

Basel Convention Bureau teleconference

Thursday 28 June, 16.00 - 17.00 (CET)

Participants: Mr. Franz Xaver Perrez, (COP President – WEOG), Mr. James Mulolo (Africa), Mr. Abdul Mohsin Al-Mahmood (Asia Pacific), Mr. Andrzej Jagusiewicz (CEE), and Ms. Yocasta Valenzuela (GRULAG)

Secretariat: Mr. Jim Willis (Executive Secretary), Mr. David Ogden, Mr. Alain Wittig

- The President welcomed all Bureau members and outlined that the purpose of the call was to discuss:
 1. The Executive Secretary's proposal to hold the ordinary COP and ExCOPs meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions back-to-back from 29 April to 10 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland and the thought starter on a possible approach for the organization of work of these meetings
 2. The status of preparations the ordinary COP and ExCOPs meetings
 3. Upcoming Bureau meetings
- The President first recalled that the three COP Presidents, following their meeting on 9 May 2012 in Geneva, consulted the proposal to hold the ordinary COP and ExCOPs meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions back-to-back from 29 April to 10 May 2013 electronically with Bureau members of the three conventions and requested their agreement to this proposal by 1 June 2012. This proposal was subsequently agreed to. Moreover, the members of the Basel Bureau have indicated their interest to start thinking of the concrete organization of the work of such an arrangement and that this is the main focus of this teleconference.
- The Executive Secretary, in his presentation, highlighted some of the key benefits of holding the ordinary COP and ExCOPs meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions back-to-back noting, in particular, that the aim was primarily to build synergies among the three conventions and increase effective and coherent decision making on policy, technical and budget matters. He emphasized that cost savings from the joint organization could be reallocated to activities that would benefit the parties to the conventions and that organizing the COPs jointly and back-to-back would enable the bureaux of the three conventions to work more closely together and to serve a much stronger leadership role in the meetings. He also underlined that the total number of contact groups meeting at any one time would need to be limited to no more than usual during COPs to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for the interests of all delegations to be factored into the discussions.
- Turning to the thought starter on a possible approach for the organization of work of these meetings and the model presented therein, the Executive Secretary indicated that the organization of work of the meetings for the two week period could involve sessions of the ExCOPs on the morning of the first day and the entirety of the last day of that period, with sequential sessions of the ordinary COPs in between. He also indicated that a high level segment could be integrated into the model if desired by the parties, and that a decision on that would need to be taken at the joint bureaux meeting scheduled from 13 to 14 December 2012 in Geneva. Finally, he underlined that the secretariat would make all possible efforts to raise enough funding to cover the travel of one participant per convention for which an eligible country is party to for the entire two week period of the meetings.
- In the following discussion, all Bureau members reaffirmed their continued support for the proposal to hold the ordinary COP and ExCOPs meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions back-to-back from 29 April to 10 May 2013, and took note of the organizational model presented in the thought starter. They all agreed that more detailed planning and organization, as well as coordination between the bureaux, would be essential. In particular, some members expressed views that small delegations may have difficulties in taking part in all meetings if the number of contact groups was not limited. Also, some members raised questions regarding the sequence of the running of the three COPs. The President mentioned that one possible approach would be to open all individual COPs on the first day of the two week period and have them run simultaneously, thus allowing for more flexibility in the organization of work across all conventions. All agreed that further discussions on the matter would be required before the joint bureaux in December 2012, and that a final decision should be taken then.

- The President concluded on the matter by summarizing as follows:
 1. The Executive Secretary's proposal and thought starter were both well received by all Bureau members;
 2. Participation of delegations is preferred for the entire two week period of the back-to-back ordinary COP and ExCOPs;
 3. More detailed scheduling of the meetings during the two week period is required, including assessing both options of organizing the three COPs either with sequential sessions or in parallel sessions, in the coming months in order to reach a final decision at the joint bureaux meeting in December 2012;
 4. The decision to hold a high level segment would also need to be taken at the joint bureaux meeting in December 2012;
 5. Final decisions on the scheduling of the meetings and on the high level segment at the joint bureaux meeting in December 2012 would give enough time to the Secretariat to adequately organize the meetings;
 6. Cost savings from the joint organization would be reallocated to activities that would benefit the parties to the conventions, and that this should be discussed by parties at the ExCOPs.

- On the status of preparations of the meetings, the secretariat informed the Bureau that the Conference Centre in Geneva, the CICG, was reserved for the whole period. The Bureau was also informed that the document preparation process was underway and that a schedule had been prepared. The schedule included that, to the extent possible, large numbers of documents would be ready as soon as possible and around 2.5 months in advance of the meeting, and that most documents will be short to save costs and reduce the burden on delegates. Finally, the Bureau was informed that work had started on the preparation of documents related to the budget and joint activities.

- The Bureau was then reminded of the upcoming Bureau meetings scheduled in 2012 in Geneva: (a) the Expanded Bureau of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention taking place from 12 to 13 November 2012, and (b) the joint bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions taking place from 13 to 14 December 2012. The agenda for the Expanded Bureau would be prepared, in consultation with the President, and sent out to all Expanded Bureau members, together with the official invitations, in about one month. A draft agenda for the joint bureaux meeting had already been discussed and agreed on at the COP Presidents meeting on 9 May 2012. It is available in the annex to the report of that meeting (see <http://synergies.pops.int/SynergiesProcess/ExCOPs/PresidentsJointMeeting/tabid/2752/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

- The President closed the teleconference and thanked all the Bureau members for their participation.