



MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES TO THE BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS: 4-15 MAY 2015

On Monday, 4 May 2015, the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Basel Convention (BC), seventh meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention (RC), and seventh meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention (SC) open in Geneva, Switzerland. The meetings will include joint sessions of the COPs on issues that are on the agendas of at least two of the three conventions, including technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, and programmes of work and budgets.

Key issues to be addressed during the meetings include, *inter alia*: the listing of new chemicals under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, adoption of technical guidelines under the BC, and financial and technical support for implementation of all three conventions. A “Friends of the President” group is expected to convene to work on compliance under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHEMICALS AND WASTE CONVENTIONS

ExCOPs1: The first simultaneous extraordinary meeting of the Conferences of the Parties (ExCOPs1) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions was held 22-24 February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia. The meeting was a result of the work of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, which was mandated to prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination for submission to the three COPs.

At the ExCOPs, delegates adopted an omnibus synergies decision on joint services, joint activities, synchronization of the budget cycles, joint audits, joint managerial functions, and review arrangements. In the decision on review arrangements, the ExCOPs, *inter alia*, decided to review in 2013 how the synergies arrangements have contributed to achieving a set of objectives, such as strengthening the implementation of the three conventions and maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources at all levels. The ExCOPs also requested the secretariats to prepare detailed terms of reference for the preparation of a report for review and adoption by the COPs of the three Conventions in 2011, and to compile and complete their report for adoption by the three COPs in 2013.

ExCOPs2: The second simultaneous extraordinary meeting of the Conferences of the Parties (ExCOPs2) to the BRS Conventions was held in conjunction with the back-to-back meetings of the COPs from 28 April-10 May 2013 in

Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates adopted an omnibus decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the BRS Conventions. The ExCOPs, *inter alia*, decided to undertake a review of the synergies process and the organization of the secretariats. On joint activities, the ExCOPs, *inter alia*, decided to continue to present joint activities as an integral part of the proposed programmes of work and budgets of the three conventions. On enhanced cooperation and coordination among the technical bodies of the BRS Conventions, the ExCOPs, *inter alia*, requested alignment of the working arrangements of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC) with those of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) to support effective participation of experts and observers and encouraged the POPRC to involve experts from the Basel Convention when discussing waste issues. On wider cooperation, the ExCOPs requested the Secretariat to enhance cooperation with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and expressed interest in coordinating with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. On facilitating financial resources for chemicals wastes, the ExCOPs welcomed an integrated approach that includes mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance.

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION: The SC was adopted in May 2001 and entered into force on 17 May 2004. The Stockholm Convention, as adopted in 2001, 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 best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) for replacing existing POPs while preventing the development of new POPs.

In 2009, parties agreed to add nine more chemicals to the Convention: c-pentabromodiphenyl ether; chlordecone; hexabromobiphenyl (HBB); alpha hexachlorocyclohexane (alphaHCH); betaHCH; lindane; c-octabromodiphenyl ether; pentachlorobenzene (PeCB); and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), its salts and PFOS fluoride (PFOSF). In 2011, parties added endosulfan to the Convention.

The Stockholm Convention currently has 179 parties.

SC COP5: COP5 was held from 25-29 April 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. SC COP5 considered several reports on activities within the Convention’s mandate and adopted over 30 decisions on, *inter alia*: listing endosulfan in Annex A of the Convention; financial and technical assistance; synergies; and endorsing seven new SC regional centres, in Algeria, Senegal, Kenya, South Africa, Iran, India and the Russian Federation.



SC COP6: COP6 was held 28 April-10 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. SC COP6 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted over 20 decisions on, *inter alia*: listing hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD) with specific exemptions for expanded and extruded polystyrene in Annex A; financial and technical assistance; effectiveness evaluation; and a second phase of implementation of the global monitoring plan. COP6 considered but did not reach consensus on establishing a compliance mechanism.

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION: The RC was adopted in September 1998 and entered into force on 24 February 2004. The Convention creates legally binding obligations for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure. It built on the voluntary PIC Procedure, created by the FAO and UNEP. The objectives of the Convention are: to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm; and to contribute to the environmentally sound use of those hazardous chemicals, by facilitating information exchange about their characteristics, by providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export, and by disseminating these decisions to parties. There are currently 154 parties to the Convention.

RC COP5: COP5 convened from 20-24 June 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland. COP5 adopted 13 decisions, including on the addition of aldicarb, alachlor and endosulfan to Annex III of the Convention (chemicals subject to the PIC Procedure). The meeting also adopted decisions on: the budget; technical assistance; synergies; information exchange; trade; and the work of the CRC. Delegates addressed issues that eluded consensus during the previous meeting of the COP, but could not agree on mechanisms and procedures for non-compliance and the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III of the Convention.

