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**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**

**Ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and  
coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions**

Second meeting

Vienna, 10–13 December 2007

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Consideration of the intersessional work undertaken by the  
members of the ad hoc joint working group and by the  
Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention**

**Programmatic cooperation in the field**

**Note by the secretariats**

Attached is the thought starter on “Programmatic cooperation in the field” prepared by Finland and Austria for consideration by the meeting. It is presented as received and has not been formally edited.

\* UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/1.

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## Thought starter on Programmatic Co-operation in the Field

Leads: Finland and Austria

Scope as stated by AHJWG 1: Identify themes/programmes /projects that could be jointly developed/implemented in the field.

### I. Background

1. The possibilities for programmatic co-operation in the field between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions encompass a very wide array of activities and, in order to be successful and effective, should involve a broad range of actors, at different levels.
2. Programmatic cooperation is, however, a national matter and should be demand –driven and stem from national needs identified. There are myriad frameworks for identifying national needs especially for capacity-building within national, regional and international processes. However, the needs highlighted in this thought starter are restricted to those identified during the first meeting of the AHJWG as well as to those needs/possibilities for joint activities identified in other thought starters to the present meeting.
3. As regards convention articles of relevance it should be noted that the convention articles of the three conventions do not address programmatic cooperation between the conventions *per se*. Stockholm Convention Article 6(2) addresses cooperation between COPs and the Basel Convention's Article 10 on international cooperation puts forth that Parties shall co-operate with each other in order to improve and achieve environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes.
4. Articles of relevance under the Conventions address issues such as implementation, national focal points, information exchange and technical assistance.
5. As to "pure" implementation articles, the Stockholm Convention in its article 7 provides for the development and implementation of a plan for the implementation of its obligations (National Implementation Plans – NIPs). Parties should also attempt to utilise and establish means to integrate NIPs in their sustainable development strategies. Under the Rotterdam Convention's Article 15 'Implementation of the Convention', the Parties are required to take such measures as may be necessary to establish and strengthen its national infrastructures and institutions for the effective implementation. The article lists legislative, administrative as well as other measures that may be taken to this end. Under 15(3) the parties agree to cooperate, directly, or where appropriate, through competent international organisations, in the implementation of this Convention at the subregional, regional and global levels.
6. Technical Assistance is addressed in Stockholm Article 12 on Technical Assistance, Rotterdam Article 16 on Technical Assistance and Basel Article 14 on Financial Aspects.
7. As regards Information Exchange and Public Awareness, relevant articles are Stockholm Article 9 on Information Exchange and Article 10 on Public Information, awareness and education. Rotterdam Article 15(2) requires the Parties to ensure, that the public has appropriate access to information on chemical handling and accident management and on alternatives that are safer for human health. Rotterdam addresses information exchange in its Article 14. Basel Article 13 addresses Transmission of Information.
8. Creating a national platform is an essential prerequisite for developing and conducting joint programmatic cooperation in the field. To achieve this, well-functioning and wide national coordination is required. Aspects of setting up efficient national coordination and the relevant convention articles are addressed in the thought starter on Coordination for the national level.

### II. Possibilities for Programmatic co-operation in the field – identified needs

9. During the first meeting of the AHJWG a list of national needs was developed (annexed to the meeting report). National needs to be addressed in the promotion of cooperation and coordination between the three conventions might include the following areas:
  1. Improvement of cooperation and coordination at the national level;
  2. Development and implementation of proactive environmental management tools;
  3. Identification, adaptation and use of environmentally sound technologies and practices;

