



EXCOPS & SIMULTANEOUS COPs HIGHLIGHTS: SUNDAY, 28 APRIL 2013

Basel Convention COP11, Rotterdam Convention COP6, Stockholm Convention COP6, and the second simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the three conventions (ExCOPs2) convened for its first day on Sunday, 28 April 2013. In the morning delegates participated in the opening ceremony of the three ordinary and extraordinary COPs, adopted the ExCOPs agenda, addressed organizational matters, and initiated discussion on enhancing cooperation and collaboration among the conventions. During the afternoon delegates initiated consideration of technical assistance in Simultaneous Sessions of the Ordinary COPs.

EXCOPS2

OPENING OF THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY COPs: Osvaldo Álvarez (Chile), Stockholm Convention (SC) COP President, explained that COP Presidents would speak on behalf of the other Presidents during the extraordinary meeting.

Executive Secretary Jim Willis noted the “positive mojo” in the room following the conclusion of negotiations of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in January. He highlighted the meeting’s theme “Sustainable Synergies,” and said the planned simultaneous ordinary sessions are “innovative and unique” in international environmental governance. Willis also drew attention to new chemicals proposed for listing in the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions, and expressed hope for a decision on chrysotile asbestos.

Clayton Campagnolo, Co-Executive Secretary for the Rotterdam Convention (RC), observed the numerous chemicals to be considered for listing in Annex III of the RC, and highlighted paraquat as the first severely-hazardous pesticide formulation to be considered for listing. Campagnolo also drew attention to the importance of reaching agreement on a compliance mechanism for the RC.

Bakary Kante, UNEP, speaking on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, noted the historic nature of three conventions convening their COPs back-to-back and simultaneously. He also underscored the importance of the agreement on the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Welcoming participants to Geneva, Bruno Oberle (Switzerland), noted the three conventions are functioning well, and expected the ExCOPs2 to further strengthen their cooperation, making the conventions more efficient and effective. Noting that Minamata Convention on Mercury will be adopted and open for signature in October, he expressed hope that its Secretariat will become part of the joint Secretariat.

Franz Perrez (Switzerland), BC COP President, said that the ExCOPs2 would build on the successes of the previous COPs. Magdalena Balicka (Poland), RC COP President, thanked parties for their confidence and trust.

Opening Statements: Jordan, on behalf of the ASIA-PACIFIC region, emphasized that sound management of chemicals and wastes is essential to development, and said decisions should be taken by consensus.

Mexico, on behalf of the GROUP OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES (GRULAC), called for guaranteed financial resources and strengthening of regional centres to support developing countries’ compliance.

Ireland, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), expressed support for the integrated approach to financing of chemicals and wastes and called for, *inter alia*, compliance mechanisms for both the SC and RC, and listing chrysotile asbestos under the RC.

Kenya, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, underscored the importance of regional centres in building capacity for implementation, and called for integration of SAICM and mercury into the chemicals and waste cluster.

The Czech Republic, on behalf of the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN (CEE) group, lauded the opportunity to address cross-cutting issues such as compliance, finance and technical assistance.

ADOPTION OF THE EXCOPS2 AGENDA: SC President Álvarez introduced the agenda for the ExCOPs (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/1 and 1/Add.1). Noting a request from the EU to consider several items in proposed contact groups, the ExCOPs adopted the draft agenda.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Organization of Work: Álvarez introduced and the Joint Secretariat outlined the documents related to the organization of work for ExCOPs2 (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/INF/1/Rev.1, INF/2/Rev.1, INF/3 and INF/4), the BC (UNEP/CHW.11/1/Add.1 and INF/1), the RC (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.6/1/Add.1 and INF/1) and the SC (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/1/Add.1 and INF/1). The Joint Secretariat highlighted, *inter alia*: procedures for adoption of decisions; the high-level ministerial segment; paperless meeting arrangements; and social media tools. He also introduced the launch of a mobile phone application titled “Synergies.” Acknowledging the EU request to consider several items in proposed contact groups, the ExCOPs adopted the organization of work.

