

The Stockholm Convention

Thursday, 11 October 2007

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms and are toxic to humans and wildlife. POPs circulate globally and can cause damage wherever they travel. In implementing the Convention, Governments will take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment. The Stockholm Convention was adopted and opened for signature at a Conference of Plenipotentiaries held from 22 to 23 May 2001 in Stockholm, Sweden. Over 150 countries signed the Convention and it entered into force, on 17 May 2004, 90 days after the ratification by the fiftieth country.

The Stockholm Convention focuses on eliminating or reducing releases of 12 POPs, the so-called "Dirty Dozen". It sets up a system for tackling additional chemicals identified as unacceptably hazardous. It recognizes that a special effort may sometimes be needed phase out certain chemicals for certain uses and seeks to ensure that this effort is made. It also channels resources into cleaning up the existing stockpiles and dumps of POPs that litter the world's landscape. Ultimately, the Convention points the way to a future free of dangerous POPs and promises to reshape our economy's reliance on toxic chemicals.

The Stockholm Convention is perhaps best understood as having five essential aims:

- Eliminate dangerous POPs, starting with the 12 worst
- Support the transition to safer alternatives
- Target additional POPs for action
- Cleanup old stockpiles and equipment containing POPs
- Work together for a POPs-free future

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) is the designated interim financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention.