



**Basel Convention on the  
Control of Transboundary  
Movements of Hazardous  
Wastes and Their Disposal**

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**Rotterdam Convention on  
the Prior Informed Consent  
Procedure for Certain  
Hazardous Chemicals and  
Pesticides in International  
Trade**



**Stockholm Convention on  
Persistent Organic  
Pollutants**

Conferences of the parties to  
the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions  
Second simultaneous extraordinary meetings  
Geneva, 28 April–10 May 2013

**Information on the high-level segment of the ordinary and  
simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the  
parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**I. Background**

1. The high-level segment of the ordinary and simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday, 9 May and the morning of Friday, 10 May 2013 will focus on the theme: “Synergies and the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions at the national, regional and global levels”. A series of ministerial round tables are planned for Thursday afternoon, followed by a presentation on Friday morning of the key messages emerging from the round-table discussions.
2. The present note contains additional information on the high-level segment:
  - (a) General organizational aspects and proposed annotated agenda (sections II and III);
  - (b) Information on the theme of the high-level segment to guide the ministerial round-table discussions planned for Thursday, 9 May from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. (section IV).

**II. General organizational aspects**

**A. Timing**

3. The high-level segment will take place on Thursday, 9 May from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and continue on Friday, 10 May from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## **B. Overall objectives**

4. Based on discussions held during the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on 13 and 14 December 2012, the high-level segment will have the following overall objectives:

- (a) To identify opportunities to more effectively and efficiently manage chemicals and wastes through collaborative and coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions at the national, regional and global levels;
- (b) To encourage synergies among relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels;
- (c) To elevate the profile of chemicals and waste management as key components of sustainable development in national development agendas;
- (d) To provide an opportunity to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices.

## **C. Theme**

5. In line with the discussions held by the joint bureaux, the theme for the high-level segment will focus on the synergistic implementation of the three conventions at the national, regional and global levels. Information on the theme, which is contained in section IV of the present note, has been developed and serves as guidance for the round-table discussions.

## **D. Preparatory work**

6. The joint meeting of the bureaux agreed on the establishment of a small group to help to prepare for the high-level segment comprising members of the bureaux of the three conventions and representing regional groups:

- (a) Mr. Luis Vayas-Valdivieso (Ecuador)
- (b) Mr. Mohammed Oglah Hussein Khashashneh (Jordan)
- (c) Ms. Gladys Njeri Maina (Kenya)
- (d) Mr. Aleksandar Vesić (Ms. Tatjana Markov Milinković) (Serbia)
- (e) Mr. Franz Perrez (Switzerland)
- (f) Mr. James Mulolo (Zambia)

7. The members of this group have worked, with the support of the Secretariat, to develop the arrangements for and the theme of the high-level segment.

## **E. Briefings and information on the organization of the high-level segment**

8. Materials relevant to the organization of the high-level segment will be sent to participating ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalent). These materials will also be made available online on the website of the Secretariat, <http://synergies.pops.int/?tabid=2914>. In addition, mission briefings will be organized to provide, among other things, updated information on the organization of the high-level segment. The Secretariat will also provide a brief overview of its organization prior to the commencement of the segment (possibly the day before) during the plenary of the ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention.

## **III. Annotated agenda**

### **A. Thursday, 9 May 2013: afternoon session**

#### **1. Opening of the high-level segment (3–4 p.m.)** (plenary meeting at the International Conference Centre in Geneva (CICG))

9. The opening of the high-level segment will take place in plenary from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, 9 May, with opening remarks by:

- (a) Ms. Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor, Minister of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (Switzerland)
- (b) Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme
- (c) Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(d) Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Global Environment Facility

(e) Introductory remarks on the high-level segment theme by Mr. Bakary Kante, Director of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions of the United Nations Environment Programme.

10. These speakers will set the stage for the round-table discussions, which will take place at the Varembe Conference Centre. Following the opening remarks, there will be a presentation to launch the ministerial round-table discussions.

