

BASEL COP8 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2006

The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP8) to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal convened in a high-level segment in the morning and afternoon to address the COP theme of "Creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the environmentally sound management," which consisted of ministerial speeches and a panel opening the World Forum on E-waste.

The Committee of the Whole (COW) met in the evening and agreed on various draft decisions, but remaining outstanding issues included: draft elements for a proposed decision on the Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres (BCRCCs) (UNEP/CHW.8/CRP.5); the 2010 Strategic Plan for the Convention's implementation (UNEP/CHW.8/CRP.6); and the outline for an instruction manual for the legal profession (UNEP/CHW.8/CRP.14).

The budget contact group met and informal consultations on ship dismantling and on the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI) continued throughout the day and evening.

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

WORLD FORUM ON E-WASTE: Kivutha Kibwana, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya, welcomed participants to the high-level segment, expressing hope that the "World Forum on E-waste" would result in the Convention's effective implementation. He described e-waste as an emerging challenge, and lamented that many developing countries are recipients of obsolete electronic equipment disguised as donations.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, chaired the high-level segment, acknowledged the growing interest in e-waste management, and underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder interaction. He said that the Forum's outcome will be measured by the extent that it can provide direction to the international discourse on e-waste, describing the Convention as a "regulatory opportunity in a globalized market place."

Jesca Eriyo, Minister of State for Environment, Uganda, highlighted the vulnerability of African countries due to the absence of effective tracking systems, adequate legal frameworks, law enforcement and capacity. Acknowledging the need to "bridge the digital divide," she called for a comprehensive action plan targeting the most vulnerable countries, and urged developed countries to show their commitment to phasing-out hazardous components of electronic equipment.

Mariano Arana, Minister of State for Environment, Uruguay, described local integrated waste management practices in Montevideo, emphasizing the need for extended producer responsibility and adequate infrastructure for waste management.

Dato'Seri Azmi Khalid, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Malaysia, noted that electrical and electronic goods manufacturing comprise 49.6% of Malaysia's total exports.

Bakary Kante, UNEP Director of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, then chaired a panel discussion.

Helge Wendenburg, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature and Nuclear Safety, Germany, welcomed the EC's recent relevant directives and regulations, stressed the importance of capacity building, awareness raising and partnerships, and encouraged the use of BCRCCs.

Timo Mäkelä, EC, informed delegates that 6-7 million tonnes of electronic and electrical waste is produced annually EU-wide, saying this had prompted the EC legislation. He pledged one million Euros to MPPI, underscoring his hope that this would be directed at improved governance.

Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Mining Industry Association, Japan, noted the high cost of current recycling techniques, and stressed the need to reduce costs to ensure recycling operations are viable.

Kirsi Sormunen, Nokia, called for better guidelines on recycling, stressed that collection volumes at Nokia's take-back facilities are low, and underscored consumer responsibility for recycling.

Klaus Hieronymi, Hewlett Packard, insisted that access to greater information technology assists sustainable development. He acknowledged that recycling and recovery operations must be safe, protect workers, and occur in facilities with environmentally sound management (ESM).

Adil Najam, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), challenged delegates to find new avenues of international environmental policy under the Convention's umbrella to deal with e-waste.

Panel Chair Kante opened the interactive discussion. CAMBODIA called for a global strategy on e-waste, where developing and developed countries deal with waste management as partners. MEXICO pointed to ongoing innovation in the electronics industry, leading to older models becoming obsolete and being disposed, when they could still be used and resources could be extracted from them. MALAYSIA called upon corporations with buy-back policies for end-of-life products to make these more public. MAURITIUS requested awareness-raising and capacity-building in developing countries to avoid pollution from e-waste and that producers be responsible for disposal.

David Tkeshelashvili, Minister for Environment Protection and Natural resources, Georgia, called for stricter regulation for recycling companies and the design of environmentally sustainable electronic equipment.

Stefan Wallin, State Secretary, Finland, stressed the need to minimize e-waste generation, prevent illegal shipments and "e-waste leakage" from regions with strict regulations to countries where regulation and enforcement are weak.

BENIN called for international community and developed countries support for the development of appropriate financial mechanisms to implement the Convention's objectives. UGANDA called for a national public-private partnership to provide functional technologies. TANZANIA underscored the

challenge of globalization, poverty reduction, and a vulnerable population, and called for a funding arrangement for capacity building.

NIGERIA highlighted ways forward in solving the e-waste problem, including developing global partnership initiatives similar to MPPI for other technologies.

Panelists then answered questions on: establishing incentives that encourage developing countries to benefit from old technologies rather than disposing of them; how governments, the private sector and civil society can work together on e-waste; fostering capacity building in developing countries for technology re-use; and establishing incentives for the private sector to better manage e-waste.

Following the panel discussions, Ioan Gherhes, President of the National Agency for Environmental Protection, Romania, discussed his country's experience in creating innovative solutions for ESM of e-waste, including projects developed in partnership with other EU countries.

Hirokazu Yoshikawa presented on the role that the non-ferrous metal industry plays in the collection and recycling of e-waste, and said that recycling of some e-waste, including personal computers and washing machines is mandatory in Japan.

Underscoring strict regulation of transboundary movement of e-waste, Sorumunen encouraged flexible transitional arrangements for developing countries, such as promoting shipment of e-waste to developed countries with existing recycling capacity.

