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**Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention
on the Control of Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Tenth meeting**

Cartagena, Colombia, 17–21 October 2011

Item 3 (c) (iii) of the provisional agenda**

**Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:
legal, compliance and governance matters: national reporting**

Report on the activities carried out by the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions on improving cooperation and coordination in the area of national reporting

Note by the Secretariat

Introduction

1. Decision IX/10 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, decision RC-4/11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and decision SC-4/34 of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the “synergies decisions”) are substantially identical decisions by which the conferences of the parties to the three conventions called for greater cooperation and coordination among the three conventions.
2. Part A of section II of the synergies decisions addresses the area of national reporting with specific requests to the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions with respect to the synchronization of the submission of reports, joint capacity building activities, and streamlining of the conventions’ respective reporting formats.
3. The synergies decisions were further elaborated in the substantively identical decision BC.Ex-1/1 of the Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention, decision RC.Ex-1/1 of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention and decision SC.Ex-1/1 of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention (the “omnibus decisions”). Pursuant to the omnibus decisions, the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions undertook informal consultations with parties in order to seek their views on how to promote synergies in the area of national reporting. Parties to the Rotterdam Convention were not involved in these informal consultations because this convention does not have a specific mandate on national reporting.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 6 October 2011.

** UNEP/CHW.10/1.

4. This document provides information on the results of these informal consultations.

I. Implementation

A. Activities completed

5. As a first effort to collect views on how the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions should answer the requests put to them in the synergies decisions, the two secretariats jointly developed a “Synergies assessment form”, which can be found in the annex of this document. This questionnaire was used in two workshops¹ organized by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention in cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Centres located in Pretoria, South Africa (the Africa Institute for the Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous and Other Wastes) and in Bratislava, Slovakia (the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Central Europe).

6. Additionally, the two secretariats organized two teleconference sessions² on 1 June, 2011 and on 9 June 2011 to discuss the possibilities of synergies in the area of national reporting and to collect ideas and views on how to move forward. The teleconference sessions discussed, in an open way, the four following issues:

(a) Review the reporting systems of both conventions and identify possible areas for streamlining;

(b) Analyze the electronic reporting systems in place, identify ways to improve them and implement the required changes to allow for national reporting under both conventions to become more similar;

(c) Develop a guidance document or documents for information collection and reporting;

(d) Organize regional capacity-building workshops on national reporting to take place in 2012 and 2013.

These four issues were also discussed during informal consultations in the margins of the national reporting workshop that took place in Slovakia³.

7. As of July 2011, the secretariats have collected the views of 36 parties to the Basel and Stockholm conventions.

8. Parties are reminded that with regards to the request to synchronize the submission of party reports under the two conventions in those years when the parties to both conventions are to submit such reports, the two secretariats provided the following details on “Joint Activities” to all three COPs in 2011:

“The Secretariat, when reminding parties for submitting their national reports, will encourage them to synchronize the time of their reports’ submissions under both of the Conventions.

As per the Basel Convention, pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 3, Parties shall transmit, before the end of each calendar year, a report on the previous calendar year. That being said, the Basel Convention related national reports can be submitted by the 31st of October of the submission year for the Stockholm Convention, as per Article 15 and relevant COP decisions.

As per the Stockholm Convention changing the national reporting time with the one from the Basel Convention (i.e. by the end of the calendar year) would be possible. However,

¹ **Parties which attended the workshop in Bratislava and answered the questionnaires:** Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. **Parties which attended the workshop in Pretoria and answered the questionnaires:** Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Additionally, five other Parties answered the questionnaire anonymously.

² **Parties which attended the teleconference sessions:** Denmark, the European Union and Thailand. **Invitations were also sent to the following Parties** which, for various reasons, did not attend the teleconference sessions: Armenia, Australia, Slovakia, South Africa and Uruguay.

³ **Parties which discussed in an informal session in Bratislava:** Austria, Czech Republic, Germany and Slovakia.

there will not be enough time to prepare the Secretariat report as called by Article 20 (2d), for the following Conference of the Parties (COP).”

