



SIMULTANEOUS COPS HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 4 MAY 2015

The Basel Convention (BC) COP12, Stockholm Convention (SC) COP7 and Rotterdam Convention (RC) COP7 convened for the first day on Monday, 4 May 2015. In the morning, delegates participated in the opening ceremony and adopted the agendas of the three COPS. Delegates then worked in a joint session of the three COPS to discuss the organization of work, election of officers, credentials and work related to waste containing persistent organic pollutants (POPs). In the afternoon, the joint session began consideration of technical assistance. A contact group was established and convened for technical guidelines (TGs), to begin consideration of POPs waste guidelines.

SIMULTANEOUS COPS:

OPENING CEREMONY: The meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions opened on Monday morning, with Jan Dusik, UNEP Regional Office for Europe serving as the “master of ceremonies.”

BRS Executive Secretary Rolph Payet urged the integration of the chemicals and wastes cluster into the sustainable development agenda. He emphasized listing chemicals under the RC, adopting BC TGs on electrical and electronic waste (e-waste), and agreeing on compliance mechanisms for the RC and SC as important outcomes.

Stressing the COPs’ theme “from science to action, working for a safer tomorrow,” Clayton Campanhola, FAO, RC Co-Executive Secretary, underscored the importance of listing methamidophos, trichlorfon, as well as the severely hazardous pesticide formulations, fenthion and paraquat dichloride under the RC. Noting that chrysotile asbestos would be considered for a fifth time, he underscored that listing a chemical under the RC does not constitute a trade ban.

Bruno Oberle, Switzerland, noted that the synergies process increased the visibility of the chemicals and waste cluster, encouraged both deepening and broadening existing synergies and urged countries to ratify the Ban Amendment.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner characterized the growth in chemicals production and use as a “fundamental” part of the modern economy while noting estimates that endocrine disruptors cost EUR157 billion in Europe alone and underscoring that occupational poisoning results in one million deaths per year.

Naoko Ishii, Global Environment Facility CEO, stated current chemical consumption patterns are pushing the carrying capacity of natural capital to their limits. Referring to GEF’s work, she highlighted the elimination of 25,000 tons of POPs, progress on managing DDT in India, and a dedicated Small Island Developing States (SIDS)/Least Developed Countries (LDC) support programme in GEF6.

INDONESIA and SWITZERLAND led delegates in congratulating parties which have ratified the Ban Amendment since 2013: Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, Colombia, Guatemala, Republic of Congo and Peru. SWITZERLAND welcomed the new ratifications and noted that 12 more instruments of ratification are required for the Amendment to enter into force. INDONESIA called a safer environment a right of all people.

Andrzej Jagusiewicz (Poland), BC COP12 President, highlighted some achievements of the BC, including TGs that assist developing countries in the environmentally-sound management (ESM) of wastes. He highlighted the need to ratify the Ban Amendment, adopt TGs on POPs, e-waste and mercury wastes, and agree on legal clarity.

Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan), RC COP7 President, called on the COP to adopt a compliance mechanism, list substances recommended by the CRC in order to enhance information sharing, and boost the technical and financial capacities of developing countries.

Johanna Lissinger Peitz (Sweden), SC COP President, highlighted “key opportunities for advancing the POPs agenda” including: listing three new chemicals; establishing a facilitative compliance mechanism; and providing resources to support implementation of the SC.

Opening Statements: During the morning, regional groups gave opening statements that addressed all COPS.

Liberia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted the need for financial and technical assistance to support implementation in developing countries, particularly for collecting data, and underscored that problems with e-waste can arise when broken equipment can be claimed as repairable.

The Cook Islands, for the ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: called for increased technical and financial assistance for regional activities; expressed support for enhanced synergies among the conventions; and called for flexibility in listing certain chemicals.

Serbia, for the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN (CEE) REGION: expressed support for adopting compliance mechanisms for the SC and RC; called for improved electronic reporting; and said technical and financial assistance should be proportionate to the size of regional centres.

Peru, for GRULAC, underscored the role of the regional and subregional coordinating centres and said the lack of stable, predictable and adequate funding is a major stumbling block for implementation.

Latvia, for the EU, underscored the importance of deciding on RC and SC compliance mechanisms and called for work on financing mechanisms for chemicals and waste.

ADOPTION OF THE COPS AGENDAS: In the morning, BC President Jagusiewicz, RC President Khashashneh and SC President Lissinger Peitz each declared their respective meetings open and introduced their respective agendas (UNEP/CHW.12/1



and Add.1; UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/1 and Add.1; (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/1 and Add.1), which were all adopted without amendment.

JOINT SESSION OF THE THREE COPS

During the joint sessions, President Jagusiewicz explained that one COP President will speak on behalf of all the Presidents of the three Conventions.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Organization of Work:

The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/CHW.12/INF/1-2; UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF1-2; UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/1-2). The EU proposed moving the discussion of BC Decision V/32 on enlargement of the scope of the Trust Fund from Saturday 9 May to Monday 4 May, and delegates agreed.

Election of Officers: In the afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/CHW.12/2; UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/2; UNEP/POPS/COP.7/2), noting that the African and Asia-Pacific groups could agree to alternate election of presidents for the SC and BC COPS. President Jagusiewicz invited the groups to discuss the possible rotation of presidencies and suspended further consideration of the agenda item.

