



Distr.: General  
22 February 2007

Original: English



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

**Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm  
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants  
Third meeting**

Dakar, 30 April–4 May 2007

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:  
information exchange**

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

**Note by the Secretariat**

**I. Introduction**

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 concept of a clearing-house mechanism for the exchange of information on persistent organic pollutants was discussed by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants at its third, fourth, sixth and seventh sessions, on the basis of documents UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5, UNEP/POPS/INC.4/INF/4, UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/7 and UNEP/POPS/INC.7/12.
3. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties had before it document UNEP/POPS/COP.1/15 on a clearing-house mechanism for information exchange on persistent organic pollutants. Owing to the volume of work before it, however, the Conference was unable to take up the agenda item on information exchange under which the document was to be discussed.
4. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties discussed document UNEP/POPS/COP.2/13, which contained a note by the Secretariat on a clearing-house mechanism for

\* UNEP/POPS/COP.3/1.

\*\* Stockholm Convention, Article 9; report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its first meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.1/31), paragraph 45; report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/30), annex I, decision SC-2/17.

information exchange on persistent organic pollutants, and adopted decision SC-2/17 on the clearing-house mechanism. In that decision, the Conference, among other things:

- (a) Approved the pilot-phase information-exchange activities referred to in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the note by the Secretariat on the clearing-house mechanism;
  - (b) Invited Parties and other interested stakeholders to provide the Secretariat by 31 October 2006 with comments on the draft prepared by the Secretariat of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for the clearing-house mechanism contained in document UNEP/POPS/COP.2/INF/8, and on their information exchange needs and priorities for 2008–2011;
  - (c) Requested the Secretariat to prepare, taking into account the comments received, a revised draft of the strategic plan for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.
5. A progress report on the pilot-phase information-exchange activities is set out in chapter II of the present note.
6. The comments and information exchange needs and priorities submitted by Parties are reflected in annex III to the present document. The submissions emphasized the importance of information exchange for capacity-building and technology transfer as well as the need to equip and train national focal points for effective use of the clearing-house.
7. Taking into account the submissions by Parties referred to above, the Secretariat prepared a revised draft of the strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operations of the clearing-house mechanism, which is set out in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/9. The revised draft strategic plan focuses on the information exchange at the global level. The role of the clearing-house mechanism at national and regional levels and its relation to regional centres and capacity assistance may need to be further elaborated.
8. Information exchange and management requirements under the Stockholm Convention and other details relevant to the development of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention are provided in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10.
9. The Secretariat has analysed the information exchange needs and priorities of Parties and the needs and priorities of the Secretariat for the period 2008–2009 and has prepared a workplan and budget for the clearing-house mechanism activities for that period. These activities correspond to the first phase of the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism as outlined in the strategic plan. They are presented in annex I to the present note.

## II. Progress report

10. The following table provides a summary report of the progress made in the implementation of clearing-house mechanism activities.

Activity		Progress
<b>a. Information capital component (information content)</b>		
(i)	Completion of the analysis of information exchange and management requirements under the Convention.	Completed. <sup>1</sup> The requirements for information exchange by the Convention are listed in annex II to document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10. The list will need to be reviewed periodically as new decisions of the Conference of the Parties are adopted and as new procedures are put in place in the implementation of the Convention.
<b>b. Operational capital component (tools, products and services)</b>		
(i)	Design, development and deployment of the electronic reporting system for Article 15.	Partially completed. <sup>2</sup> Several Parties have used the system for submitting their national reports pursuant to Article 15. More work is required to make the system available in languages and to prepare a user manual.

<sup>1</sup> See document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10, annex II.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.pops.int/Art15>.

Activity		Progress
(ii)	Design, development and deployment of a contacts database for messaging (part 1) and meeting management (part 2).	Work is in progress.
(iii)	Design, development and deployment of the Convention's electronic document repository, including internet access.	Work is in progress.
(iv)	Retooling of the Convention website as a publishing vehicle.	Prototype developed. <sup>3</sup> Work is in progress for the delivery of version 1.
(v)	Incorporating the DDT information system (to be developed jointly by UNEP and the World Health Organization with separate funding) into the clearing-house mechanism.	Postponed due to proposed changes in the DDT reporting form. <sup>4</sup>
<b>c. Human capital component (network development)</b>		
(i)	Defining the initial network member categories, including roles and responsibilities.	The definition of the initial network member categories is completed, the list of which is provided in annex II to the present document. Their roles and responsibilities with regard to information exchange are to be defined.
(ii)	Processing network member nominations in each category.	The Parties' official contact points and national focal point are being nominated. A more proactive approach is required in this area.
(iii)	Identifying partner institutions and initiatives which should be affiliated to the Secretariat's information exchange activities.	Work is in progress.
<b>d. Clearing-house mechanism management component</b>		
(i)	Analysis of Party and Secretariat information exchange needs and priorities for 2008–2011.	The needs and priorities submitted by Parties are compiled in annex III to the present note. The Secretariat has taken them into account when drafting the workplan for the first phase.
(ii)	Development of a workplan and budget for 2008 and 2009 and projected workplan budget for 2010 and 2011.	Completed for 2008–2009. The workplan is presented in annex I to the present document.
(iii)	Baseline evaluation of existing Secretariat information exchange tools and activities.	Performance indicators for the evaluation of the clearing-house mechanism have been developed. <sup>5</sup> The baseline evaluation will be finalized by the end of 2007.

