



## BRS CONVENTIONS COPs

### HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2015

The meetings of the BRS COPs reconvened on Thursday, 7 May 2015. In the morning, plenary heard reports on progress in the contact groups on: technical matters; technical assistance and financial resources; cooperation and coordination; listing of chemicals under the Stockholm Convention (SC); budget; and non-compliance under the Rotterdam Convention (RC). The SC COP convened in plenary to address matters related to implementation of the convention.

Contact groups met throughout the day to address: technical assistance and financial resources; technical matters; listing of chemicals under the SC; budget; RC non-compliance; and cooperation and coordination.

#### STOCKHOLM CONVENTION COP7

In the morning, the plenary heard an intervention, deferred from Wednesday, from the INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL (IITC) urging the SC to list PCPs in Annex A without exemption, and CNs and HCBd in Annexes A and C. IITC underscored the health effects of these chemicals on indigenous peoples who are not responsible for their production or use.

**MATTERS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: Measures to reduce or eliminate releases from intentional production and use: Evaluation of the continued need for the procedure under paragraph 2(b) of Article 3:** The Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/10). The EU called for continued use of the procedure, since not enough information is available to assess its operability for the POPs listed in 2009 and 2011, and suggested returning to a review at COP9. IPEN expressed concern about reported rises in exports and imports of chemicals listed in Annexes A or B for which permitted uses are in effect, and called for continued use of the procedure. The plenary adopted the draft decision, pending review by the budget group.

**Measures to reduce or eliminate releases from unintentional production:** The Secretariat introduced: the toolkit for identification and quantification of releases of dioxins, furans and other unintentional POPs (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/12); guidelines for best available technologies (BAT) and provisional guidance on best environmental practices (BEP) (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/14); and related documents (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/19-22).

On the toolkit, the SC adopted the decision in UNEP/POPS/COP.7/12, pending a review of budgetary implications.

On the guidelines, CANADA suggested moving the workplan contained in the report of the expert meeting (INF/19) to the draft decision. She also introduced a CRP (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/CRP.5) suggesting changes to the workplan, including removing

duplicative work completed under the Basel Convention (BC). JAPAN, BELARUS, the EU, and CHINA expressed interest in reviewing the Canadian CRP. The EU suggested adding references to the PFOS waste technical guidelines being developed under the BC.

BELARUS outlined how they use the BAT/BEP guidance nationally. IPEN said the guidance is valuable for citizen groups and called for the group to evaluate new information on alternative techniques and practices, and remediation of contaminated sites.

The US suggested simplifying guidance on PFOS and called for more opportunities for observers to comment on the guidance before the expert group meets.

The draft will be considered again on Friday, following informal consultations to consider Canada's CRP and the EU's suggested changes.

**Implementation plans:** The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/16 and INFs 24-28), including guidance documents on, *inter alia*, the development of National Implementation Plans (NIPs). She highlighted the submission of NIPs from 21 parties: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

CANADA, supported by the EU, introduced a CRP (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/CRP.6) on implementation plans, noting that it contains two annexes on the lists of available guidance to develop, review and update NIPs.

BRAZIL noted the submission of its updated NIP, highlighting the inclusion of new POPs listed in 2013.

Many developing countries thanked the GEF and UNIDO for their support in updating and submitting NIPs.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, LIBERIA, SWAZILAND, EGYPT, KYRGYZSTAN, HONDURAS, NAMIBIA and many others called for technical and financial assistance for implementation of action plans contained in the NIPs. BURKINA FASO drew attention to the need for detection apparatus. PANAMA highlighted challenges with eliminating PCB stockpiles and NEPAL cited national experiences in removing such stockpiles.

Many countries highlighted challenges faced in updating NIPs, particularly in including the POPs listed since 2009. KAZAKHSTAN, GUINEA and many others called for technical assistance in adding new POPs to the inventory, with SRI LANKA requesting assistance in including unintentional POPs to the inventory. GUATEMALA and ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA drew attention to the need to update institutional and legal frameworks.

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TUNISIA requested clarification on the number of NIPs to be submitted, given the new POPs listed in 2013. KENYA called for updated guidance on the socioeconomic assessment for development and implementation of NIPs. MEXICO called for reconsideration of the timelines for submitting NIPs.

Recognizing the various challenges faced by parties, particularly in gathering information, IPEN called for parties to uphold their obligations under the SC. ISRAEL stated that it is developing a NIP before ratifying the SC.

President Lissinger Peitz proposed, and parties agreed, to task the Secretariat with revising the draft decision to incorporate the changes suggested by Canada and the EU for consideration by the COP.

**Reporting pursuant to Article 15:** The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/27 and INF/36), noting the submission of 53 national reports through the electronic reporting system.

NEPAL, TONGA and others requested the Secretariat to assist developing countries in reporting. SWAZILAND and the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC noted challenges in participating in webinars due to connectivity difficulties. YEMEN called for the reports to be translated into all UN languages.