**2. Ministerial photo (4 p.m.) (CICG)**

11. A ministerial group photo will be taken at the CICG premises. Prints of the photo will be made available to ministerial representatives.

**3. Ministerial round tables<sup>1</sup> (4–6 p.m.) (Varembe Conference Centre)**

12. Immediately after the opening of the high-level segment, ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalent) will move to the Varembe Conference Centre to participate in informal round-table discussions focussing on the theme of the high-level segment. The round-table discussions will not involve negotiations or decision-making. The goal of the round tables is to encourage an open exchange of views and experiences between participants on the joint implementation of the three conventions at the national, regional and global levels. To facilitate these discussions, information on the theme is included in section IV of the present note.

13. A number of round tables will operate in parallel, depending on the number of participating ministers. The participation of ministers in the different round tables will be based on language preference and regional representation as no interpretation will be provided.

14. A moderator who will facilitate the discussion and who speaks the language(s) of the round-table participants will guide each round table. Note-takers will capture key messages emerging from the different round-table discussions, which will be summarized and presented during the plenary session in the morning of Friday, 10 May. One or more representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations may participate in the different round tables. Secretariat staff members will be present at each round table to assist the proceedings.

**4. Ministerial ceremony on the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and ministerial working dinner (7 p.m.) (Hotel InterContinental)**

15. Indonesia and Switzerland will organize a brief ministerial ceremony to celebrate the additional ratifications of the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and steps undertaken by parties since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. The ceremony will take place at the Hotel InterContinental.

16. The working dinner will take place after the ceremony at the Hotel InterContinental. Invitations will be distributed during the meeting.

**B. Friday, 10 May 2013: morning session**

**1. Presentation of key messages emerging from the ministerial round-table discussions (10 a.m.–1p.m.) (plenary meeting at the CICG)**

17. On Friday morning, a consolidated summary of key messages emerging from the roundtable discussions will be presented and discussed during plenary.<sup>2</sup>

**2. Closure of the high-level segment (1 p.m. at the latest) (plenary meeting at the CICG)**

<sup>1</sup> The ministerial roundtables will be open to representatives at the ministerial and deputy ministerial level only (or their equivalent).

<sup>2</sup> As of the date of issuance of this document, the matter of a possible ministerial declaration was still under discussion by the Presidents of the conferences of the parties.

## **IV. Information on the ministerial round table discussions on synergies and the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions at the national, regional and global levels**

### **A. Introduction**

18. Ministers and vice-ministers (or their equivalent) are invited to participate in ministerial round tables that will take up the theme of the high-level segment: “Synergies and the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions at the national, regional and global levels”. To facilitate these discussions, the information contained in paragraphs 19–31 below is aimed at guiding ministers in the discussions.

19. Each ministerial round table will comprise some 10 ministers and the final number of round tables will depend on the number of ministers participating in the high-level segment. In addition, one or more representatives from the private sector, NGOs, and IGOs may participate at the different roundtables. The goal is to encourage an open exchange of views and experiences between participants. It is envisaged that the ministerial roundtables will operate in parallel.

20. The key messages from the round tables will be presented during the morning plenary session on Friday, 10 May 2013.

### **B. Focus of the discussions**

#### **1. The high-level segment: zeroing in on the important issues**

21. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”,<sup>3</sup> Heads of State and Government acknowledged the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions. In this regard, they recognized that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development. They also recognized the significant contributions to sustainable development made by the multilateral environmental agreements and commended the work undertaken to increase cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

22. During the high-level segment of the ordinary and simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, ministers (or deputy ministers or those of an equivalent ranking) may wish to take the opportunity to explore how collaborative and coordinated implementation of the three conventions can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication, inter alia through promoting the green economy. In this regard, ministers may wish to consider how the synergies process can enhance sound chemicals and waste management at the national, regional and global levels and ultimately strengthen the protection of human health and the environment by focusing on long-term needs, delivery and the future policymaking regime in the implementation of the conventions.

23. In the discussions on long-term needs, some key questions to consider would be:

(a) What benefits do parties wish to realize in adopting a synergistic approach to managing chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle? What are the main priorities at the national, regional and global levels?