Credentials: In the afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/CHW.12/1/Add.1; UNEP/CHW.12/INF/44; UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/1/Add.1; UNEP/POPS/COP.7/1/Add.1), noting that credentials must be submitted within 24 hours of the opening of the meeting.

MATTERS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION

OF THE BC: Technical Guidelines on POPs Wastes: In the morning, the Secretariat introduced the TGs on POPs wastes (UNEP/CHW.12/5, Add.2-7, INF/9-14). CANADA, Chair of the Small Intersessional Working Group (SIWG) on POPs wastes, introduced the SIWG report (UNEP/CHW.12/CRP.3). She suggested that six of the seven TGs are ready for adoption and suggested that the pesticides TGs (UNEP/CHW.12/INF/15) be further considered during COP12.

In the afternoon, the EU expressed confidence that the TGs will be adopted at COP12. JAPAN indicated their willingness to serve as a lead country on PCB waste.

ARGENTINA underscored the need for environmentally-sound disposal. GHANA on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, and MEXICO, highlighted that TGs are important, especially for developing countries and national implementation plans.

IPEN expressed concern that the low-POP content levels are too high as specified in the draft TGs, and suggested that HBCD content should be limited to 50ppm.

In the afternoon, delegates agreed to establish a contact group, co-chaired by Magda Gosk (Poland) and Prakash Kowlessar (Mauritius), on TGs and requested that the group begin with POPs wastes TGs.

MATTERS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

THE SC: Measures to Reduce or Eliminate Releases from Waste: The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/15, UNEP/CHW.12/INF/22, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/14, and UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/17). The EU proposed minor amendments.

The Secretariat was asked to provide an amended version of the decision for adoption by the BC and the SC, taking into account the EU's proposed amendments.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/CHW.12/12-14, INF/20-25, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/13, UNEP/POPS/COP.7/13, INF/13-18).

On technical assistance, the EU suggested adding discussion of the roadmap for action on the implementation of the Cartagena Declaration (UNEP/CHW.12/14) to the mandate of the technical assistance contact group.

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested, with MEXICO and others, regional databases to encourage information exchange.

Speaking as a SIDS, CUBA pointed to the establishment of an emergency mechanism in accordance with Decision V/32 and encouraged similar alternatives. MAURITIUS supported by BAHRAIN, called for financial and technical assistance especially for SIDS.

NAMIBIA stressed the need to properly define capacity building to ensure effectiveness, which was supported by IPEN who suggested a "learning-by-doing" approach to augment workshops.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA called for technical assistance to address harmful chemicals used in oil extraction and wood processing. NEPAL noted further areas of work, including getting rid of PCB stockpiles and assessing the impacts of new chemicals in developing countries.

On regional centres, URUGUAY, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, CAMEROON, CHINA, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, EGYPT, INDONESIA, IRAN, KENYA, NIGERIA, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SENEGAL and SOUTH AFRICA, presented a conference room paper (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/CRP.2) on coordination between the regional and subregional centres of the BC and SC. He noted that the CRP, *inter alia*, draws attention to obstacles to funding and calls for a possible review of the evaluation criteria.

ARGENTINA, supported by EL SALVADOR and the ISLANDS SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE, suggested a focus on the quality, as well as the quantity, of regional centres' activities. JAPAN called for evaluation of inactive centres. COSTA RICA, supported by GUATEMALA, expressed concern about lack of technical and administrative capacity in the BC regional centre in El Salvador. KENYA commended the SC regional center in his country its work on non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. IPEN called for identifying why six of 16 centres had poor performance scores.

EGYPT, with TUNISIA, BRAZIL, PAKISTAN and others called for additional financial support for the regional centres. SOUTH AFRICA noted that the mandates of the centres expand without commensurate financial increases. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC called for scientific bodies to cooperate with governments through the regional centres.

RC President Khashashneh proposed, and delegates agreed, to forward discussions to a joint contact group on financial and technical assistance, to be established later in the week.

CONTACT GROUP: Technical Guidelines: In the afternoon, delegates discussed general TGs, in particular the low-POPs content values for several POPs, and guidance for ESM, including technologies. For low-POPs content for hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD), suggestions included 50ppm, 1000ppm and 1000mg/kg. A developing country suggested invoking the precautionary principle where information is lacking, while others said that low-POPs content levels should reflect what is realistic to implement, while others expressed concern that setting the value too low will reduce recycling. Noting that few comments were received intersessionally, the Chair of the SIWG suggested, and delegates agreed, to discuss the low-POP content levels under the TGs for each POP. The contact group will convene Tuesday.

IN THE CORRIDORS: On Day One of the "Triple COPS," delegates enthusiastically tackled the workload before them. Familiar issues were rather hastily identified in the regional group statements that were limited to three minutes (effectively allowing one minute per COP). Several delegates reiterated the perennial concern that, without adequate technical and financial assistance, developing countries struggle to implement their obligations under the conventions. While UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner joked (to a very cheerful audience) that multilateral negotiations can lead to ulcers, several participants hoped that the pared-down agenda, in comparison to the first joint meetings held in 2013, would yield the precious time necessary to work through the more challenging issues on the agenda. Several delegates were keen to see where conversations on implementation and compliance under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions will lead, with one delegate saying that "truly living synergies" means that all conventions should have compliance mechanisms.