4. Capacity-building, training, environmental education and awareness;
  5. Public education and awareness-raising;
  6. Development of environmental information systems, and
  7. Mobilization of financial resources.
10. Of the identified national needs, areas deemed of more relevance for the scope of the present paper, also in light of ideas being put forward in the another thought starters, are those listing capacity-building, training, environmental education and awareness; public education and awareness-raising and development of environmental information systems.
11. As regards 4. Capacity-building, training, environmental education and awareness, activities identified during AHJWG 1 include
- (a) Institutional capacity-building, including laboratory capacity;
  - (b) Training and building the capacity of enforcement and regulatory authorities such as customs officers, laboratory personnel and others, paying special attention to the needs of small island developing States and land-locked countries;
  - (c) Training of relevant personnel in meeting obligations under the conventions including reporting, preparation of notifications of final regulatory actions, etc.;
  - (d) Capacity-building in chemicals management, including risk assessment/evaluation methodologies, risk management, etc.;
  - (e) Training of trainers in chemical safety.
12. As regards 5. Public education and awareness-raising, activities identified by AHJWG 1 include:
- (a) Empowering local communities;
  - (b) Informing decision and policy makers to encourage political commitment;
  - (c) Educating the general population, in particular vulnerable populations;
  - (d) Developing environmental education programmes;
  - (e) Disseminating information materials;
  - (f) Promoting cleaner environment programmes.
13. As regards 6. Development of environmental information systems, activities highlighted by AHJWG 1 are:
- (a) Establishment, use and maintenance of information systems;
  - (b) Collection, analysis, storage and dissemination of environmental data;
  - (c) Installation and application of information systems such as geographic information systems and the Chemical Information Exchange Network;
  - (d) Establishment of documentation centres.
14. In identifying areas of cooperation, the other thought starters produced for the second meeting of the AHJWG bring forth ideas on areas where cooperation would be conducive, as follows;
15. Several areas listed in the thought starter on Coordination for the national level, would also seem appropriate for joint cooperation in the field, such as: customs and combating illegal traffic/trade in hazardous chemicals substances/waste; protection of human health and the environment in case of accidents and transfer of know-how. As regards joint cooperation in the field it is worth to note that the on-going green customs initiative addresses co-operation between international secretariats and has a wider scope than that of the three conventions, including i.a. INTERPOL, CITES and Montreal. However, it would be of interest to see further cooperation in the field at the regional and national levels vis-à-vis customs and environment agencies.
16. The thought starter on Joint outreach and public awareness suggests activities, some of which are more geared at the secretariat level. There are, however, proposals that could be included in programmatic cooperation in the field; such as producing information material and promotional activities for their dissemination at the national and local levels. The thought starter also suggests that consideration be given as to how public awareness raising activities might be combined to efforts of other international organizations on themes of common interest and relevance. Examples given include outreach activities on chemicals and risk

assessment methodologies in cooperation with the WHO as well as outreach to customs and enforcement officials to be carried out in collaboration with the World Customs Organization WCO.

17. The thought starter on coordinated use of regional offices, centres suggests that joint centres would be more able to ensure that projects are life cycle oriented and ensure policy coherence. It proposes joint projects on the ground on issues like enforcement, enabling activities and training as well as pilot projects to use regional centres for implementing activities on guidelines and tool-kits.

18. The thought starter on Reporting obligations under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions suggests awareness raising at the national level of officers in charge of filling in the relevant reports under each convention, as this would facilitate the collection of information at the national level for future reporting sessions.

19. The thought starter on pooling information on health and environmental impacts/clearing house mechanisms suggests that a common web site displaying all the information available, from official sources as well from non-governmental sources would provide useful as well as communication of reports and analysis following serious incidents which have caused or might cause harm to human health and/or the environment.

### **III. Entities and frameworks for developing cooperation in the field**

20. National Implementation Plans (NIPs) are important in integrating (or “mainstreaming”) an MEA’s obligations into domestic legal, policy, and institutional frameworks. NIPs can identify policies, programmes, and plans in related sectors through which specific measures may need to be taken in order for the MEA to be effectively implemented. In many instances, NIPs could recognize national priorities placed on sustainable development and poverty reduction and consider potential synergies and conflicts with the wider national strategies and programmes. Many NIPs also include reference to MEAs other than Stockholm so effective implementation of NIPs could enhance implementation of these other conventions.

