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

Distr.: General
22 February 2008

English only



**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**

Third meeting

Rome, 25-28 March 2008

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**

**Compilation of comments received on Annex I of the report of the
second meeting of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancement of
coordination and cooperation among the Basel, Rotterdam and
Stockholm Conventions**

Note by the secretariats

1. The annex to the present note contains a compilation of comments submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of the report of the second meeting of the ad hoc joint working group contained in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/18.
2. Comments were received from the Dominican Republic, the European Union, India, Poland and Switzerland. These submissions have been reproduced in the annex to the present note without formal editing.

* UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.3/1.

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Annex

Comments submitted by the Dominican Republic

-----Original Message-----

From: Yocasta Valenzuela [mailto:yocasta.valenzuela@medioambiente.gob.do]

Sent: 22 February 2008 15:34

To: Irina Kossenko

Subject: Re: Advance version of the AHJWG-2 report

Dear Cristina and Irina: Please find attached the comments on the report of AHJWG-2. I apologize for the late submission .

Best regards

Yocasta

In the Dominican Republic, the Secretaria de Estado de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARENA) is the instance entrusted to protect and preserve the natural resources and the environment and as such coordinates, at national level, the actions related to chemical products.

The SEMARENA has an Undersecretary of Environmental Management (SGA) that in turn has a Department of Chemical Substances and a Department competent in solid wastes handling.

With regard to chemical products, SEMARENA coordinates its actions with the Secretaria de Estado de Salud Publica y Asistencia Social (SESPAS) and the Secretaria de Estado de Agricultura (SEA).

The SEMARENA, as the governing instance of the environment and natural resources sector, designs and formulates the national protection policy, through the Oficina Sectorial de Planificación y Programación (OSPP).

A -The Three Conventions have the same Focal Point and they are in the Subsecretaria de Estado de Gestión Ambiental (SGA) of the Secretaria de Estado de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, with their respective National Designated Authorities. SAICM is also at this Undersecretary. The Rotterdam Convention has another Focal Point, at Secretaria de Estado de Agricultura.

These Focal Points look after the application of the MEAs, the National Designated Authority being the operative instance for the application of the above mentioned Conventions.

There exists in the SGA a draft of a mechanism that would be promulgated by means of Decree of the Executive for the handling or application of three (3) Conventions; for its discussion, representatives from Secretaria de Salud Publica, Industria y Comercio, Agricultura, Dirección General de Aduanas, Dirección General de Normas de Calidad, among other administrative institutions, were invited. This decree would create a frame for the integrated handling of chemical products and his wastes and already several meetings have taken place, for this possible committee; it would be highly important to establish an international frame to grant support to these national actions.

I.- Organizational issues in the field

B. Programmatic cooperation in the field

We have many projects that are managed in a manner to obtain the capacity- building and technical assistance.

We want to do the example of areas for programmatic cooperation at the national level

Examples of areas for programmatic cooperation at the national level

- Integration of a package of sound chemicals and wastes management measures, using the life cycle approach, into national development strategies;
- National regulatory framework which promotes a life cycle approach, including for industrial chemicals;
- Monitoring and enforcement;
- Waste minimization and management;
- Best available techniques/best environmental practices; integrated pest and pesticide management;
- Production facilities;
- Consumption patterns;
- Awareness rising.

ToR to Environmental Compliance

Criteria for industries

Regulatory framework for enforcement

The Agriculture Ministry has a list of the chemical products that could be used in the country. Ex. Quotas of methyl bromide.

To have a register Customs doesn't give permission without authorization from Environmental Ministry

C.) Coordinated use of Regional offices, centre

Project – even court-

The authorities in the country complain that the benefits and the projects are only for those countries where they are located.

The Regional Centres have to coordinate cooperation to the assistance to distribute in the countries in a fair manner of all of them through a regional project.

- There is the problem to submit the report for one Convention.

IV Administrative issues

To answer this item we were in contact with the Undersecretary of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Focal Point of the Convention for Biological Diversity in the country

B) Back-to-back meetings

Advantages

Saving of money

Much more economic and possibility of inviting more countries financed by the Conventions

The Synergies would be so favorable to lower costs - to make use of the cooperation and coordination between the activities of each of the conventions.

As the topics are connected, the discussions of the first meeting constitute a base for the discussion of other topics.

It forces the delegates to be 1 ó 2 persons and to a coordination with previous meetings that allow to prepare a country position.