B. Main outcomes of consultations

9. The parties consulted so far share the opinion that national reporting is an important obligation under both conventions and that improvements could be done with regards to the processes and the means of submitting national reports to the respective secretariats. Hereunder is a list of possible conclusions based on these consultations.

1. Review the reporting systems of both conventions and identify possible areas for streamlining

10. After analyzing the content of the national reporting format under each convention, the conclusion is that each contains elements that relate only to one Convention, with one exception: POPs wastes.

11. An earlier paper from 2007, UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/6⁴, has been produced by the secretariats where details of each of the reports can be found, as well as explanations on the commonalities and differences between them.

12. In this area, the secretariats do not see the need to explore further options of streamlining the content of the two reports, for the time being.

2. Analyze the electronic reporting systems in place, identify ways to improve them and implement the required changes to allow for national reporting under both conventions to become more similar

13. This seems to be the area where most of the results can be obtained in a mid-term perspective. After the discussions with the parties and looking at the answers to the questionnaires, it appears that the first step to tackle this issue is to change the Basel Convention national reporting system: to create an online reporting system, as similar as possible to Stockholm Convention online reporting system.

14. However, as underlined by several parties, the new system should be developed in a manner that would overcome the problems faced by parties with the current Stockholm Convention reporting system, for example, difficulties regarding the usability of the system. In addition, the new system should not necessarily be totally automated. For example, the statistical information on generation and transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes should be kept simple to be reported (e.g. a simple excel sheet could be uploaded to the reporting system).

15. The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention while updating the Stockholm Convention reporting system for the third round of reporting in 2014, is also considering to use pre-filled questionnaires based on previous reports and a possibility for uploading excel sheets for certain areas. This step will make both reporting systems more similar in terms of user interface and interaction, and in terms of processes. This way, both reporting systems could share a common platform, while the autonomy of each would be preserved.

16. One additional value of this approach concerns training. If the two systems are more similar, once officers are trained on one of the systems, they can use the same knowledge to use the system of the other convention.

3. Develop a guidance document or documents for information collection and reporting;

17. The secretariats foresee possibilities of joint activities to create guidance documents on information collection and user manuals on the reporting systems. This area will be further explored once the systems are more similar.

4. Organize regional capacity-building workshops on national reporting to take place in 2012 and 2013.

18. This area will be developed once the two reporting systems are more similar.

19. The parties consulted have also voiced the wish to have these workshops as close as possible to the new cycle of the Stockholm Convention national reports submissions, which will take place in 2014.

⁴

http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch/documents/2ndmeeting/ahjwg02_06.pdf

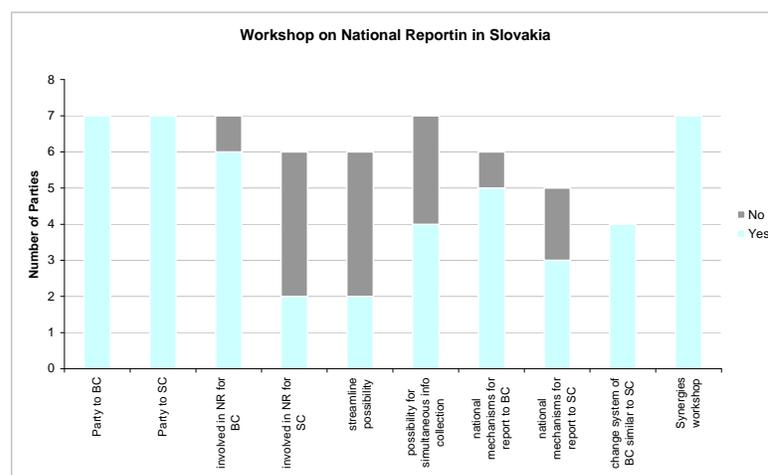
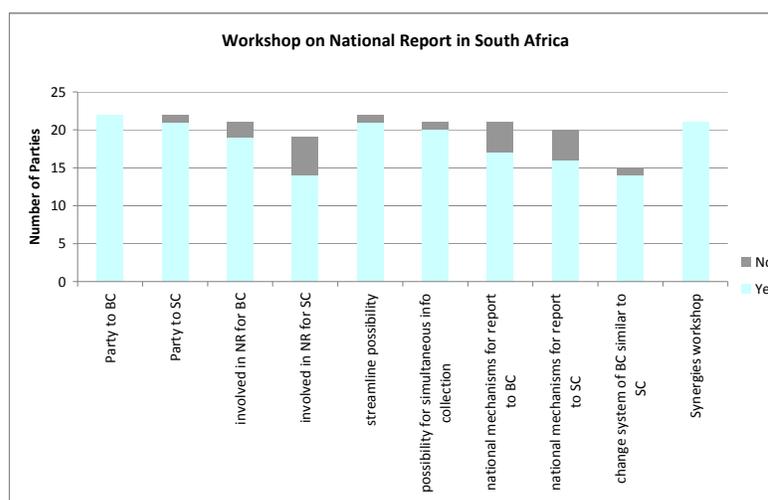
20. The secretariats are also analyzing the possibility of other joint-training possibilities, as suggested by the parties in these consultations, for example, training on data collection at the national level and how to trigger synergies at the national levels. In addition, one specific training was suggested for the European Union members (or candidates to become a member), which require a better coordinated approach between the Basel national reports and the reports on the same sort of information required by the European Commission.

