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CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

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ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE INTER-SESSIONAL
WORK REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Clearing-house mechanisms for technical and financial assistance
and capacity-building networks for chemicals management

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. At its third session, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee requested the secretariat to examine further the experience of clearing-house mechanisms under other conventions, particularly with reference to technical needs, funding and expertise, and to advise the Implementation Aspects Group of possible modalities for such a clearing-house. It also suggested that lessons might be learned from ongoing efforts to design a capacity-building network in other chemicals-related forums (see paragraph 84 the Committee's report on the work of its third session, contained in document UNEP/POPS/INC.3/4).

2. In response to this request the secretariat has prepared its present note on clearing-house mechanisms for technical and financial assistance. The note focuses on those clearing-house mechanisms associated with existing multilateral environmental agreements, but not exclusively – relevant examples associated with non-binding arrangements are also examined. The note does not consider clearing-house mechanisms whose sole function is the exchange of information unrelated to technical and financial assistance.

* UNEP/POPS/INC.4/1.

Such clearing-houses were examined previously in the secretariat's note on clearing-house mechanism for POPs (UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5). In addition, capacity-building networks in chemicals-related forums are reviewed.

3. A number of other documents were developed for previous sessions of the Committee that examine various aspects of technical and financial assistance: These include the outline of a UNEP project portfolio on persistent toxic substances in the framework of the GEF International Waters Portfolio, prepared for the Committee's first session (UNEP/POPS/INC.1/INF/14); for the second session, the secretariat's notes on possible capacity-building activities and their associated costs under the international legally binding instrument on POPs (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/3); on existing technical and financial assistance mechanisms in support of multilateral environmental agreements (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/4); on existing global, regional and bilateral programmes, providing technical and financial assistance with regard to the management and elimination of chemicals (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/5); possible capacity-building activities and their associated costs under the international legally binding instrument on POPs (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/INF/3); on existing mechanisms for providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for environmental projects (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/INF/4); on the second survey of development assistance activities for capacity-building conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/INF/5); on the "Inventory of activities - Summary report" prepared by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/INF/6); on available information on existing programmes of international financial institutions with regard to management and elimination of chemicals (UNEP/POPS/INC.2/INF/7); for the third session, its note on information received from Governments on their priorities with regard to technical assistance that would be required in undertaking inventories of POPs, and developing national action plans to address POPs (UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/4); on experience and lessons learned under the Montreal Protocol (UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/6) and on possible capacity-building activities and their associated costs under the POPs instrument (UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/8).

I. Clearing-house mechanisms for technical and financial assistance

4. For the purposes of the present note, the term "clearing-house mechanism" is defined as a managed process, information network or other mechanism that facilitates the exchange of information among sources and users of a give scope of information. The note focuses on those clearing-house mechanisms that are involved in matching needs of technical assistance, donor funding or expertise with potential sources of such assistance. The following entities are considered:

(a) OzonAction Information Clearing-house under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;

(b) Climate Convention Information Exchange Programme (CC:INFO programme) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

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- (c) Global Mechanism under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa;
- (d) Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (e) Technical Cooperation Trust Fund to Support the Establishment of Regional Centres under the Basel Convention;
- (f) Project Preparation Committee under the environmental action plan for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE Environmental action plan); and
- (g) Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology under the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

A. Comparative overview

5. This section provides a comparative overview of the clearing-house mechanisms listed above, according to the following attributes: objective and purpose; legal establishment; operational establishment; design and operation; cost and funding aspects; and review, expansion and evolution.

1. Objective and purpose

6. All the clearing-house mechanisms examined have clearly identified objectives to facilitate, coordinate, improve and augment the flow of relevant information, technical and financial assistance, and/or technology transfer. The specific type of information varies according the focus of the host international instrument or organization.

2. Legal establishment

7. Some of the clearing-house mechanisms were established on the authority granted by an explicit reference in the relevant multilateral environmental agreement (e.g., the Global Mechanism under the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity). Others were created through an amendment to the original multilateral agreement or by decision of the Parties to the agreement (e.g., the CC:INFO programme under the Climate Convention). Others trace their legal establishment to the authority delegated by a subsidiary body that creates a clearing-house mechanism to help the host multilateral environmental agreement fulfil its mandate (e.g., providing neutral, unbiased information on policies, disseminate information on available technologies, their environmental risks and the broad terms under which they are acquired.).

3. Operational establishment

8. Although the specific processes vary considerably, in general terms the operational establishment of the clearing-house mechanisms examined contains the following elements:

(a) An intergovernmental negotiating committee, the conference of the parties, or the agreement itself – either through an explicit provision in the original text or through a subsequent amendment – instructs the secretariat or some entity to study or establish a clearing-house mechanism. Such instructions sometimes contain statements regarding the proposed purpose and operational focus of the clearing-house mechanism, the organization which should host the mechanism, and the manner in which the establishment of the clearing-house mechanism should be undertaken. In other cases, the details of the organizational establishment are left to the clearing-house mechanism itself;

(b) The secretariat or designated entity examines possible options, models and cost estimates for the design, content, initiation and operation of the clearing-house mechanism. This can involve commissioning studies or holding consultations with various stakeholders, potential end-users, officials familiar with existing clearing-house mechanisms and experts in information technology and management;

(c) The secretariat or designated entity reports back to the decision-making body involved or to the parties regarding the possible options and costs associated with the clearing house to be established;

(d) Following its review of the options and costs associated, the decision-making body involved provides the secretariat or designated entity with more explicit terms of reference regarding further study of the establishment of the clearing-house mechanism; and

(e) If so instructed, the secretariat or designated entity takes necessary steps to construct the clearing-house mechanism.