The EU and CANADA, supported by IPEN, proposed amending the draft decision to “urge” parties to submit national reports. CANADA proposed, among other amendments, requesting the Secretariat to refine and implement the draft strategy to implement elements of reporting, and with reference to Secretariat activities on reporting, suggested deleting the phrase “subject to the availability of funding.”

TONGA, supported by IPEN, called for the compilation and dissemination of information on PCBs and other POPs. BELARUS called for the draft decision to include their proposal on improving the reporting system of condensers and transformers.

The Secretariat noted the services provided by the IT Helpdesk for parties facing challenges with the electronic reporting system, highlighted the need for notification of changes in official contact points, and informed delegates of limited resources available to assist parties in their reporting obligations.

President Lissinger Peitz proposed that the Secretariat prepare a revised draft decision based on the discussion for later consideration.

**Effectiveness evaluation:** The Secretariat introduced the procedure for the selection of experts to the effectiveness evaluation committee (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/28), the global monitoring plan for effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/29) and reports and guidance on regional and global monitoring (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/37-39), and noted a global human milk survey conducted by UNEP and WHO.

The EU expressed support for regional centres and the global coordination group. PAKISTAN and CHINA asked how regional experts would be nominated.

Referring to the need for additional capacity for regional centres, MEXICO stated monitoring is difficult when technical and financial resources are scarce. NEPAL requested technical and financial assistance to ensure the effectiveness evaluation can be conducted effectively. URUGUAY suggested improving capacity of national laboratories and outlined efforts to assess POPs in breast milk. CANADA supported enhancement of monitoring in regions lacking capacity, and offered minor text changes to the draft decision.

CHINA questioned why so few parties have submitted monitoring reports and asked the Secretariat to create a more robust basis for effectiveness evaluation.

JAPAN noted its study examining the relationship between environmental factors, POPs and children’s health. The COOK ISLANDS highlighted the need to monitor POPs in fish. GABON underscored the need to monitor sectors not initially addressed, such as the oil sector.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA cautioned about inconsistencies in data from the Caribbean region.

The ISLAND SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE suggested working with Indigenous Peoples on monitoring, noting they often depend on fish and aquatic species as primary food sources.

Mentioning its progress on POPs monitoring, KENYA suggested more continuous and extensive efforts were needed.

SC President Lissinger Peitz observed support for the draft decisions on effectiveness evaluation and suggested their adoption, taking into account Canada’s suggested text on global monitoring, pending budgetary accommodations.

**OTHER MATTERS: Official Communications:** The Secretariat reported that 165 parties have nominated one or more official contact points and 123 have nominated one or more focal points. She also reported that two non-parties have designated official contact points. The COP took note of the report.

### CONTACT GROUPS

**SC LISTING OF CHEMICALS:** The group met in the morning and early afternoon, making editorial amendments to the draft decisions on polychlorinated naphthalenes and PCP. They also revised the draft decision on HCBd to list it in Annex A and to defer consideration of listing it in Annex C to COP8. The group discussed proposed text on acceptable purposes for PFOS and on possible actions for the COP when it concludes there is no continued need for the various acceptable purposes for a chemical listed in Annex B.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES:** In the morning, the group considered draft decisions on the fourth review of the financial mechanism, and on the assessment of funding needs. Concerns were raised on, *inter alia*: whether to only include activities funded by the financial mechanism, or also activities where funding has not been provided; information on how to access support; and the need for additional funding to match changing amendments.

**BUDGET:** The group outlined issues for consideration including, *inter alia*, the challenges posed by parties being in arrears over assessed contributions; staff positions potentially affected by the UN’s geographic mobility rule; and a restructured BC draft decision on financing and budget for 2016-2017.

**BC TECHNICAL MATTERS:** The group met in the afternoon, focusing on the general TGs for POPs wastes. The group agreed to text on “advanced solid waste incinerators” which outlines that not all types of municipal waste incinerators can properly destroy POPs in wastes. The group discussed low-POP content levels in waste containing BDEs listed under the SC, where proposals were 50 and 1000 mg/kg, and HCBd, where proposals were 100 and 1000mg/kg. Participants considered including both figures and the need for a future review or a potential transition to lower numbers.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

On Thursday, delegates flocked to the opening of the first-ever BRS Science Fair, a three-day event designed to explore the ways in which science informs decision-making and implementation of the BRS Conventions. The view that science is the foundation of the conventions was not shared by all participants, however; in one contact group, a party questioned the validity of the scientific review process that serves as the basis of much of the Stockholm Convention’s work. This issue prompted strong defenses of the scientific basis of the POPs review process, with one delegate declaring, “if you question the POPRC, you undermine the Stockholm Convention.” The extent to which scientific knowledge shapes the work of the Convention was further underscored in plenary when a delegate highlighted the need for technical assistance to support implementation of the convention, reflecting that “science is powerful, but not yet universally distributed.”