



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.
General

UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/3
16 October 2004

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

EXPERT GROUP ON BEST AVAILABLE
TECHNIQUES AND BEST ENVIRONMENTAL
PRACTICES
Third session
Tokyo, Japan, 11-16 October 2004

REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON
BEST AVAILABLE TECHNIQUES AND BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

I. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, held from 17 to 21 June 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland, established the Expert Group on Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP) to develop guidelines on BAT and provisional guidance on BEP relevant to the provisions of Article 5 and Annex C of the Convention.¹
2. The first session of the Expert Group on BAT and BEP was held in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, United States of America from 10 to 14 March 2003 and the second session in Villarrica Park Lake Hotel, Villarrica, Chile from 8 to 12 December 2003.
3. The third session of the Expert Group was held at the Takanawa Prince Hotel, Tokyo, Japan from 11 to 16 October 2004. The session was opened at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 11 October 2004 by Mr. Robert Kellam (United States of America), co-chair of the Expert Group.
4. Opening statements were made by Mr. Seizo Matsumoto, Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, Mr. John Whitelaw, Deputy, UNEP Chemicals, and Mr. Kellam.
5. Mr. Matsumoto, speaking on behalf of the host country, welcomed the experts to the meeting and to Japan. He noted the growing concern over environmental issues such as global warming, deforestation and

¹ For the purposes of the current report, the guidelines on BAT and provisional guidance on BEP are hereinafter referred to as the guidelines.

soil erosion and said that it was important to take integrated measures with international coordination to address those issues, not just national measures. He made reference to the positive steps accomplished in the past aimed at environmental protection including the adoption of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, which had also led all stakeholders to vigorously negotiate the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. He added that Japan had acceded to the Stockholm Convention in August 2002 and welcomed its entry into force in May 2004. He stressed the importance of the current session as the draft guidelines on BAT and BEP had to be finalized for submission to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention in May 2005 and would provide guidelines on measures to be taken in every country. He outlined the work done recently in Japan to address the issue of dioxins, noting that the world's first environmental standard for dioxins was established in Japan in July 1999 and that the target to cut 90 per cent of total dioxin emission by March 2003 had been met and surpassed. He concluded by saying that Japan would continue to support the elimination and reduction of unintentional persistent organic pollutants and wished the meeting success in its work.

6. Mr. Whitelaw, speaking on behalf of Mr. Jim Willis, Director of UNEP Chemicals and Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention, said that 2004 had been a busy year for the chemical agenda and reflected countries' concerns on chemicals and their impact on human health and the environment, especially in the context of achieving sustainable development. 2004 had seen the entry into force of the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Rotterdam Convention and the second session of the Preparatory Committee on a Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management. He said that the Expert Group was addressing a major issue in the Stockholm Convention, which would continue to be of concern to Parties. The guidelines being prepared were crucial to the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention and it was important that countries had confidence in those guidelines. While there was pressure to conclude the work he urged experts to not lose sight of the need for rigour and said that the guidelines could continue to be updated to reflect trends, experience and on-going work. He reminded the Expert Group that it should not attempt to interpret or change the Convention or its own mandate and, if issues needed to be clarified, that could be entrusted to the Conference of the Parties. He acknowledged that preparing the guidelines had been a big task but that an impressive amount of work had already been accomplished in a short time. He concluded by thanking the Government of Japan for hosting the Expert Group meeting.

7. Mr. Kellam welcomed all members to the meeting, in particular those present for the first time, and noted that the Expert Group was faced with a challenging week. He thanked those members who had co-authored or coordinated sections of the draft guidelines and expressed satisfaction at the amount of work accomplished. A complete draft was ready for the Expert Group, he said, but much work was required to address remaining substantive issues and to work on the style, emphasis and overlap within the guidelines. He concurred with Mr. Whitelaw that it would be important for the Expert Group to forward substantially complete guidelines to the Conference of the Parties for adoption at its first meeting. The report to the Conference of the Parties might also include recommendations for further work. He said that the organization, structure and content of the guidelines should be ready by the end of the week for a final technical edit prior to transmittal to the Conference of the Parties.