Disadvantages: the delegate is good and qualified in a subject, but not so good and qualified in another. There is quantity but not quality.

The small delegations cannot be in different work groups but in only one.

They have to pay attention to the quality of the representatives.

Comments submitted by the European Union

8 February 2008

**EU comments
for the preparation of the 3rd meeting
of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group
on enhancing cooperation and coordination
between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
(AHJWG)**

The two Ad Hoc Joint Working Group (AHJWG) meetings (respectively Helsinki, 26-28 March 2007 and Vienna, 10-14 December 2007) have come to a first set of recommendations, set out in Annex I to the 2nd AHJWG report, which constitutes the basis for a Co-Chairs document containing draft recommendations to be submitted to the forthcoming JWG 3 meeting.

The EU would like to submit the comments below as a constructive contribution to the ongoing process, and hopes that the Co-Chairs will find them helpful elements for joint recommendations and possible outcomes of AHJWG3. The contribution builds on the AHJWG2 report and is intended to help the Co-Chairs in the preparation of the document for AHJWG3.

1. General remarks

The EU recalls that the objective of the AHJWG is to prepare joint recommendations on enhancing coordination and cooperation among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The EU further notes that the importance of improved synergies has already been recognised by the COPs of all three Conventions. Therefore the EU considers that the recommendations must be built on a strong and positive approach, be practical and bring added-value in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. If the AHJWG produces ambitious recommendations that are acted on by the 3 COPs, it should be possible to enhance the visibility of hazardous wastes and chemicals issues within the international environmental agenda, and contribute positively to effective implementation of the three Conventions.

The EU also attaches importance to the ongoing deliberations on International Environmental Governance (IEG) and considers that the practical experience being gained through the AHJWG can be of great benefit to the wider IEG debate. The AHJWG is learning by doing and the lessons of a successful outcome may prove useful in the considerations on possible action regarding the strengthening of cooperation and coordination between other thematically related MEAs.

The EU would like to stress that in exploring the scope for synergies, it is important to go beyond the role of the Secretariats of the three Conventions. SAICM and other international institutions related to the hazardous wastes and chemicals sector need to be better taken into account. For example UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO and other IOMC organisations and agencies could support certain functions. Implementation of the Conventions could usefully be a contribution to the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

The EU would like the Co-Chairs paper to follow the structure of a draft decision containing joint recommendations for submission to the COPs. The EU interprets the mandate of the AHJWG to be to present a set of recommendations based on consensus. The AHJWG should also clearly indicate and identify relevant actors and entities (contracting parties, COPs, secretariats, other UN

institutions) responsible for the follow-up of recommended actions, as well as their level of proposed commitment.

In general, the EU considers that the elements outlined in Annex I of the report of the 2nd meeting of the AHJWG represent a positive contribution to enhanced cooperation and coordination. Some issues however still require further discussion, in order to explore the possibility of strengthened synergies. Some recommendations could also be merged into one.

Although AHJWG should avoid proposals that involve micro-management of the Secretariats, the recommendations need to take a pragmatic and detailed form. The financial consequences of each recommendation need to be kept in mind, in a context where resources are limited and financial pressure is likely to remain. The proposals should be as cost-effective as possible and better forms of coordination of services and functions should be encouraged.

2. Remarks on the content of Annex I of the meeting report of AHJWG2

The AHJWG made progress on the possibilities of synergies connected with 3 clusters of issues corresponding with programmatic issues. Even though the AHJWG3 should now also concentrate on addressing the administrative issues (see below), some points on programmatic issues need further work to outline clear recommendations at AHJWG3 :

A. Programmatic issues

I. Organizational issues in the field

I.A. Coordination at the national level

While fully endorsing the fact that arrangements for national coordination are a matter for individual Parties, the EU supports better coordination and cooperation amongst the units involved at the national level. Focal points and designated national authorities in meetings under the three Conventions are key partners to ensure more effective implementation and more coherent positions in COPs. Formal coordination mechanisms play a useful role and examples of good practices can be helpful.

Regarding the establishment of national units to coordinate the 3 Conventions built on the model of the Montreal Protocol National Ozone Units, the EU notes the differences of situation, since MP Units have much more specific tasks as well as a coordinating function, and disposes of the necessary financial resources from the Multilateral Fund, which are far larger than the combined nominal voluntary trust funds of 3 the Conventions.

The EU would not in general support financing for national coordination between the three Conventions, however initial support could be included in projects focusing on foundational capacities in the area of sound chemicals management.

