



**Stockholm Convention  
on Persistent Organic  
Pollutants**

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**Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee**

**Fourth meeting**

Geneva, 13–17 October 2008

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Operational issues: report on the outcomes of activities  
undertaken for effective participation of Parties in  
the work of the Committee**

**Summary of the activities undertaken for effective participation  
in the work of the Committee**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**I. Background**

1. Paragraph 1 of Article 12 of the Stockholm Convention states: “The Parties recognize that rendering of timely and appropriate technical assistance in response to requests from developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition is essential to the successful implementation of this Convention”.
2. Some developing country Parties have expressed to the Secretariat the need for support and capacity to participate fully in the work of the Committee and, in particular, for identifying and compiling information pertinent to the requests of the Committee on the chemicals being assessed for listing in the Convention.
3. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties in its decision SC-3/9 requested the Secretariat to undertake work as listed in paragraph 19 of document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/12 to support and strengthen the capacity of Parties which are developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate fully in the work of the Committee.
4. The Committee took note of the request from the Conference of the Parties and established an intersessional working group chaired by Mr. Mario Ramirez Yarto (Mexico) to address the implementation of the activities proposed by the Secretariat.<sup>1</sup>
5. The activities initiated by the Secretariat to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition for effective participation in the Committee include the following:

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\* UNEP/POPS/POPRC.4/1.

1 UNEP/POPS/POPRC.3/20 paras. 109–113.

- (a) Producing a handbook on the work of the Committee and on what Parties and stakeholders need to do to contribute efficiently to its work;
- (b) Developing a methodology for the identification and compilation of information;
- (c) Organizing regional workshops to bring together Committee members and stakeholders of the regions to demonstrate the handbook, as well as for experience-sharing and preparedness;
- (d) Assisting in the provision of internet access to selected countries that lack internet connection facilities.

## **II. Development of a handbook and regional workshops**

6. The draft of the handbook was prepared by Mr. Yarto and an expert from Sweden, Mr. Wahlström, and reviewed by the intersessional working group. The purpose of the handbook is to enhance the understanding of stakeholders on the review process and to increase the capacity of Parties to identify and provide information pertaining to the risk profile and risk management of the chemicals under review. The draft is presented in document UNEP/POPS/POPRC.4/INF/4.

7. After development of the handbook, three regional workshops were undertaken to test the usefulness of the handbook and collect feedback on it and to provide for face-to-face experience-sharing among past and current members of the Committee, focal points and key stakeholders.

8. One workshop was held for the Latin American and Caribbean region from 20 to 22 August 2008 in Montevideo, with financial support from Germany and logistic support from Uruguay. A second workshop was held for the Asian region from 3 to 5 September 2008, in Bangkok, with logistic support from Thailand.

9. A third workshop was held for the African region from 22 to 26 September 2008 in Bujumbura. This workshop was organized in conjunction with the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention to foster cooperation and networking at the national and regional levels between the focal points of the two conventions and to explore an integrated approach in chemicals management at the national level.

10. The outcomes of the workshops are reported in document UNEP/POPS/POPRC.4/INF/5.

## **III. Technical assistance and training in strengthening local capacity to participate effectively in the work of the Committee**

11. One national workshop was organized, in Sierra Leone from 18 to 22 August 2008, with the technical assistance of the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, to improve access to technical and scientific information, in order to promote effective participation in the work of the Committee. Another workshop has been scheduled for Cambodia.

12. These measures have enhanced collaboration between various national agencies involved in the management of chemicals, including the focal or contact points engaged in the national activities related to the Stockholm Convention and the Committee. They have also encouraged other stakeholders to exchange information.

13. To strengthen countries' capacity to disseminate information related to the Committee, the Environmentally Sound Technology Information System software, which enables countries to build and design their own electronic portal, was provided to them.

14. As a result, 20 stakeholders, including the Committee members, were trained in each country and two national electronic portals were launched for information access and exchange.

## **IV. Possible action by the Committee**

15. The Committee may wish:
  - (a) To take note of the activities;
  - (b) To invite Parties to make use of the handbook and to send comments to the Secretariat;
  - (c) To provide guidance to the Secretariat for the revision of the handbook;
  - (d) To recommend any further required activities.