8. A list of documents available to the session was provided in UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/INF/6.

Attendance

9. The session was attended by Government-designated experts from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Republic of Korea, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela and Zambia.

10. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations and United Nations specialized agencies were present: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

11. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Greenpeace International, International Council of Chemicals Associations (ICCA), International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), International POPS Elimination Network (IPEN), The European Cement Association (Cembureau), World Chlorine Council (WCC) and World Wide Fund for Nature-International (WWF).

12. The list of participants was provided in UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/INF/7.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Practical arrangements

13. A brief outline of the practical arrangements for the session was provided by the Secretariat to the Expert Group.

14. Pursuant to section VII of annex VII of UNEP/POP/INC.6/22, the following experts continued to serve as officers of the Expert Group:

Mr. Robert Kellam (United States of America)	Co-chair
Mr. Sergio Vives (Chile)	Co-chair

B. Organization of the Work

15. The Expert Group adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Practical arrangements;
 - (b) Organization of work;
 - (c) Report by the Secretariat on inter-sessional work requested by the Expert Group
3. Development of guidelines on best available techniques and provisional guidance on best environmental practices relevant to the provisions of Article 5 and Annex C of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
4. Process for presenting the report on the draft guidelines on best available techniques and provisional guidance on best environmental practices for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants at its first meeting.
5. Other matters
6. Adoption of the report
7. Closure of the session

16. The Expert Group had before it a scenario note for the session (UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/INF/1) prepared by the co-chairs of the Expert Group and the note by the Secretariat on a tentative schedule for the week (UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/INF/2). Mr. Kellam provided an explanation of how he and Mr. Vives expected the

work of the session to progress over the course of the week. The secretariat provided a timetable for preparation of the guidelines for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting to be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, 2-6 May 2005. Technical editing had to be completed by 15 November 2004 such that the document could be submitted for translation by 1 December 2004. It was expected that the guidelines would be ready for distribution by 1 March 2005.

C. Report by the Secretariat on inter-sessional work requested by the Expert Group

17. The Secretariat acknowledged progress made in completing the inter-sessional work requested by the Expert Group at its second session.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES ON BAT AND PROVISIONAL GUIDANCE
ON BEP RELEVANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 5 AND ANNEX C
OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

A. Overview of the organization and structure of the draft guidelines and guidance

18. Under the agenda item different proposals for revising the draft guidelines were introduced. Following a general discussion in plenary, a contact group was established on streamlining the structure of the guidelines co-chaired by Mr. Juan-Carlos Colombo (Argentina), Mr. Cliff Curtis (WWF) and Ms. Ute Karl (Germany). The contact group was mandated to examine the structure of the guidelines in order to streamline and consolidate it. The contact group was also requested to look at the listing of references as well as to undertake some technical editing on the appendices, nomenclature and harmonization, if time permitted. Finally, contact group members were asked to take into consideration the document on dioxins produced by the Government of Japan in 2003 in order to be able to formulate a general statement on what were unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants and their risks to humans and the environment.

19. Reporting back to the plenary, the contact group introduced a streamlined structure for the draft guidelines and a proposal was made to include executive summaries on each source category at the top of each of those sections on the availability of techniques to prevent and control the formation of unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants. It was further suggested that the different source categories be drafted in such a way that they could be stand alone documents. The contact group had not undertaken technical editing or harmonization but had prepared a general statement on unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants. The Expert Group noted that the proposed restructuring of the guidelines to address cross-cutting issues in one section would result in monitoring and waste hierarchy, among others, being addressed under the general BAT-BEP guidance, principles and cross-cutting considerations section.

20. The Expert Group reviewed and agreed to the revised structure of the draft guidelines that is contained in annex I of the present report.