The following drafting changes are suggested :

- Recommendations 1 and 2 should be merged into one ;
- The recommendations should refer more specifically to SAICM and the GEF. It is suggested to add the following as first elements (of present recommendation 1) : ‘Encourage Parties to improve where necessary national coordination, for implementation of the three Conventions and, where relevant for preparation of Convention meetings and, beyond the three Conventions, for example where

related to SAICM or the GEF'. As to SAICM, the recommendation should be more concrete and explain how this mechanism works with regards to national coordination ;

- As to the last paragraph of section I.A, it should be recommended to the COPs to request UNEP to support and facilitate the production of guidance and training in related areas, in accordance with the Bali Strategic Plan, and in collaboration with other relevant organisations and agencies, especially IOMC.

I.B Programmatic cooperation in the field

In addition to the elements referring to the United Nations system, the role of UNEP should be also specifically stressed, and close cooperation in the field between UNEP and UNDP should continue and be strengthened. Additional elements should also be included, one on better coordination between bilateral donors and between these and multilateral donors, another on the inclusion of implementation of the Conventions in national development and sustainability strategies, in order to facilitate aid from donors also in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and ensure coherence in the national priority setting.

I.C. Coordinated use of regional offices and centres

In addition to the elements in JWG2 report, the EU has taken account of the SBC draft Review Report on Regional Centres. The EU recognises that the designation of Centres under the different Conventions is regionally driven and notes that not all Regional Centres under Stockholm and Basel will necessarily be coordinating centres serving both MEAs. Also, the question of centres also contributing to the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention and SAICM needs to be further discussed.

However, the EU has concerns about the proliferation of Centres in the absence of stable and predictable long term funding. While externally financed projects should be encouraged, the centres need secure operational budgets. This issue should be seen in conjunction with programmatic cooperation in the field.

In order to secure stability and predictable, long term funding, there may be a need to look at other regional structures and to link the Stockholm and Basel Regional Centres to these.

II. Cooperation on technical and Substantive issues

II. A. National reporting

This is relevant to the Stockholm and Basel Conventions, which both require reporting on different aspects of wastes containing POPs. The EU supports the recommendation on synchronising reporting although recognising that synchronisation every fourth year (when Stockholm reports are due) would not change the periodicity of the annual reporting within the Basel Convention given that this is clearly prescribed in the Convention text and the deadlines have been agreed by the COP. It could also be of interest to explore the possibility of creating a common document in order to standardize the reporting.

In recommendation 4 ('Rationale' and 'Possible Elements'),

- 'reduce' should be replaced by 'review' since a 'reduction' of the reporting burden is an unclear notion. The notion of 'review' is broader and would leave open the consideration of all possibilities.

II.B. Compliance

The AHJWG2 agreed that ultimately there could be scope for promoting administrative cooperation between compliance committees, exchanging experience, and for looking for and tackling jointly common causes of non-compliance. Noting this, and notwithstanding the fact that, as the AHJWG recognised, the negotiations under Rotterdam and Stockholm are still ongoing, the EU will consider carefully the proposed Montreal Protocol Secretariat paper upon availability on the experience of that mechanism in helping countries to overcome non-compliance, noting however that the set up related to the Montreal mechanism is quite different.

III. Information management and public awareness

This issue provides considerable and easily achievable scope for synergies, including information sharing and the creation of a joint information service.

III. A. Joint outreach to the public

SAICM should be referred to within the recommendations. Thus, the third bullet should read 'initiate joint outreach activities on issues of common concern among the conventions and other relevant organisations and processes, e.g. SAICM'.

III. B. Information sharing among technical and scientific panels

It is important that these panels actively pursue closer cooperation. Cooperation on technical issues should also be addressed from a broader perspective.

The following drafting changes are suggested :

In recommendation 1 ('Rationale') :

- Add 'Support the strengthening of the technical capacities of Parties, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to achieve the objectives of the three conventions'

In recommendation 2 ('Possible Elements') :

- In bullet 2, first line, replace these bodies by 'the POPRC and the CRC' for clarification as this element seems to refer to these two bodies ;
- In bullet 3, replace the wording 'annex I of the report of the first meeting of the AHJWG' by 'annex I of the thought-starter on information sharing among scientific and technical panels';
- Add a last bullet : 'Maintain or establish cooperation, between the bodies and the Secretariats of the three Conventions and where relevant beyond the three Conventions, on technical issues which relate to more than one Convention'.