21. This is in line with on-going efforts to mainstream environmental protection and the implementation of MEAs into wider developmental and economic policies through the development of system-wide coherent policy national implementation plans. Plans for joint implementation of the three conventions would thus benefit from linking into national strategies on, inter alia, sustainable development and poverty eradication and reduction programmes and strategies and programmes for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

22. Joint implementation could also link into implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol. CDM project activities are designed to assist developing country host Parties to achieve sustainable development and to contribute to the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC. The CDM covers a considerable range of waste-related activities, and these can have the knock on benefit of sound chemicals management.

23. To achieve this, cooperation and coordination between the focal points is crucial and their functions and mandates have been described in the thought starter on national coordination. In order to enhance the role of national focal points in joint programmatic efforts, the development of joint synergistic programmes could be included in their terms of reference.

24. Here the role of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management SAICM should be stressed. SAICM, as a policy framework and network for international action on chemical hazards, links national focal points with relevant international institutions and provides as such a bridge to the wider setting of institutions involved in programmatic cooperation in the field. A strengthened interaction between SAICM focal points and MEA focal points would benefit the development of joint programmatic cooperation in the field.

25. The needs and opportunities for joint programmatic cooperation between the three conventions in the field would also benefit from being taken into account within the implementation of the "One UN" – approach. The "One UN"-approach aims to deliver United Nations system development assistance in a more coordinated and unified way at the country level through Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes. Any further development of joint programmatic cooperation would do well to be based on knowledge on the relevance of these processes to their activities. Highlighting aspects related to the implementation and compliance of MEAs within the CCA/UNDAF processes and within the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) and their thematic groups would be useful. For example, guidance as to how UNCTs could mainstream environment and the implementation of MEAs into UN country programming could be developed. This would, however, presuppose greater involvement of MEAs, UNEP as well as NGOs and other non-resident agencies in the UNCTF meetings and in the preparation of the CCA and UNDAF.

26. For the purpose of achieving joint programmatic cooperation in the field, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology support and capacity-building should be applied, as it serves as an overarching guiding framework for operational activities of MEAs, UN agencies and the International financial institutions at country level
27. The plan seeks to strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition at all levels and provide systematic, targeted, long- and short-term measures for technology support and capacity building. Another objective of the Plan is to promote, facilitate, and finance access to and support for environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how.
28. The Bali Plan also aims to enhance delivery by UNEP of technology support and capacity building based on best practices from both within and outside UNEP. In particular, the Plan seeks to improve coordination of disparate efforts to strengthen capacity by various multilateral and bilateral institutions. It does so by providing a framework for strengthening cooperation among UNEP, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and other bodies engaged in environmental capacity building, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), civil society, and other relevant stakeholders.
29. An important component of the implementation of the Plan is the strengthened co-operation between UNEP and UNDP who in 2004 signed a Memorandum of Understanding to improve cooperation in environmental capacity development and to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated in the mainstream of sustainable development policies and activities.
30. The Bali Plan states that a bottom-up approach in identifying specific objectives, strategies, and activities will be used to reflect the needs of countries and regions and in order to safeguard national ownership to capacity building and technology support initiatives. Another important theme of the Plan is fostering South-South cooperation bilaterally, regionally, and globally as a mean to maximize and develop existing capacities in developing countries.
31. In order to ensure that the implementation of the Plan reflects the specific needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, UNEP has undertaken a series of regional and subregional consultations to identify priorities and opportunities for technology support and capacity building. UNEP is also assisting countries to transform their sectoral needs assessments into a holistic identification of priorities through the development of National Capacity Building and Technology Support (NCBTS) Plans. They will build upon existing assessments such as the GEF National Capacity Self-Assessment (for the Rio MEAs), National Environment Action Plans, Poverty Reduction Strategies, as well as the Poverty and Environment Initiative.
32. In support of the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, UNEP has developed an inventory of its capacity building and technology activities across all UNEP Divisions, including those undertaken directly by its Regional Offices. The database is arranged by category (according to the 13 cross-cutting issues and 19 thematic areas identified in the Bali Strategic Plan), by geographical focus (region and State), by type of capacity building (Systemic, Institutional, Individual), etc. UNEP will launch an online public access version, and a government portal will enable designated Governments to submit official requests for assistance to relevant UNEP Divisions. The database will also help UNEP to report on its activities related to State requests and its implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.
33. Building on the Bali Strategic Plan, SAICM initial capacity building activities for the implementation of Strategic Approach objectives will be supported by the establishment of the Quick Start Programme (QSP), containing a voluntary, time-limited trust fund, administered by UNEP, to include multilateral, bilateral and other forms of cooperation.
34. The objective of the QSP is to “support initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition”. The QSP should mobilize resources for national priority initial enabling activities, in particular:
- (a) Development or updating of national chemical profiles and the identification of capacity needs for sound chemicals management;
  - (b) Development and strengthening of national chemicals management institutions, plans, programmes and activities to implement the Strategic Approach, building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives;
  - (c) Undertaking analysis, interagency coordination, and public participation activities directed at enabling the implementation of the Strategic Approach by integrating – i.e., mainstreaming – the sound management of chemicals in national strategies, and thereby informing development assistance cooperation priorities.

