested Secretariat assistance for reporting on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (ESDO) noted that adapting the reporting format is challenging for many countries and called for periodical capacity-building and training activities. The COP adopted the decision pending confirmation of budgetary implications.

Brominated diphenyl ethers (BDEs): The COP adopted the decision with the addition of two text proposals:

- by the EU, encouraging parties that are registered for specific exemptions not to allow recycling of articles containing BDEs as soon as possible and no later than 2030, to review their continued need for such registration, and to make the resulting information available to the Secretariat to facilitate the evaluation and review;
- by COLOMBIA, encouraging parties to share experiences of managing recycled plastics and wastes containing BDEs, including cost-effective methods suitable for developing countries, and to contribute to capacity-building efforts.

Effectiveness evaluation: The Secretariat introduced the documents, including on the global monitoring plan (GMP) for effectiveness evaluation, a report of the global coordination group

and regional organization groups under the GMP and guidance thereof, and on a UNEP report on activities supporting the GMP (POPS/COP.12/20, 21, INF/42, 43, 73).

The SC took note of the reports and adopted the decisions.

Basel Convention

Implementation and Compliance Committee: The Secretariat introduced the documents (CHW.17/12/Rev.1, Add.1, INF/29-34, 78). The EU, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, and SWITZERLAND welcomed the Committee's work. PAKISTAN called for technical support.

The COP adopted the decision, pending budgetary information.

Contact Groups

SC Listing: The contact group, co-chaired by Lamin Jaiteh (the Gambia) and Timo Seppälä (Finland), met throughout the day and evening.

On Ethiopia's proposal to amend the UV-328 listing to add a specific exemption for water-seal tape and polyurethane and polyamide adhesives for specific aircraft systems for a five-year period, Co-Chair Seppälä recalled the POPs Review Committee (POPRC) was assured that alternatives would be employed for these uses before the listing entered into force. Parties shared that they only recently became aware of problems in implementing alternatives.

Many noted the extremely low quantities involved and that the industry has begun employing alternatives, which some argued would not lead to new UV-328 production. Observing that countries that had not opted out could not accept the aircraft deliveries without being out of compliance with the Convention, several parties reported they had opted out of the UV-328 listing. A party suggested adding an exemption for polyurethane coatings and for repairing the parts cited in the new exemption.

Worries about the implications included disincentivizing industry engagement before listing decisions are adopted and encouraging anti-competitive industry practices. Others said the precedent could undermine the Convention's long-term effectiveness.

Some suggested other options, such as requesting an assessment from POPRC, leveraging the Convention's "articles in use" provision, or not amending the Annex while providing confidence to parties that they will not be considered non-compliant.

Several did not support the paragraph requesting the SC Compliance Committee to refrain from considering parties' compliance for these uses, because the compliance mechanism is facilitative, not punitive. An alternative was tabled to allow parties to continue to use UV-328 for the proposed uses on an interim basis pending the entry into force of the amendment, while also encouraging parties to notify their use on the register of specific exemptions.

On long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs), there was a debate about how to appropriately urge parties to assess alternatives using the information provided by the POPRC, given the risk of using per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as substitutes. Once sorted, the draft decision was finalized.

On chlorpyrifos, new exemptions were requested for: mealybugs, pineapple weevils, and symphylids for pineapple crops; corn bugs, wheat chafers, leaf beetles, aphids, and thrips for wheat; and crucifer flea beetle, turnip sow fly, common pollen beetle, and turnip gall weevil for rapeseed. Some lamented the many exemptions added to this decision. A few questioned the justifications for an exemption, including that chlorpyrifos is not as toxic to bees and therefore could be used on rapeseed. The decision was finalized with these additional exemptions.

On medium-chain chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs), a proposal was offered for the chemical identity that includes both the congeners and the formulas often used by the manufacturers. This was favored by some but opposed by one group.