RC COP6: COP6 was held 28 April-10 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. RC COP6 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted 15 decisions on issues including, *inter alia*, listing azinphos-methyl, pentabromodiphenyl ether, octabromodiphenyl ether, and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid and its related chemicals in Annex III of the Convention. The COP considered listing paraquat and chrysotile asbestos in Annex III but could not reach consensus. RC COP6 also adopted decisions on, *inter alia*, technical assistance, the programme of work and budget; official communications; and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between UNEP, FAO and the COP.

BASEL CONVENTION: The BC was adopted in 1989 and entered into force on 5 May 1992. It was created to address concerns over the management, disposal and transboundary movement of the estimated 400 million tonnes of hazardous wastes that are produced worldwide each year. The guiding principles of the Convention are that transboundary movements of hazardous wastes should be: reduced to a minimum; managed in an environmentally sound manner; treated and disposed of as close as possible to their source of generation; and minimized at the source. In September 1995, at BC COP3, parties adopted the Ban Amendment, which bans the export of hazardous wastes for final disposal and recycling from Annex VII countries (EU, OECD and Liechtenstein) to non-Annex VII countries. According to Article 17, paragraph 5, entry into force of amendments takes place upon ratification by at least three-fourths of the parties "who accepted them." There were differing interpretations over the term "who accepted them" and, therefore, over the number of ratifications required for the Ban Amendment to enter into force. Some parties suggested that the number was three-fourths of parties at the time of adoption of

the Ban Amendment. Others, including the UN Office of Legal Affairs, argued that three-fourths of current parties must ratify the Ban Amendment.

There are currently 183 parties to the Convention and 81 ratifications of the Ban Amendment.

BC COP10: The tenth meeting of the COP to the BC was held from 17-21 October 2011, in Cartagena, Colombia. BC COP10 adopted decisions on the new strategic framework and the Indonesian-Swiss Country-Led Initiative (CLI) to improve the effectiveness of the Basel Convention. The CLI clarifies the interpretation of Article 17(5), and provides that the Ban Amendment will enter into force once three-fourths, which is 66 of the 87 parties that were parties when it was adopted at COP3, ratify the Amendment. The Ban Amendment has not yet entered into force.

COP10 also adopted 25 decisions on, *inter alia*: synergies; the budget; legal matters; Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres (BCRCs); capacity building; the Partnership Programme; and technical matters. The Cartagena Declaration on prevention and minimization of hazardous wastes was also adopted.

BC COP11: COP11 was held 28 April-10 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. BC COP11 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted over 20 decisions on issues including: strategic issues; scientific and technical matters; legal, compliance and government matters; technical assistance; international cooperation, coordination and partnerships; resource mobilization and financial resources; programme of work and budget; admission of observers; and an MOU with UNEP.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

BASEL CONVENTION OEWG: The ninth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG9) took place from 16-19 September 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. OEWG9 adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: technical guidelines for POPs and mercury wastes, future work on electrical and electronic waste; a glossary of terms to provide legal clarity; and national reporting. OEWG9 advanced work on technical guidelines, legal matters and other issues to facilitate progress at COP12.

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION POPRC: The ninth meeting of the POPRC (POPRC9) met from 14-18 October, 2013 in Rome, Italy. The Committee adopted nine decisions, including on: the commercial mixture of decabromodiphenyl ether (c-decaBDE); pentachlorophenol and its salts and esters (PCP); chlorinated naphthalenes (CNs); hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD); the approach to the evaluation of chemicals in accordance with Annex E; guidance on alternatives to PFOS, its salts, PFOSF and their related chemicals; and the process for evaluation of PFOS, its salts and PFOSF for acceptable uses. The Committee also held a joint workshop with the RC CRC.

The tenth meeting of the POPRC (POPRC10) took place from 27-30 October 2014 in Rome, Italy. POPRC10 adopted seven decisions on, *inter alia*: dicofol; decabromodiphenyl ether; pentachlorophenol, its salts and esters; and alternatives to PFOS, its salts and PFOSF.

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION CRC: The ninth meeting of the CRC (CRC9) was held 22-24 October 2013 in Rome, Italy. The Committee took decisions on: trichlorfon; cyhexatin; methamidophos; lead arsenate; lead carbonate; fenthion 640 ULV; and pentachlorobenzene. The CRC also convened a joint meeting with the POPRC.

The tenth meeting of the CRC (CRC10) took place from 22-24 October 2014 in Rome, Italy. CRC10 adopted decisions on: methamidophos, fenthion (ultra-low volume, at or above 640g active ingredient/L), polychlorinated naphthalenes, tributyltin, and short-chained chlorinated paraffins.