III. C. Pooling information on health and environmental impacts

Stronger co-operation in this area should also be welcomed.

III. D. Joint input to other processes

The EU considers that common representation at international meetings would ensure a greater attention and leverage for a coordinated message. Apart from organisations mentioned in the text, common representation should also happen in the context of processes and respective meetings such as SAICM since the implementation of the Conventions would provide valuable input to its 2020 objective.

Suggested drafting change : in Recommendation 1 ('Possible Elements') :

- add at the end of the bullet 'and processes, including SAICM'.

B. Administrative issues

Although the AHJWG acknowledged the principle that form follows function and has so far concentrated its work on the programmatic issues, the administrative issues remain important and will have to be properly addressed. The EU considers that AHJWG3 will need to devote enough time to tackle the administrative issues and should submit recommendations with a rather high level of ambition. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness must be addressed. The EU notes that the information document on "joint managerial functions, including joint head of secretariat" will be considered as thought starter during the AHJWG3 meeting and, as such, as an input to the debates.

IV. A. Joint resource mobilization

Although the three Conventions do not have fully identical scopes, their implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition raises many common issues with regard to capacity building which in turn requires the mobilization of resources. Thus there is considerable room for joint resource mobilization. The extent to which resource mobilisation should be a Secretariat activity for all three Conventions and under which conditions as well as the budgetary implications of any joint service need to be addressed by the AHJWG.

The following drafting changes are suggested :

Recommendation 1 ('Possible Elements') :

- The last bullet should be written 'a framework for resource mobilization on initiatives of joint concern for the short, medium and long term'.

Recommendation 2 ('Possible Elements') :

- In the first bullet, a change is suggested to better reflect the state-of-art wording related to the future role of the GEF (E.g. as adopted at Rotterdam COP3 and Basel COP8) : 'Send coherent and coordinated messages from each of the three conferences of the Parties on priorities, in order to promote Global Environment Facility funding for the sound management of chemicals and wastes through the implementation of the three conventions';
- in the second bullet, add finally 'to parties and to industry / the business community'.

IV.B. Back to back meetings

The question of back to back meetings was originally approached as a means to use meeting resources more effectively and to improve the international visibility of and political support for the chemicals and wastes issues.

These remain valid objectives. However, the EU considers that another important issue is the need to organise COPs in a coordinated manner. If the synergies process is successful, greater cooperation and coordination between the Conventions will need some coherent or joint decision-making between the different instruments. This in turn will require Parties to undertake coordinated preparation at the national level.

The extent to which such joint decision-making is needed will depend on the recommendations that are agreed on other issues. For example, as noted elsewhere in these comments, the EU is in favour of exploring the scope for joint services and functions to bundle certain horizontal tasks and these would have to be agreed jointly by the three COPs. In such circumstances a back to back element in the meetings schedule would be useful.

However, the fact that successful joint decision-making at the level of the MEAs depends on coordinated preparation at home should mean that any process that is put in place will not place excessive burdens on small delegations.

Any move to more coordinated decision-making on certain issues would have to take account of need for adequate time for preparation by the delegations and the Secretariats.

Given the complexity of the issue, the EU would welcome contributions to the debate before AHJWG3 based on experience in other fora.

IV. C. Joint financial management and audit functions:

The cooperation and coordination process should keep in mind the need to make the best use of the assessed contributions. The Thought Starter provides an important basis for discussion and should be considered in depth. The EU will also look carefully at the additional information provided by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention on the burden of work on its staff due to the Basel Convention Regional Centres, as well as the information from UNEP.

The EU is in favour of a greater coordination of the financial management functions and supports the idea of the establishment of a joint financial service for all three Conventions. As to recommendation 2, the EU looks forward to further information on a coordinated approach to auditing functions.

3. New issue for discussion at AHJWG 3

Although there is no recommendation at this stage related to the legal service arrangements, an information document was elaborated on this subject and the Co-Chairs should address this issue in their recommendation document. The EU supports the idea of greater coordination of the legal services, noting that many legal issues are of common concern to the three Conventions.

4. Remarks on the participation at AHJWG3

Due to the links with SAICM and UNEP, resource persons from UNEP Headquarters and UNEP Chemicals should participate in AHJWG 3.