21. It was suggested that countries would benefit from seeing achievable performance levels, as far as they were available, listed for each specific source category. There was discussion on how such levels should be described and whether they should be placed in the text or an annex of example national standards. Those could be reached by different techniques, including pollution prevention and control, and could be regulatory or voluntary. Within the guidelines the Expert Group agreed to use the term "achievable performance level". The Expert Group further agreed to amend and correct the specific values that were included in the text to ensure that they were accurate.

22. The Expert Group noted that the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal would be finalizing technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of persistent organic pollutants as wastes and agreed that work should be taken into account and all effort made to avoid duplication or overlap of work. A cross-reference to work of the Basel Convention was recommended in the relevant source

categories. The Expert Group then identified other cross-cutting issues between different source categories and further noted the need for integration of sustainable waste management strategies into the waste management hierarchy: reduce, reuse and recycle.

23. Strong concerns were raised on the lack of developing country capacity to manage, in particular, medical waste while contending with other high priority socio-economic issues. A paper detailing those concerns is contained in annex II of the present report. It was noted that, in the interim, developing countries may be obliged to use small-scale medical waste incinerators even if they were not identified as BAT or BEP in the provisional guidance. In that regard, it was said, there was need for early provision of technical assistance and financial resources for capacity building and institutional strengthening to enable conformance with the BAT/BEP documents for developing countries. The Expert Group noted the special concerns of African countries' lack of waste management capacity and agreed to highlight that concern for urgent consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting. The Expert Group also noted that the choice of a particular waste disposal option would not obviate the need for Parties to take into consideration the range of general techniques and practices for BAT and BEP identified in the guidance. The Group also agreed that special attention should be paid to training of operators as the best techniques could not work optimally with untrained personnel and a text to that effect would be included in the guidelines.

B. Introduction

24. The Secretariat introduced the text drafted for the introduction. The Expert Group was reminded that legal experts would be revisiting the text to ensure that it was in line with the requirements of the Stockholm Convention. It was suggested that further information be included in the introduction on the relationship between the Stockholm Convention and other Conventions. On that understanding the Expert Group agreed to the introduction contained in the draft guidelines.

25. The Expert Group examined a schematic proposed by Mr. Colombo and Mr. Patrick Finlay (Canada) which summarized measures to be taken on unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants under Article 5 of the Stockholm Convention. This was modified and adopted for inclusion in the introduction of the guidelines.

26. The Expert Group considered a text on relationships between the Stockholm Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements. The Expert Group suggested that as far as unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants were concerned the interlinkages between Conventions were primarily those with the Basel Convention. The Expert Group decided to limit the text to be included in the guidelines to refer solely to the Basel Convention.

27. The Expert Group agreed on text for inclusion in the introduction of the draft guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

C. Consideration of alternatives in the application of BAT

28. Mr. Jack Weinberg (IPEN), co-coordinator of text on alternatives, outlined the principle issues concerning the presentation of alternatives in the draft guidelines. In the ensuing discussion, the Expert Group reiterated that consideration of alternatives should be restricted to Annex C sources. One expert requested that some guidance be provided to countries developing their national action plans that would enable them to investigate possibilities for progressive investment in a move towards BAT. That, he suggested, could be included in the section on socio-economic considerations.

29. A contact group was established to discuss a source by source overview and consideration of possible alternatives, co-chaired by Mr. Howard Ellis (New Zealand), Mr. Hans-Peter Fahrni (Switzerland) and Mr. Weinberg. Reporting back to plenary the contact group noted that while developing concise

statements of alternatives would be a useful tool, especially for countries developing their national implementation plans, time did not permit such an exercise for every source category at the current session of the Expert Group. The contact group suggested that criteria be developed to facilitate compilation and review of possible alternatives. The Expert Group recognized the need to do further work on this issue and suggested further work to be recommended to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its first meeting.

30. It was noted that Article 9 of the Convention mandated the Secretariat to develop and maintain a clearing house. The Group agreed that technical information on alternatives should be included as a priority. It suggested also that economic instruments and emerging technologies be included, as well as technical guidelines on POPs currently being developed by the Basel Convention. The Secretariat was urged to undertake that task in an open and transparent manner and to ensure continual updating of the information.

