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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN  
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT  
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON  
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Fifth session

Johannesburg, 4-9 December 2000

Item 3 of the provisional agenda \*

REVIEW OF ONGOING INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATING  
TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Related work on persistent organic pollutants under the  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in the annex to the present note, information provided by the secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The information is circulated as submitted and has not been formally edited.

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\* UNEP/POPS/INC.5/1.

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Annex

**INFORMATION FOR THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS**  
*(Johannesburg, 4-9 December 2000)*

1. Nine of the 12 chemicals identified in the initial list of 'Persistent Organic Pollutants' (POPs) are pesticides. **FAO** does **not** recommend the use of these pesticides in agriculture; they have been banned in most industrialised and many developing countries, however, they remain in use in many regions, legally and illegally. Based on the criteria for the screening of proposed POPs (published as annex D in the report of INC 3) and looking at the specific exemptions, it becomes obvious that specific uses of certain POP pesticides will remain and that for the foreseeable future pesticides will continue to make up a significant proportion of the chemicals considered as POPs. It is the purpose of this note to provide a brief of FAO's ongoing activities directly related to POP pesticides.

2. By following the overall guiding principles for the sound management of pesticides provided in the **“International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides”** and promoting **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** as its overall pest control strategy, FAO is conducting various activities with impact on and relevance to POP pesticides. The following four areas are examples of ongoing work related to FAO normative functions, such as activities under the Rotterdam Convention, the Joint FAO-WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR), the development of FAO Pesticide Specifications, and FAO's field programme linked to technical assistance provided to developing countries, e.g. through the Global IPM Facility or the programme on obsolete pesticides.

3. Six pesticides out of the nine initial POP pesticides are subject to the **“Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade”**. This Convention was adopted in 1998. UNEP/FAO jointly provide the Interim Secretariat of this Convention. The established transparent information exchange procedures, e.g. the biannual PIC Circular published by the Interim Secretariat, identify the countries, which have given their consent to the import of those pesticides/chemicals. Further information can be obtained directly from the Interim Secretariat or through its homepage [www.pic.int/](http://www.pic.int/)

4. The **“Joint WHO/FAO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)”** estimates maximum residue levels for pesticides in food commodities moving in international trade within the CODEX ALIMENTARIUS. Since 1998 this Meeting has conducted dietary risk assessments for pesticide residues in food to allow estimation if the dietary intake is of concern. Governments are requested to submit monitoring and consumption data to the FAO Joint Secretary of this Meeting. Monitoring data for DDT residues in specific food items have been evaluated by the 2000 JMPR (September 2000). Further information can be obtained through FAO's homepage <http://www.fao.org/AG/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/>

5. **"FAO Pesticide Specifications"** represent an internationally recognised mechanism to define quality standards for pesticides. These specifications provide an international point of reference against which products can be measured and judged thereby preventing the trade sale and use of inferior products. As part of their registration requirements some countries require that products permitted for use comply with the relevant FAO specifications. FAO specifications may be extended to similar formulations produced by other manufacturers through a simple procedure for defining the equivalence of pesticide products. The process for the establishing FAO Specifications is detailed in 'Manual on the Development and Use of FAO Specifications for Plant Protection Products, including the New Procedure'. Further information is available under <http://www.fao.org/AG/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/>

6. The application of **IPM** includes the search for alternative management approaches against pests and diseases. The need for such alternatives for POP pesticides is obvious. As five of the nine POP pesticides are used against termites, FAO, UNEP and the Global IPM Facility recently conducted (Geneva, February 2000) a joint workshop to recommend strategies for managing termites in agriculture and constructions. The objectives of this workshop included the identification of new management approaches and not simply the replacement of a POP pesticide by another chemical. Further information can be obtained from the following web page <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops>

7. The FAO programme on “**Prevention and Disposal of Obsolete Pesticides**” has been in operation since 1994. This programme was initiated with the support of a Netherlands Trust Fund. During its initial phase it was restricted to Africa and the Near East. Since 1999, inventory data on stocks of obsolete pesticides have been collected from Latin America (supported by UNEP and Canada). The collection of similar data from selected Asian countries started this year based on support from Japan. Experience obtained through the inventory data from Africa and the Near East shows that about 30% of the 20,000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides are POP pesticides. For further information please refer to the homepage under <http://www.fao.org/AG/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Disposal/>

8. Following the decision of the FAO Council (111<sup>th</sup> Session, October 1996) recognizing the relevance of the envisaged legally binding instrument for certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs) for sustainable agricultural development, FAO has participated actively in the discussions and negotiations during the previous sessions of this International Negotiating Committee (INC). This decision is also reflected in the Strategic Framework for FAO 2000-2015, adopted at last year's Conference in November (30<sup>th</sup> Session, 1999). The Strategic Framework calls for support to the development of an international regulatory framework from a food and agriculture perspective in partnership with other UN organizations. Such a regulatory framework is seen by FAO as an important pre-requisite for achieving food security for all by supporting sustainable agricultural production.

9. The examples of ongoing and planned activities have been selected to reflect FAO's normative functions and its field programme. There are also other activities carried out by FAO that will indirectly support the implementation of the envisaged treaty, e.g. training workshops on implementing the Rotterdam Convention, FAO projects on IPM or in support of the Code of Conduct. FAO will continue with these activities, however, FAO is also open to receiving comments and suggestions from this INC with regard to its present and future involvement related to POP pesticides.

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