Comments submitted by India

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS

PARYAVARAN BHAVAN
CGO COMPLEX, LODI ROAD,
NEW DELHI-110003

No.4-4(247)/2006-HSMD(Pt.III)

DATED:18.02.2008

To

Mr. Donald Cooper,
Executive Secretary,
Secretariat of the Stockholm
Convention on POPs,
United Nations Environment
Programme(UNEP),
11-13 Chemin Des Anemones,
1219 Chatelaine,
Geneva, Switzerland.

Sir,

This refers to the Second Meeting of the Ad hoc Joint Working Group(AHJWG) on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions held at Vienna from 10-13 December, 2007.

2. As decided in the Meeting, kindly find enclosed herewith the written comments on the elements and rationales contained in Annex-I of the Report of the Second Meeting of the AHJWG vide document No.UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/ JWG.2/18.

3. It is requested that these views may kindly be forwarded to the Co-Chairs of the AHJWG for their consideration while preparing draft recommendations of the AHJWG for consideration in the Third Meeting of the AHJWG.

(R.K. VAISH)
Joint Secretary

Encl: As above

WRITTEN COMMENTS

This refers to the Second Meeting of the Ad hoc Joint Working Group(AHJWG) on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions held at Vienna from 10-13 December, 2007. Following were the views expressed by India during the Second Meeting of the AHJWG:

I) Organizational issues in the field

- Joint implementation of the three Conventions may not be possible to achieve since the three Conventions have their own separate mandate and objectives. Further, entrusting the task of implementation of the mandates of the three Conventions to the Basel Secretariat Regional Centres will have the disadvantage of involving lesser number of countries in hosting these centers. As regards clean development centers of UNIDO, we would like to have more details before expressing our opinion.
- It is agreed that there requires to be coordination at the national level between the focal points of the three Conventions. It was pointed out that in India, such a coordination already existed. A Consultative Group on Chemicals(CGC) had been constituted in the Ministry of Environment & Forests, which is the nodal Ministry for multilateral agreements on environment. The CGC consists of experts and all matters relating to the three Conventions are discussed in this Group. A senior Officer of the rank of Additional Secretary in the Govt. of India oversees the implementation of the three Conventions.

II) Technical Substantive Issues

- There does not appear to be any convergence in the working of the Compliance Committees in three Conventions. Moreover, the negotiations regarding the working and formulation of the Compliance Committees for Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions were still on and there should not be any suggestion from this Group to the COPs, so as to influence the ongoing negotiations.

Contd..p.2.

III) Information Management and Public Awareness Issues

- We do not agree with the idea of a separate meeting between the Chairs of the Technical and Scientific Panels of the two Conventions. POPs Review Committee and PIC Review Committee are the two important scientific committees to review proposals for inclusion of new chemicals under these Conventions. The two Conventions having different mandates and objectives, there is, therefore, no overlapping between the working of the two Review Committees. Holding a separate meeting between the Chairs of the two Committees would also not be appropriate from the point of view of giving transparency to the entire proceedings of the Review Committee.
- Further, the functions of the respective Secretariats are clearly given in the Convention documents of Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention is basically a Clearing House Mechanism and it is important to ensure that only that information is shared which is validated and peer reviewed and not any information, including information based on suspicion submitted by one Party with no scientific basis.

IV) Administrative Issues

- The National Govt. in India is already doing a lot in the area of Chemicals and Waste Management. A separate Scheme in the National Plan is dedicated for the purpose of creating infrastructure for Management of Hazardous Substances including wastes. The Scheme includes provision for assistance for setting up Treatment Storage Disposal Facilities for hazardous wastes and Common Effluent Treatment Plants on public-private partnership basis.
- Further that the three conventions had different objectives and mandates and long period of absence in case of back to back meetings would be difficult for delegates from developing countries.
- We agree with the current model of holding meetings of COP and that autonomy of three Conventions had to be maintained. We do not agree with the joint meeting of the COP of the three Conventions.

Contd..p.3.

- On the suggestion of financial management and audit functions, with respect to the idea of a joint budget of the three Conventions, there could be no objection for enhanced cooperation in the area of resources mobilization and audit functions. The individuality of the three Conventions at the same time needed to be retained as the three Conventions had different mandates and objectives. We do not, therefore, agree with the suggestion of a joint budget for the three Conventions.

2. These views are sent herewith for forwarding the same to the Co-Chairs of the AHJWG for their consideration while preparing the draft recommendations of the AHJWG for discussion in the Third Meeting of the AHJWG.