C. Comments on the results from the questionnaires

21. In this section, the results obtained with the questionnaires on synergies used in the workshops in South Africa and in Slovakia are presented.

22. Questions 1 to 5 were “yes/no” questions with the possibility of comments as well. Questions 6 to 8 were multiple-choice questions, with different possibilities to answer. Question 9 was an open question.

23. The two graphics below shows the distribution of “yes/no” answers for questions 1 to 5.



As the graphics show, most respondents are parties to the two Conventions (**question 1**).

24. In the group of respondents in Africa, most are involved with national reporting processes of both Conventions (**question 2**). While in the group answering in Slovakia, more than a half of the parties were not involved with the Stockholm national reporting processes. This reflects that in some countries the two different reporting are sometimes done by the same organization, or under the responsibility of one specific group or even one individual, whereas in others the reporting responsibilities for different Conventions are shared by different groups, ministries or individuals.

Since these two workshops were focused on the Basel Convention, it is natural that some participants were not familiar with the Stockholm Convention national reporting processes.

25. In **question 3**, on streamlining possibilities, in the workshop in South Africa, the majority of the respondents were positive about this idea. While the majority of the group in Slovakia, answered negatively to this possibility.

26. In the open part of this question, two suggestions for streamlining were collected: the possibility to use information on POPs consumption and their waste management, useful for both conventions, and NIP development. The suggestion on NIPs is not elaborated enough, and the secretariats would need to go back to the parties to explore it in more detail.

27. One comment of one party also calls attention to the fact that the data needed for the two reports are very different, and that PCBs is one of the few linkages between the reports. However, while the Stockholm Convention report covers a large amount of information on PCB management, in the Basel Convention report PCBs are just one among many sources of information.

28. **Question 4** sought ideas for a coordinated and simultaneous information collection mechanism from relevant government agencies for both Conventions. The answers varied quite a bit in the Slovakia workshop, while the majority was positive in the South African event.

29. In the open part of this question, parties suggested the following as possibilities: (i) POPs inventory and the hazardous wastes inventory can be done once for both conventions; (ii) when the same agency/organization is responsible for both reports, and coordination to collect information can possibly be achieved; (iii) information related to import and export of POPs can be used by both conventions' reports;

30. In **question 5**, on the existence of national mechanisms to produce national reports of both conventions, most of the parties in the two groups indicated that mechanisms are in place for both Conventions. But some parties commented on their deficits in this area, for e.g. some parties lack the experience of reporting to the Stockholm Convention, others lack coordination and resources (e.g., personnel) to take these responsibilities forward, and one party voiced that training to the responsible people might have a positive effect on the national reporting results.