35. Also the regional level plays an important role in the setting up and implementation of programmatic cooperation in the field. The regional commissions of the United Nations and other regional institutions promote environmental norms and conventions and provide technical assistance through regional advisory services, capacity-building workshops and projects as assistance to countries. Also cooperation with the regional offices of UNEP and FAO would provide added value. As regards the role of the Basel and Stockholm regional centres and their roles and mandates, reference is made to the thought starter dedicated to this issue.

36. Even where joint cooperation in the field should be demand driven and country led, there may be instances where some tasks pertaining to the development of joint programmatic activities could be assumed by the Convention Secretariats. Also more general guidance on programmatic cooperation between the three conventions may be decided on by the Conferences of the Parties to the Conventions. Whether such action is required should, however, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## IV. Conclusions

37. Developing and implementing joint programmatic cooperation in the field is demand driven and country led. In order for it to be successful, political will is a prerequisite and therefore political visibility a must. Joint projects may well be able to secure the interests of decision – makers and funders, because of a broader scope and magnitude. Informing decision- and policy-makers to encourage political commitment has also been highlighted as a specific national need.

38. Cooperation in the field is dependent on well-functioning, broad national coordination. At the same time, faced with the development of a joint programme or project, national authorities may be more easily persuaded to coordinate and cooperate for a common good.

39. One could consider to include in the terms of reference for the national focal point the development of joint synergistic programmes between the three conventions whilst also taking into account SAICM implementation.

40. In order to facilitate and guide the process of developing joint programmatic activities it may be of use to formulate guidelines for establishing national platforms to ensure the integrated implementation of environmental agreements and policies at national and possibly regional levels; involving national focal points of all three conventions and relevant stakeholders.

41. From the list of national needs identified during the first meeting of the AHJWG and based on the proposals in the other thought starters one can see a certain trend towards the following joint programmatic themes emerging:

- Capacity building and training for regulatory, customs and enforcement officials and authorities and within the area of combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and waste, bearing in mind, however, that there are on-going joint activities in this field such as the Green Customs Initiative and training programmes within i.e. UNITAR.
- Training of personnel in meeting reporting requirements and other obligations under the conventions
- Protection of human health and the environment – risk management and in cases of accidents
- Public awareness raising and educational activities; informing and educating local communities and particularly vulnerable populations
- Outreach activities on chemicals and risk assessment /evaluation methodologies

42. As described, there are also several international frameworks and processes which could be accessed in order to ensure efficient programmatic cooperation in the field between the three conventions.

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