(R.K. VAISH)
Joint Secretary

Comments submitted by Poland

-----Original Message-----

From: Marek Porycki [mailto:m.porycki@gios.gov.pl]

Sent: jeudi, 24. janvier 2008 16:56

To: synergies@unepchemicals.ch

Subject: Polish comments to the report on synergy

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed the Polish comments to the report of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation between Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

Best regards,

Marek Porycki

Division of Transboundary Movement of Waste

Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection

Wawelska 52/54 str., 00-922 Warsaw

Poland

Comments of Polish Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection

The Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection does not submit any comments concerning the “Report of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on the work of its second meeting”.

The Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection agrees with EU position supporting initiative of intensifying cooperation and coordination of the three conventions’ work. In our opinion coordination of this activities on the professional, technical and administrative level will improve the effectiveness of the conventions what should make the work of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm convention more successive in the area of their professional activity. This should effect in improvement of the quality of the environment and better enforcement of the sound waste management, procedures of POP’s management and other chemical substances generated by people.

Comments submitted by Switzerland



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

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12.2.2008 / pfr

Comments on the elements and rationales contained in Annex I to the report of AHJWG-2

As foreseen by the schedule of work for the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group (AHJWG) on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, we would like to submit the following comments:

a) Good practices on coordination at the national level:

Switzerland has a well established system of interagency coordination for decision making at the national level. The Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) is the lead agency on most chemicals related issues. The State Secretary for Economic Affairs, the Federal Office for Health and the Federal Office for Agriculture are the main partners within the Swiss administration. FOEN's technical division on substances soils and biotechnology takes the lead in national chemicals policy development and implementation, FOEN's division on waste takes the lead in national waste related policy development and implementation, and FOEN's international affairs division takes the lead on international policy issues. The lead division prepares policies and measures in close cooperation with the other divisions of FOEN. As a next step, these policies are coordinated informally with the other agencies interested. Before the adoption of a policy or a measure, a formal consultation takes place between all interested agencies. The ultimate decision is not taken by a single agency but by the federal government as a whole.

b) Programmatic coordination:

As indicated during the 2nd meeting of the AHJWG, the mandate of the AHJWG also includes the task to explore and prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination among the three conventions at programmatic levels. The Working Group has not yet had the time to sufficiently explore the issue of enhancing and strengthening cooperation and coordination at the programmatic policy level. Already during its 1st meeting in Helsinki, the Working Group was of the view that activities relating to decision-making and oversight might require more profound deliberations. During its 2nd meeting in Vienna, it was agreed that the working group's recommendations to the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions should also address programmatic cooperation on policy development among the conventions (para 31 of the report).

Programmatic cooperation and coordination in decision making and the further policy development are crucial not only at the national, but also at the international level. Thereby, the goal has to be that the decisions and policies of the three conventions mutually support each other and that potential overlaps,

duplications or contradictions are avoided. This would allow for a framework at the international level that is promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach to chemicals and waste management.

Rationale

- Ensure mutual supportiveness and complementarity between the three conventions.
- Avoid overlaps, duplications and contradictions.
- Promotion of a comprehensive and integrated approach to chemicals and waste management at the international level.
- Ensure an international institutional framework that supports comprehensive and integrated approaches at the national level.

Elements

- Organizing joint bureau meetings to facilitate and promote programmatic coordination on policy development between the three conventions.
- Coordinate the work programmes of the three conventions to allow addressing interrelated issues within the three conventions in a coordinated manner.
- Organization of back-to-back to discuss interrelated issues at the same time.
- Organization of joint meetings to discuss interrelated issues jointly.

c) Back-to-back meetings:

Switzerland supports the idea of holding back-to-back meetings. Organizing meetings in conjunction or back-to-back has important advantages, including:

- simultaneous preparation of back-to-back meetings promotes coordination and good oversight at the national level;
- back-to-back meetings allow for a discussion of and decision making on interrelated issues by two processes within a short period of time;
- back-to-back meetings allow for cost-savings by reducing travel costs if persons attend both meetings.

d) Financial management and audit functions:

Switzerland supports the idea of joint internal audits performed for the 3 conventions by a joint internal auditor. The same approach of joint internal audits is taken by the UNCCD and the UNFCCC. Costs for internal audits could be further reduced by using jointly the Geneva based Office of Internal Oversight of the United Nations (OIOS). Other UNEP bodies such as UNEP CBD or UNEP CMS are already using OIOS for their internal audits.