ENHANCING COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG THE THREE CONVENTIONS: President Álvarez suggested introducing these items and deferring subsequent discussion to a contact group.

Review of Synergies Arrangements: The Joint Secretariat introduced the documents on: enhancing cooperation and coordination and review of the synergies arrangements (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/2 and Add.1); reports of UNEP and FAO, and the Secretariat on the review of the synergies arrangements (INF/5 and INF/6); and UNEP Governing Council (GC) decision 27/12 on chemicals and waste management (INF/20). On the review process, a representative of the UNEP evaluation office noted that the “immaturity” of the synergies process presented challenges. The Joint Secretariat reported 23 parties submitted questionnaire responses, which indicated that, among other items, the synergies process was progressing towards its objectives. President Álvarez highlighted that the UNEP GC decision invited parties to consider steps to facilitate the possible addition of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to the synergies process.

Proposal for Organization of the Secretariat: Executive Secretary Willis introduced the Joint Secretariat’s proposal for the modification of the organization of the three Secretariats



(UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/2/INF/7 and INF/8); RC Secretariat organization (INF/9); BC COP audit (INF/18); estimated cost savings of synergies (INF/22); and mainstreaming gender (INF/25).

Joint Activities: The Joint Secretariat introduced documents on: joint activities (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/2/Add.4); implementation of joint activities (INF/10); activities undertaken jointly by the Secretariat (INF/13); ratification status (INF/15); potential for collaboration between the POPRC and the CRC (INF/17); and draft guidance on the joint clearinghouse mechanism (INF/19).

On the joint clearinghouse mechanism, the Joint Secretariat noted challenges in raising funds to support activities and explained that the Executive Secretary's budget proposal suggests such funds be considered part of the conventions' trust funds.

Budget for Joint Activities: Executive Secretary Willis outlined the three baseline budgets as starting points for discussion on the 2014-2015 biennium budget, noting that the three 2015 COPs are currently budgeted for separately. The Secretariat introduced relevant documents, including: the combined proposal including joint activities (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/3); the programmes of work and proposed budgets for the biennium 2014-2015 (INF/11); budget activity fact sheets (INF/12); and the status of funding for participation of developing countries and parties with economies in transition in the current meeting (INF/23).

UNEP Consultative Process: The Joint Secretariat introduced a note on the outcome of the UNEP Executive Director's consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/INF/14). Bakary Kante, UNEP DELC expressed gratitude to countries that had provided financial support for the process.

During the afternoon, President Álvarez suggested, and delegates agreed, to establish a budget and synergies contact group, to discuss: synergies; joint activities; measures to further increase cooperation and coordination; the modality of the next meetings of the COPs; the Programme of Work and the budget for joint activities; and the Programmes of Work and budgets for the three conventions. The contact group will be co-chaired by Karel Blaha (Czech Republic) and Gregor Filyk (Canada).

BC COP11

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Parties adopted the BC COP11 agenda (UNEP/CHW.11/1 and 1/Add.1).

RC COP6

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Parties adopted the RC COP6 agenda (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.6/1 and 1/Add.1)

SC COP6

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Parties adopted the SC COP6 agenda (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/1 and 1/Add.1).

SIMULTANEOUS SESSIONS OF THE ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COPS ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RC COP6 President Balicka noted the first simultaneous session of the three COPs would consider: technical assistance and financial resources; national reporting; waste issues related to POPs; and compliance.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The Joint Secretariat introduced the main documents on technical assistance and capacity building (UNEP/CHW.11/15, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.6/15 and UNEP/POPS/COP.6/18).

On technical assistance, JAPAN said activities should consider the needs of developing countries based on information from parties. The EU highlighted the need for efficient, comprehensive and accurate information-gathering. SWITZERLAND noted the proposed harmonized approach for delivery of technical assistance, but said the Secretariat should maintain a primarily "facilitative role" in implementation. Zambia, on behalf of the AFRICAN REGION, and supported by the PHILIPPINES, noted regional challenges with webinars owing to timing, connectivity and language barriers. COSTA RICA lauded tools such as webinars in capacity building, and requested more webinars in Spanish. INDIA pointed to the importance of technology transfers, technical assistance, and financial resources.

