



ROTTERDAM COP-1 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2004

Delegates met in a high-level segment in the morning and afternoon to hear statements from ministers and heads of delegation. In the afternoon, the Committee of the Whole (COW) met to finalize its work and adopt its report.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

COP-1 President Philippe Roch (Switzerland) opened the high-level segment.

Moritz Leuenberger, Swiss Federal Councillor in charge of the Federal Department of Transport, Communications and Energy, recalled the commitment of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to ensure the Rotterdam Convention's entry into force.

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, noted that the Rotterdam Convention's entry into force was not only an important step forward for the chemicals agenda, but also for the overall agenda of sustainable development.

Louise Fresco, FAO Assistant Director-General, called for improved coordination among ministries at the national level. She noted that the management of chemicals was by definition a trans-boundary issue, and underlined the continued need for donor countries to keep chemicals management high on their development agendas.

LOCATION OF THE SECRETARIAT: Maria Teriosina (Lithuania) chaired the discussion on location of the Secretariat, and drew attention to the relevant documents (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/23, 32, INF/5, INF/5/Add.1, INF/6, INF/6/Add.1, and INF/6/Add.2).

The offer by Germany to host the Secretariat in Bonn was presented by: Jürgen Trittin, Federal Minister of Environment, Nature, Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany; and Bärbel Dieckmann, Mayor of Bonn.

The offer by Switzerland and Italy to host the Secretariat in Geneva and Rome was presented by: Leuenberger; Ambassador Paolo Bruni, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN in Geneva; Mariapia Garavaglia, Deputy Mayor of Rome; and Ambassador Beat Nobs, Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape.

Delegates agreed that voting would be held between 10:15 am and 12:15 pm on Friday, in parallel with the high level segment.

REPORT ON THE CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO COP-1: Dessaigne Mesfin, Chair of the Credentials Committee (Ethiopia), submitted the report on credentials of

representatives, noting that a second report would be submitted on Friday morning, allowing time for more Parties to present their original credentials. The COP adopted the first report.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS: In the afternoon, delegates heard statements from ministers and heads of delegations. Key themes addressed in these statements are summarized below.

Significance of the entry into force of the Rotterdam

Convention: GUINEA and BENIN recalled that the Rotterdam Convention was the product of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 adopted in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC), CZECH REPUBLIC and SOUTH AFRICA said the Rotterdam Convention's entry into force met the target of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and took it as an encouraging sign that other WSSD targets will be met on schedule.

SOUTH AFRICA stated the Convention was the first line of defense for chemicals management, and highlighted its potential contribution to reducing poverty, death and disease caused by chemicals mismanagement. SOUTH AFRICA, with LIBYA, expressed hope that the Convention would address the problem of stockpiles of obsolete chemicals. GUINEA said the Convention would contribute to reducing threats, promoting safer use and strengthening capacity in chemicals management. JAPAN urged building on the interim PIC Procedure to forge a practical and effective institution.

Technical assistance: TANZANIA and COTE D'IVOIRE highlighted difficulties arising from a lack of legal and administrative frameworks and inadequate resources. Together with SENEGAL, LIBYA and SAMOA, they stressed the need for international collaboration to establish relevant mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs). Nigeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, asked developed countries for assistance, stressing that successful implementation in Africa depends on: the development of a viable financial mechanism; synergies with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions; strengthening cooperation with other international organizations; and technical assessment and capacity building. He underscored various constraints faced by developing country Parties, such as the smuggling of banned chemicals and lack of capacity for conducting risk assessments. ECUADOR called for the transfer of financial and technical assistance.

SAMOA expressed concern that importers will respond to increased control by diverting exports of listed chemicals to developing countries and LDCs where border controls are weak. The UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGA-



NIZATION (UNIDO) expressed the hope that further links between projects related to the Convention and ongoing related UNIDO activities will be developed.

Financial mechanisms: COTE D'IVOIRE, SENEGAL and TOGO stressed the need for a financial mechanism to facilitate the provision of technical assistance and capacity building. SOUTH AFRICA noted with regret that the financial mechanism had not been resolved at COP-1, and expressed hope that the feasibility of a financial mechanism will be considered and reviewed at COP-2.

Synergies between chemicals-related MEAs: TOGO and SAMOA highlighted the need for synergies between the Rotterdam Convention and other chemicals-related MEAs in order to coordinate assistance and allow countries to meet their obligations in a cost-effective manner. The EC highlighted the potential for synergies between the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, and with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). SOUTH AFRICA urged the Secretariat to work closely with the existing structures in Africa, such as the Basel Convention Regional Centers and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

Domestic issues: BENIN, NIGERIA, UKRAINE, ITALY, BULGARIA, TANZANIA and OMAN outlined different aspects of their national legislation and domestic efforts to promote implementation of the Rotterdam Convention and strengthen integrated chemicals management. The UK highlighted the planned launch of new UK policies on international sustainable development in 2005.