31. The coordinators of the different source categories were invited to prepare short summary statements to set the stage of the BAT-BEP guidelines and guidance within the broader framework of environmentally sound management and were encouraged to identify alternatives if and as appropriate for inclusion within the summaries of the specific source categories.

32. A small drafting group was established to develop a general text on alternatives. The Expert Group revised and approved that text for inclusion in the alternatives section of the draft guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

D. General guidance in the application of BEP and BAT

33. The Secretariat introduced the draft text on general guidance. The Expert Group agreed to the inclusion of the text in the general guidance section of the guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention, subject to the Secretariat review to ensure consistency with the Stockholm Convention.

34. The Expert Group considered a number of cross-cutting issues that are discussed below.

35. The Expert Group agreed on text on the formation of unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants to be included in the draft guidelines submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

36. The Expert Group considered it useful to have a cross-cutting section on waste management considerations. It was suggested that the text be general in nature yet refer in specific subsections to municipal waste, hazardous waste and medical waste separately. It was further suggested that an overall principle that would include the value of a waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse and recycle or prevent, reuse and recycle) be included. Issues such as source reduction, life-cycle consideration, economic instruments and producer/consumer/government responsibility were also noted for inclusion. The Expert Group stressed that considerations on waste should be developed under a framework of a broader waste management policy.

37. The Expert Group agreed to text on waste management considerations to be included in the draft guidelines submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

38. The Expert Group turned its attention to the issue of flue gas cleaning systems which was also considered to be a cross-cutting issue. An overarching text was developed for inclusion in the guidelines. While some reference to comparative costs of different techniques had been proposed for inclusion in the text, such figures were considered to be misleading. A more valuable inclusion, it was suggested, would be the inclusion of qualitative indicators on the merits of different techniques. The Expert Group agreed to the inclusion of the text on flue gas cleaning systems as modified by discussions held in plenary.

39. The Expert Group agreed to text on the management of flue gas and other residues to be included in the draft guidelines submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

40. A contact group was established on monitoring, co-chaired by Ms. Pat Costner (Greenpeace), Mr. Shinichi Sakai (Japan) and Mr. Bo Wahlstrom (Sweden), to assess needs associated with monitoring, including guidelines for appropriate monitoring programmes; validated, standardized methods for sampling and analysis; and the economic burden of monitoring.

41. Reporting back to plenary, the contact group suggested that a general statement on monitoring be included as a cross-cutting issue in the introductory section of the guidelines. Specific monitoring methods or performance indicators could be described in each source category with their relative advantages and disadvantages for different applications.

42. The Expert Group considered monitoring to be essential for large facilities. One expert noted that quasi continuous monitoring already existed in sophisticated larger plants. Several experts suggested that regional laboratories and expertise be developed and enlisted to augment regional capacity to undertake analyses. At the same time national capacities should also be further developed. The cost and legal implications of transport and analysis of samples would require further study. If monitoring were required, clearly defined methodologies and achievable performance levels needed to be adopted. It was suggested, however, that smaller installations be exempted from periodic, mandatory monitoring owing to the cost implications. The Expert Group was reminded of the implications for eligibility for funding of linking monitoring to BAT and BEP as the financial mechanism would give priority to obligations under the Convention.

43. The Expert Group agreed to text on monitoring to be included in the draft guidelines submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

44. The Expert Group agreed to text on training for decision-makers and technical training to be included in the draft guidelines submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

E. General principles to be considered in the application of BEP and BAT

45. Mr. Finlay introduced the text on general principles noting that it was a reminder of some environmental policies and principles that could be useful to Parties as they developed their national implementation plans and action plans for unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants.

46. It was recognized that the reference to examples of international, regional and national principles would be useful to countries and the essence could be captured under a different heading and in a different format. The Expert Group agreed to include text under this agenda item to be included in the draft guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on the understanding that the heading be changed and that a more generalized text would be included taking into account discussions held in plenary.