On MCCPs exemptions, one group observed that parties seem to "be taking a shortcut" when proposing exemptions and rescinded their proposal for an exemption for machinery lubricants. Another group narrowed its proposed exemptions, but also suggested a longer timeframe for the exemption for paints and coatings for ammunition and ammunition marking, until 2041.

BC Technical Matters: Co-chaired by Nawaf Bilasi (Saudi Arabia) and Martien Janssen (the Netherlands), the contact group

focused on the draft technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management (ESM) of used and waste pneumatic tyres. Delegates did not agree to include "used tyres" in the scope of the technical guidelines. The contact group tasked the small intersessional working group (SIWG) with working further on the differentiation between used and waste tyres.

Delegates agreed to include tyre retreading in the technical guidelines but asked the SIWG to: ensure alignment with BC Annex IV (disposal operations); specify which kind of tyres (used or waste) can be retreaded; clarify whether retreading is a waste minimization technique and/or a waste management operation; and define which stages of retreading are considered ESM.

Delegates could not agree to include mentions of "microplastics" in the guidelines, some arguing that scientific evidence is lacking on the issue. They also did not agree to include thermal treatment, including pyrolysis and gasification.

On disposal operations, the contact group tasked the SIWG with ensuring alignment with the review process of BC Annex IV and clarifying that, under the Convention, disposal covers both final disposal and recovery operations.

BC Legal Matters: Co-Chairs Perine Nkosi Kasonde (Zambia) and Jason Dunn (Australia) proposed a second reading of the chapeau text to Annex IV (disposal operations). Among other aspects, it outlines that the Annex covers all disposal operations, regardless of whether they are considered to be ESM. This would be most relevant to open burning. Those in favor and opposed to including these non-ESM operations fell along the same lines as those for and against a standalone disposal operation for open burning.

Financial Resources: Co-chaired by Toks Akinseye (the UK) and David Kapindula (Zambia), the contact group heard that the "small working group" did not manage to clean up or propose new text, but focused rather on understanding different national positions. Discussions revolved around whether to include a reference to differentiation, with some parties insisting on including the text of the SC Article 13 (provision of financial resources). Others pointed out that the decision text in question refers to providing information on the provision of financial resources, not to the actual provision of financial resources, and deleting the text might be a way forward.

On the African Region's conference room paper (CRP) on the strategy for resource mobilization from non-state actors, some parties were ready for a discussion, while others questioned the process of "operationalizing an INF document" which is referenced in the CRP. Proponents explained that the CRP mandates the Secretariat to continue this work and ensure intersessional work for consideration at the next COP. The Secretariat presented the report on the possible development of a non-state actor resource mobilization strategy (CHW.17/INF/52, RC/COP.12/INF/23, POPS/COP.12/INF/40) and responded to questions.

The small working group was mandated to find agreement on the way forward with the draft decision on the financial mechanism and encouraged bilateral consultations on the CRP.

In the Corridors

With only one day left planned for the conclusion of the SC COP, three truths became evident. One: the SC will likely stretch into the second week. Two: the UV-328 amendment proposal represents a minuscule amount of POPs releases, "9 grams for a Boeing 737." Thirty-six countries opted out of the UV-328 listing entirely, worried that accepting an aircraft with UV-328 would put them in breach of the Convention. They can keep using this POP in all applications. Others follow the listing, not seeing 9 grams as a significant enough breach to opt out.

The third truth: UV-328 is about the precedent. One delegate asked, "Is the damage to the Convention worth doing for this small quantity?" to which another replied, "It upholds the Convention, because parties shouldn't opt out for two tiny uses." One concern with the precedent is the signal it sends to industry.

This concern echoed in other listing discussions. For chlorpyrifos, parties kept coming up with exemptions even after the decision was finalized. These new exemptions were added to a list much longer than POPRC recommended. An observer asked, "What is the incentive for industry to go to POPRC when they can just come here and avoid scientific scrutiny?" For a "despondent," POPRC member, "it felt like our work is being devalued."