31. On the question about changing the Basel Convention reporting system to something as similar as possible to the one of the Stockholm Convention reporting (**question 6**), most of the parties were positive about it. This supports one of the overall conclusions that this could be the first step to be tackled in the process of synergies on national reporting.

32. However, some parties showed concern in sharing an opinion on this topic, because of lack of experience with the Stockholm Convention. Other also voiced concerns about mixing the systems too much, and indicating that the two reports are different. On the positive side, some parties commented that the Stockholm Convention reporting is very convenient so it would be good to have a similar system for the Basel Convention reports.

33. **Question 7** sought feedback on the possibility of synergized workshops. There, 100% of the respondents were positive about this idea. This also indicates the expectation of the parties that this should be planned in the future. Some parties indicated that this sort of initiative might help reduce effort, time, energy and resources. This is also seen as a means to help countries create "synergies" (or improve coordination) at the national levels, as well, as an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences on national reporting.

34. On the possibilities to increase the capacity of focal points, official contact points and designated authorities to collect and report information (**question 8**), some parties indicated that they expect more assistance from the secretariats and from the Regional Centres. Other parties propose that capacity building activities are needed on a continuous basis. They also emphasize issues of high-turn over of personnel, the lack of participation of the relevant authorities in the COPs, the lack of personnel to deal specifically with each Convention, in order to understand the problems well and how to report properly.

35. Parties also voiced the need to provide training to a variety of officials, such as staff of the related Ministries, customs and national environmental agency officials. Especially for new parties, these issues seem to be big barriers. Some parties have also indicated that small projects for capacity building might be one additional way to increase the proficiency of representatives at the country level on the two conventions.

36. Finally, respondents had a chance to propose any other relevant topic (**question 9**). The outcome of this question indicates that some parties consider that the secretariats and Regional

Centres are doing enough, and that more work needs to be done at the national level. Others complimented the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the Regional Centres for the workshop initiatives, which is considered “an eye opener”, and a great opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience on national reporting. Other parties voiced the concern that more capacity building is needed in the areas of awareness and data collection. One party indicated that there is need to develop databases to help collect and manage information at the country level, related to national reports, and that this idea could be an initiative for a new project, lead by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention.

Annex



BASEL CONVENTION



Stockholm Convention



UNEP

Synergies Assessment Form

Participant name (optional): _____

Country name (optional): _____

Background information: As per Synergies decisions (BC-IX/10, SC-4/34), section II A; Omnibus decisions (BC.Ex-1/1, SC.Ex-1/1), paragraph 2 of section I., the Secretariats of the Basel and of the Stockholm conventions, should revise the reporting systems of the conventions and identify possible areas for streamlining.

1. Your country is a Party to:

The Basel Convention yes no
 The Stockholm Convention yes no

2. Which national reporting process(es) you are involved in?

National reporting to the Basel Convention yes no
 National reporting to the Stockholm Convention yes no

3. Do you see any opportunity to streamline the reporting format of the two Conventions in a harmonized manner?

yes no

Please explain: _____

If your answer is yes to this question, please indicate the areas where such streamline could be done

4. Do you foresee any possibility for a coordinated and simultaneous information collection mechanism from relevant government agencies for both Conventions?

yes no

Please explain: _____

5. Are national mechanisms for reporting relating to the two Conventions in place in your country?

National mechanisms for reporting to the Basel Convention yes no
 National mechanisms for reporting to the Stockholm Convention yes no

Please explain: _____

6. Changing the means to send a report to the Secretariat of Basel Convention, using a similar system and user interface as used by the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention is:

- ideal partially ideal not good at all

Please explain: _____

7. Synergies workshop on national reporting for both conventions, i.e. workshops which would cover both sets of requirements of the two Conventions, is:

- necessary partially necessary not necessary
- a very good idea partially a good idea not a good idea

Please explain: _____

8. What are your views on the possibilities to increase the capacity of focal points, official contact points and designated authorities to collect and report information.

9. If you have any suggestion, comments or critiques to do, please use the space below for that. Your opinion is very important to us.