(b) How can the use of the life-cycle approach in national decision-making be strengthened? Could a better science-policy interface be key?

24. In the discussions on delivery, ministers may want to focus on questions such as:

(a) At the national level, what steps need to be taken to improve cooperation and coordination between key sectors such as health, agriculture and the environment? Which stakeholders need to be involved?

(b) How can industry involvement, including public-private partnerships, be encouraged and strengthened for better implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements and other chemical and waste policies at the national level?

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<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

(c) How can issues relevant to improving the sound management of chemicals and wastes be integrated into national development plans, strategies and priorities?

25. In the discussions on the future policymaking regime for chemicals and waste, ministers may wish to address questions such as:

(a) What mechanisms can be employed to enhance cooperation and coordination among parties at the regional and global levels?

(b) What benefits have been realized so far in adopting the synergies process? Which practices should be reinforced and replicated?

## 2. **An evolution over time: the synergies process**

26. The synergies process is a collaborative mechanism developed by parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to enhance cooperation and coordination among the three conventions, while maintaining their legal autonomy. As part of this process, parties, the Secretariat and other key partners must collaborate to strengthen the implementation of the three conventions at the national, regional and global levels by providing coherent policy guidance, enhancing efficiency, reducing the administrative burden and maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources.

27. Through the synergies process, parties may achieve:

(a) A raised profile of chemicals and waste issues at the national level, resulting in greater awareness of the potentially harmful effects of certain hazardous chemicals and wastes;

(b) The development of mutually supportive national chemicals and waste management programmes that will result in a greater impact on the protection of human health and the environment and increase the chances of securing resources to support activities;

(c) An approach which looks at the full life cycle of chemicals from production through use, trade, reuse, recycling and disposal as wastes, which will help streamline national activities on chemicals and waste management;

(d) Improved use of available resources through better coordinated national frameworks, institutional mechanisms and enforcement capacity for dealing with chemicals and wastes;

(e) Increased information flow between national stakeholders in the governmental, private and public sectors;

(f) The sustainable development goals,<sup>4</sup> using the green economy as a tool to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication.

28. The synergies process has already changed the way in which the implementation of the conventions is undertaken at the national and regional levels and resulted in administrative and operational reforms in the Secretariat. These efforts to achieve synergies within a cluster of related multilateral environmental agreements have become an outstanding and concrete example of enhanced international environmental governance.

29. However, much remains to be done to maximize the benefits that can be achieved from the synergies process. Many innovative ways to forge synergies have been devised and applied and are contributing to enhanced protection of human health and the environment. These need to be reinforced and replicated at the national and regional levels.

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<sup>4</sup> Currently being developed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as mandated by the General Assembly (see <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>).

30. By focusing on cross-cutting issues, such as combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes, promoting technology and knowledge transfer and improving the generation of and access to information, parties can ensure consistent and effective implementation of the conventions. Particular attention needs to be given to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen national coordination mechanisms and frameworks to support implementation at the national level.<sup>5</sup>

31. By pooling resources and ensuring their efficient use, avoiding duplication of effort and increasing efficiency, parties to the conventions are in a better position to tackle cross-cutting issues and implement the conventions. Each country will have to find its own way forward, in accordance with national frameworks, structures, processes, stakeholders and resources. This will be both a major challenge and opportunity for parties over the coming years.

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<sup>5</sup> The 2008 and 2009 synergies decisions (IX/10, RC-4/11, SC-4/34), the 2010 omnibus decision (BC.Ex-1/1, RC.Ex-1/1, SC.Ex-1/1), and the 2011 synergies decisions (SC-5/27, RC-5/12, BC-10/29) taken by the conferences of the parties to the three conventions give parties general guidance on how to achieve synergies at the national level, but in practice there are many different ways to accomplish this (see the publication “Synergies Success Stories” available from <http://synergies.pops.int/Archivesv1/Countries/SuccessStories/tabid/2631/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).