



FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: 2-6 MAY 2005

The first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) convenes today at the Conrad Resort and Casino, Punta del Este, Uruguay. The primary objective of this meeting is to adopt those decisions required by the Convention to be taken at COP-1. These decisions relate to: providing for the evaluation of the continued need for DDT for disease vector control; establishing a review process for entries in the register of specific exemptions; adopting guidance for the financial mechanism; establishing a schedule for reporting; establishing arrangements for monitoring data on POPs; adopting rules of procedure and financial rules; adopting the budget for the Secretariat; and establishing the POPs Review Committee. Other matters scheduled for discussion include: the format for the DDT Register and the Register of specific exemptions; the process for developing guidelines to assist Parties in preventing the formation and release of unintentionally produced POPs; and guidelines on best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP).

The Stockholm Convention entered into force on 17 May 2004. The Convention currently has 98 parties, including 97 states and the European Community.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

During the 1960s and 1970s, the use of chemicals and pesticides in industry and agriculture increased dramatically. In particular, a category of chemicals known as POPs attracted international attention due to a growing body of scientific evidence indicating that exposure to very low doses of POPs can lead to cancer, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development. POPs are chemical substances that persist, bioaccumulate in living organisms, and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment. With further evidence of the long-range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced, and the consequent threats they pose to the environment worldwide, the international community called for urgent global action to reduce and eliminate their release into the environment.

Prior to 1992, international action on chemicals primarily involved developing tools for information exchange and risk assessment, such as the FAO's International Code of Conduct for the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and UNEP's London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in

International Trade. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development adopted Agenda 21. Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, on "Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products," called for the creation of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS). Agenda 21 also called for the establishment of the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) to promote coordination among international organizations involved in implementing Chapter 19.

In March 1995, the UNEP Governing Council (GC) adopted decision 18/32 inviting the IOMC, the IFCS and the International Programme on Chemical Safety to initiate an assessment process regarding a list of 12 POPs. In response, the IFCS convened an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on POPs, which developed a workplan for assessing available information on the chemistry, sources, toxicity, environmental dispersion and socioeconomic impacts of the 12 POPs.

In June 1996, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group convened a meeting of experts in Manila, the Philippines, and concluded that sufficient information existed to demonstrate the need for international action to minimize risks from the 12 POPs, including a global legally binding instrument. The meeting forwarded a recommendation to the UNEP GC and the World Health Assembly (WHA) that immediate international action be taken on the 12 POPs. In February 1997, the UNEP GC adopted decision 19/13C endorsing the conclusions and recommendations of the IFCS. The GC requested that UNEP, together with relevant international organizations, convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) with a mandate to develop, by the end of 2000, an international legally binding instrument for implementing international action, beginning with the list of 12 POPs. Also in February 1997, the second meeting of the IFCS decided that the *Ad Hoc* Working Group would continue to assist in the preparations for the negotiations. In May 1997, the WHA endorsed the recommendations of the IFCS and requested that the World Health Organization (WHO) participate actively in the negotiations.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: The First Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) was held from 29 June to 3 July 1998, in Montreal, Canada. INC-1 requested the Secretariat to prepare a document containing material for possible inclusion in an international legally binding instrument. The second session of the INC was held from 25-29 January 1999, in Nairobi, Kenya, where participants discussed a Secretariat-prepared outline of a convention text. The third session of the INC met from 6-11 September 1999, in Geneva,



Switzerland, with delegates considering the revised draft text. They adopted a procedure establishing a review committee to apply screening criteria and to prepare a risk profile and risk management evaluation for proposed substances as a basis for further negotiation. The fourth session of the INC met from 20-25 March 2000, in Bonn, Germany. Delegates drafted articles on technical assistance and on financial resources and mechanisms, addressed control measures, and made some headway on language on unintentionally produced POPs. The fifth session of the INC met from 4-10 December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa, with delegates concluding negotiations on the convention in the early morning hours of Saturday, 10 December.

CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES ON THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: The Conference of the Plenipotentiaries convened from 22-23 May 2001, in Stockholm, Sweden. During the Diplomatic Conference, delegates adopted: the Stockholm Convention; resolutions adopted by INC-4 and INC-5, addressing interim financial arrangements and issues related to the Basel Convention; resolutions forwarded by the Preparatory Meeting; and the Final Act.

