



United Nations
Environment
Programme



Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/7
4 March 2002

ENGLISH ONLY

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

Sixth session

Geneva, 17-21 June 2002

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants**

Note by the secretariat

1. Paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants states that “The Secretariat shall serve as a clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants, including information provided by Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.”
2. The Convention identifies information that Parties are required to exchange, directly or through the secretariat, or to submit to the secretariat, including information relevant to:
 - (a) The reduction or elimination of the production, use and release of persistent organic pollutants; and alternatives to persistent organic pollutants, including information relating to their risks as well as to their economic and social costs (paragraph 1 of Article 9);
 - (b) The register of specific exemptions (Article 4);
 - (c) Implementation plans (Article 7), including action plans for addressing unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants (Article 5) and use of DDT for disease vector control (Part II of Annex B);
 - (d) Party reporting (Article 15);

* UNEP/POPS/INC.6/1.

** Stockholm Convention, Article 9, paragraph 4.

K0260444 120302

(e) Effectiveness evaluations (Article 16);

(f) Notifications pursuant to notes (ii) and (iii) in Annex A and Annex B, reports by Parties on progress in eliminating polychlorinated biphenyls (Part II of Annex A) and the DDT Register (Part II of Annex B);

(g) Results of research, development and monitoring conducted pertaining to persistent organic pollutants (Article 11).

3. In addition to the information described in paragraph 2 above, the clearing-house mechanism could include information on persistent organic pollutants currently provided through United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) websites, such as:

(a) The documentation for sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

(b) A reference database on alternatives to persistent organic pollutants, including alternative approaches and addresses of experts;

(c) Lists of Stockholm Convention Focal Points and experts on persistent organic pollutants;

(d) Proceedings of workshops and other meetings; and

(e) Guidance documents and other reference materials.

4. The clearing-house mechanism could also serve as a portal to other sources of information on persistent organic pollutants, rather than try to duplicate the information contained in them.

5. The document UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5, prepared by the secretariat for the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, identifies key components of a clearing-house mechanism.

6. Possible performance criteria for the clearing-house mechanism may include:

(a) Collecting information actively from all relevant sources;

(b) Managing information effectively through electronic and hard copy media;

(c) Updating information regularly and often;

(d) Disseminating information as widely as possible through various means, including regular hardcopy (e.g., information circulars and newsletters) and CD-ROM distribution to established mailing lists and via the Internet;

(e) Providing information in a manner that is easy to find and understand for all potential users;

(f) Responding well to user-identified needs and providing a forum to express these needs;

(g) Taking advantage of potential enhanced efficiencies by coordinating with existing sources of information, including those associated with other multilateral environment agreements related to chemicals management.

7. Developing and maintaining the clearing-house will incur costs for staff, travel, meetings, office space, equipment and other materials, software, communication, mailing, publication, translation and other costs. These costs are estimated at between US\$ 1 and 1.3 million per year, based on costs incurred by clearing-house mechanisms operated under other multilateral environmental agreements. Guidance from the Committee on the operation and scope of the clearing-house mechanism is necessary for its further design

and development, including its operation on a pilot basis, and to enable the necessary steps to allow the fully functional clearing-house mechanism to begin operation by the entry into force of the Convention. Funding of \$250,000 per year is required for such development work.

Possible action by the Committee

8. The Committee may wish to take note of the above information and consider:
 - (a) Providing further guidance on the development of the clearing-house mechanism;
 - (b) Agreeing to an allocation of up to US\$ 250,000 per year in 2003 and 2004 for developing the clearing- house mechanism as part of the overall budget for the secretariat included in document UNEP/POPS/INC.6/3;
 - (c) Requesting the secretariat to develop a detailed operational plan and budget for the clearing-house mechanism to be considered by the Committee at its next session.