### III. Next steps

11. The Secretariat will finalize all pending pilot phase activities by the end of 2007. This will enable the start of the first phase in January 2008.
12. It is proposed that the implementation of the first phase be conducted during the 2008–2011 period. A draft costed workplan for 2008–2009 is given in annex I to the present note.
13. To initiate the implementation of the first phase, an estimated \$135,000 will be needed in 2008 and \$145,000 will be needed in 2009. The funding for the period 2010–2011 will be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, in accordance with the time scale proposed in the revised strategic plan.

<sup>3</sup> Prototype available at <http://chm.pops.int>.

<sup>4</sup> UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/2.

<sup>5</sup> UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10, annex IV (performance indicators).

#### **IV. Possible action by the Conference**

14. The Conference of the Parties may wish:

(a) To take note of the progress made in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism and invite Parties and other stakeholders to continue their support to the Secretariat in the development of the clearing-house mechanism;

(b) To endorse the revised draft of the strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism, contained in document UNEP/COP.3/INF/9, as the framework to be used by the Secretariat, Parties and other interested stakeholders for the further development of information exchange activities and projects pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention;

(c) To approve the activities and budget for the first phase of implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, as set out in annex I to the present note;

(d) To invite Parties and other interested stakeholders to promote and contribute to the clearing-house mechanism and to register as members of the clearing-house mechanism network when the system becomes available on the Secretariat's website;

(e) To request the Secretariat to prepare a proposal, for discussion by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, on the possible role of the clearing-house mechanism at the national and regional levels, taking into account the terms of reference for regional and subregional centres and other relevant decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

## Annex I

## Draft workplan for the first phase of implementation of the clearing-house mechanism (2008–2009)

Activity		Deadline	Development costs <sup>1</sup>	
			2008	2009
<b>a. Information capital component (information content)</b>				
1	Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee web corner	September 2009	\$0.00	\$0.00
2	Effectiveness evaluation web corner	December 2009	\$0.00	\$0.00
3	Inventory of all clearing-house mechanism information products and their target audience	April 2008	\$2,900.00	\$1,000.00
4	Web database application and questionnaire to collect and track user information needs and gaps (web pools)	Prototype: June 2008 Final: August 2009	\$4,400.00	\$12,000.00
<b>b. Operational capital component (services and tools)</b>				
5	<b>Total maintenance costs for pilot phase and existing tools</b>		\$19,200.00	\$19,200.00
6	Electronic reporting system for DDT <sup>2</sup>	May 2008	\$0.00	\$0.00
7	Maintenance of DDT electronic reporting system		\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
8	Clearing-house mechanism required ad-ons for the core system platform. <i>Includes: A helpdesk forum, web pools, inventories of tools, standards, information technology used, the questionnaire and evaluation data recording subsystem</i>	June 2009	\$18,000.00	\$9,000.00
9	Query-response database, including FAQs	Prototype: July 2008 Final: February 2009	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
10	A system to track information products distribution (for printed materials, CD-ROMs, etc)	February 2009	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
<b>c. Human capital component (network development)</b>				
11	Review network member categories, including roles and responsibilities	Continuous	\$0.00	\$0.00
12	Processing of network member nominations	Continuous	\$0.00	\$0.00
13	Foster agreements with partner institutions and initiatives that should be affiliated to the information exchange activities of the Secretariat	Continuous	\$0.00	\$0.00
14	Clearing-house mechanism e-newsletter	March 2009	\$0.00	\$300.00
15	User satisfaction web pools and rewarding tool (points)	March 2009	\$6,000.00	\$5,000.00
16	Development of the clearing-house mechanism brokering database allowing Parties, observers and the Secretariat to exchange information. <i>The system covers the following topics: provision of expertise; donor/funding brokering; technology transfer brokering; capacity- building and capacity assistance; tracking partnerships and agreements; sound measures; alternatives and their social and economic impacts;</i>	October 2009	\$80,000.00	\$90,000.00

<b>d. Clearing-house mechanism management component</b>				
17	Analysis of Parties and Secretariat information exchange needs and priorities for 2010–2011	October 2008	\$0.00	\$0.00
18	Adjustment of the work plan and budget for 2010–2011	November 2008	\$0.00	\$0.00
19	Mid-term evaluation of the first phase (2008–2009)	October 2008	\$0.00	\$0.00
		Total cost	\$135,000.00	\$145,000.00

Estimated software maintenance costs in 2010–2011 \$34,180.00

<sup>1</sup> These costs do not include staff time, which includes:

- The information manager (P4)
- The webmaster (G5)
- The data entry and quality control clerk (G4).