The Stockholm Convention calls for international action on 12 POPs grouped into three categories: 1) pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; 2) industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and 3) unintentionally produced POPs: dioxins and furans. Governments are to promote BAT and BEP for replacing existing POPs while preventing the development of new POPs. Provision has also been made for a procedure identifying additional POPs and the criteria to be considered in doing so.

Key elements of the treaty include: the requirement that developed countries provide new and additional financial resources; control measures to eliminate production and use of intentionally produced POPs, eliminate unintentionally produced POPs, where feasible, and manage and dispose of POPs wastes in an environmentally sound manner; and substitution involving the use of safer chemicals and processes to prevent unintentionally produced POPs. Precaution is operationalized throughout the Stockholm Convention, with specific references in the preamble, the objective and the provision on identifying new POPs.

INC-6: INC-6 met from 17-21 June 2002, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates adopted decisions on: DDT and the Register of specific exemptions; the POPs Review Committee; a clearing-house mechanism; technical assistance; financial resources and mechanisms and the interim financial mechanism; regional and subregional centers for capacity building and technology transfer; effectiveness evaluation; and non-compliance. INC-6 also established an Expert Group on BAT and BEP.

INC-7: The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-7) was held from 14-18 July 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates focused on addressing a number of "housekeeping" issues in preparation for the first COP. Decisions were adopted on, *inter alia*: offers to host the permanent Secretariat; technical assistance; national implementation plans; exempted use; Party reporting; specific exemptions; DDT; interim financial arrangements; a standardized Toolkit for the identification and quantification of dioxin and furan releases; measures to reduce or eliminate releases from stockpiles and wastes; effectiveness evaluation; the budget; and the financial mechanism.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

SECOND SESSION OF THE BAT/BEP EXPERT GROUP: The Second session of the BAT/BEP Expert Group met from 8-12 December 2003, in Villarrica, Chile. Participants

discussed the development of guidelines on BAT and provisional guidance on BEP relevant to the provisions of Article 5 and Annex C of the Stockholm Convention. A contact group met to discuss consideration of alternatives in the application of BAT. Participants also addressed guidelines and guidance for different source categories, such as pulp and paper bleaching, open burning of wastes, thermal processes in the metallurgical industry, smelting of copper cables, cement kilns firing hazardous waste, waste incineration and chemical production.

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION COP-1: The first Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC COP-1) was held from 20-24 September 2004, in Geneva. Immediately preceding PIC COP-1, the eleventh session of the INC for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (INC-11) was held on 18 September 2004, in Geneva. At INC-11, delegates agreed to add tetraethyl lead, tetramethyl lead and parathion to the interim PIC Procedure, but did not reach consensus on the addition of chrysotile asbestos. PIC COP-1 added 14 additional chemicals to Annex III of the Convention, including the three added at INC-11. PIC COP-1 also took decisions on: composition of the PIC regions; financial rules and provisions for the COP, subsidiary bodies, and the Secretariat; establishment of the Chemical Review Committee; cooperation with the World Trade Organization; and settlement of disputes. Delegates also voted to establish the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention jointly in Geneva and Rome.

SAICM PREPCOM-2: The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom2) took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4-8 October 2004. At the session, participants agreed that SAICM should consist of an overarching policy strategy for international chemicals management, a global plan of action, and a high-level declaration. During the meeting, participants discussed elements for the overarching policy strategy, made progress in creating a matrix of possible concrete measures to promote chemical safety, and provided comments on an initial list of elements to be included in the high-level political declaration. The work of the PrepCom will culminate in a final "International Conference on Chemicals Management."

THIRD SESSION OF THE BAT/BEP EXPERT GROUP: The third session of the Stockholm Convention Expert Group on BAT and BEP met from 11-16 October 2004, in Tokyo, Japan. At the meeting, experts discussed the development of guidelines on BAT and provisional guidance on BEP. Topics addressed included consideration of alternatives in the application of BAT, general guidance and guidelines in the application of BAT and BEP, and guidance by source category. The Expert Group agreed to forward the draft guidelines to COP-1.

BASEL CONVENTION COP-7: COP-7 to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was held from 25-29 October 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants engaged in discussions on partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge – the theme of COP-7. A key decision at COP-7 was to apply the terms of the Basel Convention to the dismantling of ships. COP-7 also adopted decisions on: definitions and characteristics of hazardous wastes; technical guidelines; guidance elements for bilateral, multilateral or regional agreements; and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.