The importance of chemicals for economic and social development: BENIN, MALAYSIA, COTE D'IVOIRE and SENEGAL emphasized that, when used properly, chemicals and pesticides play a major role in the social and economic development of countries. GUINEA concurred, but stated that pesticide use is also responsible for major ongoing risks and threats. TANZANIA highlighted the global community's responsibility for addressing the negative effects of chemicals and pesticides on human health and the environment.

The listing of chemicals in Annex III (Chemicals subject to the PIC Procedure): MALAYSIA welcomed the inclusion at COP-1 of 14 additional chemicals and pesticides, stressing that listing does not prevent the international trade of listed chemicals but only imposes an obligation to follow certain procedures. The EC underscored that COP decisions to add additional chemicals to Annex III were of a political nature, and expressed hope that decisions will be taken in line with the objectives of the Convention. UKRAINE stressed the need to take countries' economies and capacities into account, as well as ecology and health concerns. The CZECH REPUBLIC stressed the importance of including all substances that meet the criteria under Annex II (Criteria for listing banned or severely restricted chemicals in Annex III).

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE COW: Chair Maria Celina de Azevedo Rodrigues (Brazil) presented the COW's report to the COP, and noted that budget and financial matters are the only pending issues.

On nominations to the CRC, regional groups announced the countries that will be submitting expert nominations. Experts from Brazil, Ecuador, France, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Libya, Malaysia, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Switzerland, Tanzania, and Thailand will serve an initial term of two years. Experts from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Jamaica, Jordan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, South Africa, Syria, Ukraine, and Uruguay will serve an initial term of four years.

The COW report was adopted by the COP, and the final text of the decisions contained in the report will be presented to the COP on Friday for adoption.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

AMENDMENTS TO ANNEX III: The COW agreed to forward to the COP the revised draft from the legal group (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/5/Rev.1)

NON-COMPLIANCE: The EC introduced its proposal, with Canada, Egypt, Japan, Norway, South Africa, and Switzerland, to convene an open-ended *ad hoc* working group on Article 17 (Non-compliance) immediately prior to COP-2. MALAYSIA supported the EC proposal. AUSTRALIA proposed that the working group be chaired by the Chair of the legal group. The COW agreed to forward this proposal to the COP.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT AND ADOPTION

OF A BUDGET: Senegal, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, introduced a proposal requesting better representation from Africa in the Secretariat (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/CRP.10). The EC asked for clarification on how the procedures of UNEP and FAO would apply to recruitment. Niek van der Graaff, Joint Executive Secretary (FAO), responded that there were administrative rules and procedures at FAO which applied to representation. INDIA called for equitable distribution from all regions in the Secretariat. Brazil, on behalf of the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), and supported by MALAYSIA and NEW ZEALAND, suggested that the submission apply to all developing countries. MOROCCO asked that information be provided showing the representation of regions in the Secretariat. The GAMBIA indicated that it did not support deleting specific references to Africa. CANADA noted that it did not have adequate statistics to verify the underrepresentation of developing countries. JAMAICA, supported by JORDAN, suggested a compromise referring to underrepresentation in developing countries in general, and Africa in particular. Nigeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, supported Jamaica's suggestion. NEW ZEALAND suggested that the document refer to the "undesirability" of an imbalance in regional distribution, rather than the existence of an imbalance. Delegates agreed to the proposal as amended by Jamaica and New Zealand, and forwarded it to the COP.

REPORT OF THE COW: Delegates approved the report of the COW (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/CW/L.1) with amendments to reflect the decisions on Annex III, non-compliance, and activities of the Secretariat, as well as some minor editorial changes.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The corridors were abuzz in anticipation of the vote on the location of the Secretariat, scheduled for Friday morning. While delegates danced around the issue, trying to ascertain how others will be voting without divulging their own positions, some ventured predictions based on delegates' patronage of the candidate cities' snack offerings during coffee breaks. Yet, as German delegates were seen munching on the Genève-Roma chocolates, and Bonn's gummi bears had a following of their own among the Swiss and Italians, other delegates expressed reservations about this method's predictive value.

Whatever the outcome, many remarked that they had greatly enjoyed the wining and dining by the candidate governments over the course of the week. As this "courtship" draws to a close, the only decision remaining is whether the "honeymoon" will be in Geneva and Rome, or in Bonn.