EGYPT called for technical assistance to analyze new POPs. JORDAN suggested capacity building for e-waste and nanotechnology projects. LIBERIA called for the capacities of focal points to be enhanced technically and financially.

NIGERIA called for funding for National Implementation Plan (NIP) development, with the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO noting many activities have not been implemented due to a lack of technical and financial assistance. CÔTE D'IVOIRE called for assistance in raising awareness on e-waste. PAKISTAN stressed the need for control of illegal traffic of hazardous wastes. ALGERIA suggested that programmes like the PCB elimination network be expanded to all kinds of wastes.

On regional centres, President Balicka introduced general discussion on the BC and SC regional centres (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/19 and 19/Add.1, UNEP/CHW.11/5 and 5/Add.1). The Secretariat introduced the documents on BC regional and coordinating centres (UNEP/CHW.11/5), SC regional and sub-regional centres for capacity building and transfer of technology (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/19 and Add.1), and criteria and methodology on evaluation of the performance of the regional centres (UNEP/CHW.11/5/Add.1).

CHINA expressed concern that centres hosted by developing countries have become the main actors providing technical assistance. BRAZIL and VENEZUELA supported China, stressing that the ability of regional centres to meet the specialized needs of each convention should not be compromised.

NIGER, KENYA, KUWAIT, COLOMBIA, LIBYA, PANAMA and DJIBOUTI noted the need to strengthen capacities of regional centres. ARGENTINA called for cost savings from the synergies process to be transferred to technical assistance for capacity building and strengthening of regional centres.

President Balicka suggested continuing discussions in a contact group, which would be established later.

MEXICO underscored the need to evaluate the efficiency and resource availability of regional centres. The EU suggested extending the mandates of current centres for only two years, to allow all centres to be evaluated concurrently. EGYPT urged that no new regional centres be established until a standard has been developed for the creation of new centres and evaluation of existing centres. KYRGYSTAN asked parties to consider a request from Central Asian countries to establish a sub-regional centre in Central Asia. Parties agreed to further consideration of the issue in a contact group.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: The Joint Secretariat identified 13 documents on this issue and highlighted: needs assessment (UNEP/POPS/COP.6/20); report on the effectiveness of the MOU between the Joint Secretariat and the GEF (POPS/COP.6/21); third review (POPS/COP.6/23 and INF/25); consolidated guidance (POPS/COP.6/24); and further work (POPS/COP.6/25 and INF/27). The GEF Secretariat introduced the GEF report to the SC (POPS/COP.6/22 and INF/24).

The EU noted the resources provided and stated it is "vital" to provide clear guidance on funding priorities.

CHINA underlined a disconnect between legally-binding provisions to eliminate some POPs and to provide financial resources. He expressed concern that GEF discussions on the "graduation" of developing countries could "subvert" the arrangements of the SC.

MEXICO welcomed the GEF reforms but relayed his country's experience that the procedures are "very complex."

SWITZERLAND highlighted the need to provide a clear signal to the GEF as it negotiates the sixth replenishment, and to signal the COP's preference for institutional strengthening, such establishing joint chemical and waste implementation units.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As participants broke new ground with the first ever back-to-back meetings of the three COPs, the second ever ExCOPs, and the novel addition of the simultaneous meeting of ordinary COPs, many delegates said their heads were spinning by Sunday evening. Despite meticulous organization by the Joint Secretariat, and a very clear rainbow-colored schedule, several participants admitted to feeling a "little daunted" by the prospect of the eleven days ahead. Yet enthusiasm prevailed as participants enjoyed the famed hospitality of the Swiss during the evening reception. Several were heard joking about the good fortune of being in "the land of chocolate" for this grand experiment in synergies.