F. Guidelines by source category listed in Part II of Annex C of the Stockholm Convention

47. Under this agenda item, the Expert Group addressed those source categories that had been redrafted subsequent to the second session of the Expert Group and taking into account comments submitted to the coordinators. Presentations were made by: Mr. Siegmund Boehmer (Austria) coordinator on incinerators for medical waste; Ms. Hille Hyytiä (Finland) on production of pulp using elemental chlorine or chemicals generating elemental chlorine for bleaching; Ms. Karl on cement kilns firing hazardous wastes; Mr. Kellam on incinerators for municipal and hazardous waste, and sewage sludge; and Mr. Finlay on thermal processes

in the metallurgical industry included in Part II of Annex C of the Stockholm Convention (secondary copper production, sinter plants in the iron and steel industry, secondary aluminium production and secondary zinc production). A brief presentation was also made by Mr. Willem Van Loo (Cembureau) on a WBCSD/SINTEF (World Business Council for Sustainable Development/The Foundation for Industrial and Scientific Research of Norway) March 2004 report on formation and release of POPs in the cement industry.

49. In the ensuing discussions several specific comments and amendments were made on ways to refine and improve the specific source categories in the guidelines. The coordinators revised the draft text to reflect comments from experts. The Expert Group examined the revised texts and agreed to their inclusion, as amended, in the draft guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

50. The Expert Group adopted the revised guidelines and decided to forward them to the Conference of Parties for consideration at its first meeting.

G. Guidelines/guidance by source category listed in Part III of Annex C of the Stockholm Convention

51. Under this agenda item, the Expert Group first addressed the source categories that had not yet been discussed during the first two sessions of the Expert Group and had not been circulated for comments following their drafting. Presentations were made by the respective coordinators of the groups drafting those source categories: Mr. David Atkinson (Australia) on fossil fuels-fired utility and industrial boilers; and Ms. Nicola Lettington (United Kingdom) on crematoria and on animal carcass destruction;

52. The Expert Group then turned to those source categories that had been taking into account comments submitted to the coordinators. Brief presentations were made by the respective coordinators of the groups drafting those source categories by: Mr. William Carroll (ICCA) and Mr. Francis Kihumba (Kenya) on open burning of wastes; Mr. Finlay on thermal processes in the metallurgical industry not mentioned in Part II of Annex C of the Stockholm Convention (secondary lead production, primary aluminium production, magnesium production, secondary steel productions and primary metals); Ms. Vandana Naidu (Fiji) on residential combustion sources; Ms. Karl on firing installations for wood and other biomass fuels; Mr. Carroll on chemical production processes; Mr. Sakai and Ms. Heidi Fiedler (UNEP) on motor vehicles and on shredder plants for the treatment of end of life vehicles; Ms. Fiedler on textile and leather dyeing and finishing and on waste oil refineries and Mr. Finlay on smouldering of copper cables.

53. In the ensuing discussions several specific comments and amendments were made on ways to refine and improve the text for specific source categories in the guidelines. The coordinators revised the draft texts to reflect comments from experts. The Expert Group considered the revised texts and agreed to their inclusion, as amended, in the draft guidelines to be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

54. Regarding the texts on waste shredder plants for the treatment of end of life vehicles and waste oil refineries, the Expert Group agreed that the available data on these sources suggested that they distributed rather than formed unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants. A summary statement will be included in the guidelines to this effect. More information on the source categories could be made available at a later stage through the Stockholm Convention clearing-house mechanism served by the Secretariat pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention.

55. With reference to the source category on crematoria, the Expert Group noted that, given the nature of the topic, the guidelines should recognize ethical, cultural and religious sensitivities.

H. Applicable existing national and sub-national standards, guidelines or guidance for BAT

56. Mr. Finlay introduced a draft compilation of standards, guidelines and guidance. It was agreed that this information should be updated and made available through the Stockholm Convention clearing-house mechanism.