<sup>2</sup> The development of the DDT electronic reporting system is budgeted separately.

## Annex II

### Initial network member categories

The Secretariat has conducted a preliminary assessment and has identified the following groups of key players with a possible involvement in the clearing-house mechanism. These groups, which could serve as the initial clearing-house mechanism network categories, are as follows:

- (a) Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies;
- (b) Secretariat and Conference Services;
- (c) Parties to the Convention (through official contact points<sup>1</sup> and national focal points<sup>2</sup>);
- (d) States non-Parties (through official contact points);
- (e) Environmental non-governmental organizations;
- (f) Industry and private sector associations;
- (g) UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements (including information exchange initiatives such as the Chemical Information Exchange Network, the Information Exchange Network on Capacity-building for the Sound Management of Chemicals, pollutant release and transfer registers, etc.);
- (h) United Nations bodies and specialized agencies;
- (i) Funding agencies and mechanisms and other donors;
- (j) Researchers, universities and related initiatives;
- (k) Regional centres and other persistent organic pollutant information centres.

---

<sup>1</sup> See decision SC-2/16.

<sup>2</sup> Article 9, paragraph 3 of the Convention.

## Annex III

**Comments by Parties on the first draft of a strategic plan prepared by the Secretariat for establishing procedures for the clearing-house mechanism, and information exchange needs and priorities for the period 2008–2011**

Country		Comments
China	Strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mission of the clearing-house mechanism should also include promotion of the communication and exchange of sound measures and valuable experiences in the implementation of the Convention.</li> <li>The clearing-house mechanism should be able to provide information analysis and make timely responses.</li> </ul>
	Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding chemicals under review to be listed as persistent organic pollutants, the information on the environmental and health risks, production, use, alternatives, related international policies and actions and social and economic impacts of possible control measures should be considered as priorities for information exchange.</li> <li>Information on best available techniques and best environmental practices and social and economic impacts of possible control measures.</li> <li>Information on facilitating technology transfer and capacity-building for the implementation of the Convention.</li> <li>Information on management instruments and measures for the control and reduction of persistent organic pollutants.</li> </ul>
Norway	Strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We find the draft strategic plan comprehensive, well-founded and relevant to the objectives of the clearing-house mechanism on information exchange on persistent organic pollutants.</li> </ul> <p>We would like the Secretariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present possible scenarios on the scope of work for the Secretariat, i.e. relating to the division of roles and responsibility in particular between the Secretariat and the individual Parties through their national focal points.</li> <li>In line with the scenarios above, to present the possible financing needs for the clearing-house mechanism.</li> <li>To elaborate on whether, and how, the Secretariat will perform validation and quality control activities in relation to the information submitted to the clearing-house mechanism.</li> <li>To elaborate on the possible synergies with the Rotterdam and Basel conventions. We also suggest, provided that a joint working group on synergies is established between the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel conventions, that the synergies working group is informed on the work and status of work on the clearing-house mechanism for information exchange under the Stockholm Convention, as this work may be less known to the Parties of the other two conventions.</li> <li>To elaborate on how experiences from other clearing-house mechanisms are taken into account when drafting the strategic plan.</li> </ul>
	Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norway recognizes the importance information exchange has in relation to capacity-building and technology transfer, as stated in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.</li> </ul>
Burundi	Strategic plan	<p>The strategic plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the mechanism is flexible and accessible to all Parties.</li> <li>Ensure that the mechanism makes available the relevant information, addressing the information gaps of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.</li> <li>Ensure that the Convention focal points are equipped and trained to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism.</li> </ul>
	Priorities	<p>The following activities are considered as priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular and periodic updating of the inventories and evaluations on persistent organic pollutants.</li> <li>Equipping and training the institutional focal points of the Stockholm Convention to enable them to exchange information.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating and making sustainable the national chemical information exchange network.</li> <li>• Equipping and training the main national stakeholders (private and public institutions) to enable them to exchange information.</li> <li>• Creating a database on persistent organic pollutants.</li> <li>• Organizing training and information sessions oriented to the main stakeholders managing persistent organic pollutants.</li> <li>• Organizing and making sustainable reliable data and information collection systems on persistent organic pollutants at the national level.</li> <li>• Providing timely responses to all information requests addressed to the country by the Secretariat of the Convention and other Parties.</li> <li>• Producing periodic and regular national reports on the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and submitting them to the Secretariat.</li> </ul>
Slovak Republic	Strategic plan	<p>The Strategic plan should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to support relevant work at the national level too.</li> <li>• The need to ensure that the national information base on persistent organic pollutants is at an appropriate level and in compliance with relevant European Union legislation and reflects several activities based on Regulation (EC) No. 850/2004 on persistent organic pollutants.</li> </ul>