



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Delegations

Subject : Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent
Organic Pollutants (Geneva, 4-8 May 2009)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find annexed a note from the Presidency on the above subject, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 25 June 2009.

**Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention
on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Geneva, 4-8 May 2009)
- Information from the Presidency -**

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants took place on the fifth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force. Representatives of more than 150 governments, IGOs and NGOs attended the meeting, chaired by Mr. Alireza Moaiyeri (Islamic Republic of Iran). Throughout the meeting, the EU played an active role and significantly contributed to the successful outcome of the Conference. Despite extremely difficult negotiations going on in many parallel meetings, the landmark decisions taken provide a clear signal that the international community is ready to meet the challenges of a POPs-free future, which was the motto of the whole week, and to provide even stronger protection for human health and the environment from the adverse effects of toxic substances.

The Conference took a historic decision to add nine new chemicals to the Annexes to the Convention and so extend the scope of the Convention from the original "dirty dozen" to 21 substances, many of which, e.g. Lindane and polybrominated diphenyl ethers and PFOS, are still widely used as pesticides, flame retardants and for a number of other commercial purposes. The EU fully achieved its ambitious goal of listing all the nominated substances, however this means that the EU will have to swiftly adapt the existing EU regulation dealing with POPs to the COP 4 decisions. An agreement on listing was part of a compromise package deal reached early on Saturday morning, which linked the issue to financial and technical assistance.

Despite all the efforts of the EU and JUSSCANNZ countries and their strong support at both expert and ministerial level, Parties failed to reach consensus on the non-compliance procedures and mechanism. The working text has been forwarded to COP 5 for further discussion.

The COP 4 successfully adopted a recommendation package prepared by the Ad-hoc Joint Working Group on Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the implementation of which should greatly improve the coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of all three conventions and avoid duplication of effort. The decision gives a green light for the establishment of joint services on an interim basis as well as for preparation for the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties that will decide on the joint work to be undertaken. The EU has played an active part in the participatory and bottom-up process which led to the outcome adopted, and strongly advocated adoption of the decision.

The Conference evaluated for the first time the Convention's effectiveness in reducing POPs releases and agreed on the further work needed to improve the global monitoring programme, building on various national and regional monitoring systems. Parties agreed that a six-year period is a suitable interval for subsequent effectiveness evaluation.

An important step forward has been achieved with regard to DDT. Parties endorsed the establishment of a global alliance for the development and deployment of products, methods and strategies as alternatives to DDT for disease vector control. COP 4 urged Parties to participate actively in the alliance and welcomed the involvement of all other governments, the private sector, IGOs and NGOs, researchers and philanthropic institutions in the effort to achieve the dual aims of reducing reliance on DDT and reducing transmission of the malaria vector and other disease carriers now controlled by DDT.

Parties also endorsed the establishment of a Polychlorinated Biphenyls Elimination Network (PEN) and invited the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal to join the network on an equal footing. The aim of the Network is to promote information exchange between Parties, donors, holders of PCBs, IGOs as well as NGOs, experts and the industry and business sectors with a view to achieving the goals of the Convention for the environmentally sound management of PCBs by 2028. The PEN task will consist of key data establishment and evaluating whether the use of PCBs declines over time.

The endorsement of the nominated Stockholm Convention Regional Centres for technical assistance and capacity building was a crucial issue for the developing countries, in spite of the fact that recognition of a centre did not entail budgetary support from the Convention. The final decision on this matter, endorsing 8 out of 12 nominated centres, was in line with the EU position highlighting that only those centres meeting the criteria collectively agreed at previous COPs and that have demonstrated the necessary attributes and capabilities can be endorsed. Two of the endorsed centres are located in the EU (Spain and the Czech Republic).

Furthermore, the Conference adopted a decision calling on developed countries, in the context of the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility, while being aware of the funding needs assessment and in the light of the listing of new POPs, to make every effort to make adequate financial resources available to enable developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to fulfil their obligations under the Convention as part of the compromise package deal.

COP 4 also welcomed the positive report on the second review of the financial mechanism, noting the significant contribution of the GEF for POPs since the adoption of the Convention. Parties concluded that the methodological framework used in the review should be followed in the future and invited the GEF to provide a response to the report on the second review in its report to COP 5.

The Conference approved the programme activities and operational budget for the biennium 2010-2011 of 5,839,267 USD for 2010 and 5,873,643 USD for 2011. For the first time the budget format allows Parties to see the programme of work and its relation with resources. In comparison with the previous biennium Parties estimated that contributions will not increase by more than 2,3%.

The Parties welcomed the offer of the Government of Argentina to host the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in the capital city of Buenos Aires in May 2011.

The Czech Presidency regards the outcome of COP 4 as a success, apart from the result of the non-compliance negotiation. Further work will be needed to achieve a breakthrough in this area so closely linked to the core of the implementation of the Convention. The Presidency thanks the European Commission and all Member States for their support and collaboration in the preparatory process and especially during the difficult negotiations at COP 4.