I. Applicable reference materials from various sources including assessment methods and measurement techniques

57. It was agreed that information under this agenda item should be developed, regularly updated and made available through the Stockholm Convention clearing-house mechanism.

IV. PROCESS FOR PRESENTING THE REPORT ON THE DRAFT GUIDELINES ON BEST AVAILABLE TECHNIQUES AND PROVISIONAL GUIDANCE ON BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS AT ITS FIRST MEETING.

58. The Expert Group agreed to forward the draft guidelines to the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention for consideration and possible adoption at its first meeting. The Expert Group endorsed the guidelines but noted that while BAT and BEP for many of the specific source categories were complete or very well advanced, others needed additional work. It was also worthy of note that the guidelines reflected work done to date under a very tight time schedule.

59. The Expert Group agreed to bring to the attention of the Conference of the Parties the process that had been followed in preparing the guidelines and the outstanding issues and concerns that remain to be addressed. This was to be included in the report of the Expert Group to the Conference of the Parties to be prepared by the co-chairs. The report is to reflect also, inter alia, developing country concerns on the socio-economic impact of applying BAT and the lack of capacity to do so, the concurrent need for technical and financial assistance and the need for further work to continue to develop the guidelines. With regard to developing country concerns, the Expert Group agreed to recommend to the Conference of the Parties that it consider special support to these countries.

60. The Expert Group further suggested that the report by the co-chairs include a recommendation that the Conference of the Parties consider how to update the guidelines and associated issues.

61. A list of issues requiring further work was drawn up by the Expert Group for submission to the Conference of the Parties as part of the co-chairs report.

V. OTHER MATTERS

62. No other matters were raised by the Expert Group.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

63. The Expert Group adopted its report on the basis of the draft report contained in document UNEP/POPS/EGB.3/L.1, which had been circulated during the session, as amended, and on the understanding that finalization of the report would be entrusted to the co-chairs working in consultation with the Secretariat.

VII. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

64. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the co-chairs declared the session closed at 7.00 p.m. on Saturday, 16 October 2004.

Annex I

STRUCTURE FOR THE BAT-BEP DOCUMENT

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Annex II

DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONCERNS RELATING TO MEETING BAT-BEP REQUIREMENTS,
IN PARTICULAR, IN THE AREA OF MEDICAL WASTE,
WHILE CONTENDING WITH OTHER HIGH PRIORITY SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

The developing country parties expressed with concern, the difficulties that may be confronting some of their member to meet the BAT-BEP standards for persistent organic pollutants in medical waste management due to lack of or inadequacy of capacity and technology while contending with other high priority socio-economic issues. However, we recognize that medical waste may have to be disposed off in a manner that will prevent the spread of infectious diseases arising from the present practice of co-disposal of hazardous medical wastes with other domestic type wastes in the open dump. Therefore, in the absence of sufficient, timely and appropriate international technical and financial assistance, developing country parties may have to be allowed in the short-term the use of the other options which are better than open dumping, including small scale hospital incinerators, even if they are not BAT, even though many aspects of BAT and BEP guidance would still apply and still be useful, especially waste management measures including segregation, and minimization. In this regard, there is need for early provision of financial resources for capacity building and institutional strengthening to enable compliance with BAT-BEP guidelines for POPs management by developing country parties. We note with interest the Global Environment Facility(GEF)/United Nations Development Programme/World Health Organization Medical Waste Management demonstration project under development, and we encourage the GEF, its implementing agencies and others to support and rapidly initiate much more work in this area. This would be greatly facilitated by developing countries making the related BAT/BEP issues and important part of their National Sustainable Development Strategies.

The need for special assistance in meeting BAT and BEP requirements for medical waste management is indicative of broader concerns relative to implementation of BAT and BEP for many developing countries. Implementation of BAT and BEP must be made broadly compatible with sustainable development goals in order to encourage development and poverty reduction while, at the same time, taking needed measures to protect public health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.