SOUTH AFRICA urged developed countries to reduce e-waste hazards and promote principles of duty of care and producer responsibility. SUDAN emphasized the role of manufacturers in reducing e-waste and proposed establishing a mechanism to restrict export of electronic goods with less than half their remaining useful life cycle.

THAILAND and IPEN supported a declaration on e-waste, with THAILAND proposing that it include: reducing waste at its source; extended producer responsibility; and public-private partnerships.

On management of e-waste, the UK recommended: a life cycle approach from product design onwards; a robust legal framework providing clarity on the definition of waste; clear communication and awareness-raising of ESM requirements; and implementation and enforcement. The CZECH REPUBLIC spoke of national successes in e-waste take-back. SWITZERLAND, supported by the US, proposed encouraging multistakeholder cooperation and responsibility. He also supported an international e-waste awareness-raising campaign. CHINA highlighted his country's actions on e-waste control and activities carried out by the South Asia BCRCC.

The US requested panel comments on whether a single approach, such as a ban on the transboundary movement of electronic materials and wastes, would impact the ability to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable solutions. BAN said the way to tackle e-waste is by creating deadlines for non-toxic equipment use and recognizing that trafficking e-waste from rich to poor countries is a disincentive for green design.

On illegal traffic, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted that transboundary movement of used electronics should be allowed only when importing countries have available technology for recycling and reuse. KENYA requested the implementation of measures that at a minimum include guidelines on the transboundary movement of electronic equipment.

Mäkelä stressed the need to reward businesses undertaking proactive activities on e-waste and to take activities upstream. Yoshikawa proposed the Basel Secretariat establish a system to certify recycling facilities and KUWAIT stressed the need for national legislation on e-waste. Najam noted the focus on the role of large businesses and urged delegates to also consider innovative incentives for small businesses to ensure poor and vulnerable individuals have access to recycling incentives. Hieronymi offered the possibility of developing simple recycling technologies that can be taken up by the informal sector. COLOMBIA noted the need to also focus on other hazardous wastes, including insecticides.

NIGERIA discussed the need for cooperation with the Bamako Convention and asked which steps the Basel Convention Secretariat was taking. Basel Convention Executive Secretary Kuwabara-Yamamoto pointed to the Secretariat's assistance in preparation of Bamako COP1, and possibilities for back-to-back COPs, common reporting, common use and development of BCRCCs technical guidelines.

Forum Chair Steiner provided a summary of the key issues emerging from the discussion and announced that a proposal for a declaration on e-waste would be available Friday, 1 December.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY

COP7: Report on contact group and informal consultations: COW heard progress reports from the budget contact group and informal consultations on ship dismantling. On the MPPI, Facilitator Barry Reville (Australia), tabled the provisional decision, explained it is without prejudice to national legislation, and will be forwarded to OEWG for review and finalization, and encouraged parties to participate in the process. COW agreed to the decision with a minor textual amendment. The EU asked COW to note the guidelines are non-binding and stressed aligning the definition of e-waste with EC law and Basel Convention definitions.

Dumping of toxic wastes in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: COW Chair Maquieira asked delegates to consult informally and report back to COW on Friday, 1 December.

E-waste: COW Chair Maquieira asked delegates to informally consult on the draft declaration late into the evening and report back to COW on Friday, 1 December.

Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Convention to 2010: Partnership Programme: COW agreed to the decision on the Basel Convention Partnership Programme (UNEP/CHW.8/CRP.12) with minor amendments.

International cooperation and synergies: COW considered, and agreed to, the draft decision on cooperation and synergies (UNEP/CHW.8/CRP.8) with minor amendments. Finland announced its intention to host the *ad hoc* joint working group meeting. COW also agreed to mandate the Secretariat to strengthen coordination with the chemical-related convention secretariats.

Legal matters: COW agreed to the decision on designation of competent authorities and focal points (UNEP/CHW.8/14) without amendment.

OEWG work programme: Switzerland introduced the draft 2007-2008 OEWG work programme (UNEP/CHW.8/11) to which delegates deferred their decision pending finalization of budget discussions.

CONTACT GROUP

BUDGET: Delegates, chaired by Anne Daniel (Canada), continued debating, line-by-line, the revised proposal to the biennium programme and budget, and identified possible cost reductions, including removing a number of Secretariat's permanent staff, decreasing traveling costs, and holding back-to-back meetings.

The group also continued debating the EU proposed draft decision on resource mobilization and sustainable financing, and addressed outstanding issues, including: language on recalling COP7 report in which developed countries were invited to increase substantially their contribution to the Convention Technical and Cooperation Trust Fund; and encouraging donors, parties and non-parties to "substantially increase" voluntary contributions to such Fund.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

SHIP DISMANTLING: Delegates discussed at length the draft decision on the "ship recycling convention" and agreed to forward it to COW recommending the COP, *inter alia*, to: issue an invitation to the IMO to incorporate clear responsibilities taking into account current capacities and common but differentiated responsibilities; request the Secretariat to follow-up on the development of the draft convention; invite parties to provide comments on issues such as roles and responsibilities in the draft convention; have the issue addressed by OEWG and forward OEWG report to IMO. Delegates continued deliberating late into the night on the issue of abandonment of ships.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

While the high-level segment convened to deal with the ever-growing amounts of e-waste, some delegates commented that the problem could be more effectively addressed by focusing future efforts and discussions on reduction of hazardous waste generation, including the elimination of toxic components in electronics. Given that a number of NGOs have drawn public attention to e-waste, some delegates were surprised to see that NGOs were not given equal space as industry representatives in the high-level segment.