4. Design and operation

9. The clearing-house mechanisms examined vary significantly in their specific design and operation, reflecting the manner in which they were established, the issue areas which they cover, the availability of human and financial resources and other factors. These clearing-house mechanisms can, however, be grouped in two general categories: first, informational and, second, catalytic, facilitating and networking.

10. Informational clearing-houses focus almost exclusively on obtaining and distributing information, to ensure the more effective implementation of a multilateral environmental agreement or programme objective. An example of this type of clearing-house mechanism is the OzonAction Information Clearing-house under the Montreal Protocol. They are designed and operated to gather, organize, process, analyse, and disseminate large amounts of often detailed information on many aspects of their relevant issue areas.

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11. Catalytic, facilitating and networking clearing-houses are designed and operated to facilitate and coordinate financial and technical assistance, capacity-building and technology transfer. Examples of this type of clearing-house mechanism are the Global Mechanism under the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund under the Basel Convention, the Project Preparation Committee under the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) environmental action plan, and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology under ESCAP. These clearing-house mechanisms gather, distribute and use information with the goal of creating new, or improving existing, avenues of technical and financial assistance, capacity-building and technology transfer.

12. More detailed information on the mechanics of how clearing-house mechanisms collect, store, manage, process, distribute and facilitate the free exchange of information can be found in the secretariat's note on the clearing-house mechanism for POPs (UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5).

5. Cost and funding

13. The costs associated with creating and operating a clearing-house mechanism are often borne by the parties to the relevant multilateral environment agreement or other international instrument, although modalities for how this is done vary. In many cases, some or all of the costs associated with the clearing-house mechanism are included in the overall budget for the secretariat for the agreement and paid according to the standard procedure used to cover the secretariat's operating expenses. This is the case for the Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the CC:INFO programme under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under the Convention on Biological Diversity the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has provided funding to promote national implementation of the clearing-house mechanism.

14. In some cases, there is considerable reliance on voluntary contributions to support significant aspects of clearing-house operations. This is the case with the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund under the Basel Convention and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology. Additional funding may also come from other United Nations or intergovernmental organizations, or through bilateral support from Governments or from non-governmental organizations.

15. The specific costs associated with creating and operating clearing-house mechanisms include the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of the network of personnel and computer and other systems necessary. This often entails costs for technical, profession and clerical staff, computer equipment, state-of-the-art communications, including internet services, fax and mail services, and office space and supplies.

16. The cost of using clearing-house mechanisms is most often covered by the end-users themselves. Under some multilateral environmental agreements, however, such costs are subsidized for certain parties (e.g., developing countries or countries with economies in transition). User costs include those required to submit, access, receive, analyse and make use of relevant

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information provide through the clearing-house mechanism. These can include expenses for technical, professional and clerical staff, computer equipment and internet access.

6. Review, expansion and evolution

17. Most of the multilateral environmental agreements with clearing-house mechanisms contain expectations – explicit or implicit – that the design, performance, and effectiveness of their clearing-house mechanisms is to be reviewed with a view to ensuring that the mechanism meets the set objectives and to examining opportunities for improvement. Such reviews are often conducted by a subsidiary body or outside consultant who reports back to the conference of the parties or other designated entity. Reviews generally lead to recommendations to maintain, modify or expand elements of the focus, design or operation of the clearing-house mechanism.

18. Clearing-house mechanisms also need to evolve to keep up with new computer and communications technologies, which can enhance the amount and types of information they manages and improve the efficiency and speed at which information is collected, managed and disseminated.

B. Possible models

19. Each of the clearing-house mechanisms examined contains certain elements in their design and operation that could serve as possible models to facilitate the provision of technical and financial assistance in support of countries' efforts to meet their obligations under a global convention on POPs. Their design and operation suggest some broad categories of potential models and these are discussed below. The desired purpose and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism, including the level of service and the resources available, may determine whether one of the following models or some other model would be most suitable.

1. Passive informational clearing-house mechanisms

20. Passive informational clearing-house mechanisms to facilitate technical and financial assistance would focus exclusively on posting information related to assistance that they receive from potential donors and recipients. These may include such features as interactive internet bulletin boards that contain descriptions of projects needing assistance, potential sources of funding for certain types of projects, descriptions of best practices or certain technologies and other related information. Clearing-house mechanisms of this type could post project proposals from potential recipients as well as information on the types of activities that donors would like to have posted and for which it would welcome proposals. They would not actively seek information or disseminate it, although the information would be made widely available through the internet. The clearing-house mechanism would not engage in efforts to increase or coordinate technical or financial assistance activities.

2. Active informational clearing-house mechanisms

21. Active informational clearing-house mechanisms to facilitate technical and financial assistance would assist in the provision of technical and financial assistance in much the same way as the passive informational model discussed above. They would, however, play an active role in the collection, management, and distribution of information. Under this active model, information would be actively sought on possible projects from potential recipients and from potential sources of technical and assistance. These mechanisms could be increasingly informative, interactive and user-friendly in their methods of collecting, packaging and distributing information. This distribution could be accomplished by all possible means and could even target particular users.

3. Limited networking

22. Limited networking clearing-house mechanisms to facilitate technical and financial assistance would facilitate and help coordinate available technical and financial assistance with the aim of supporting countries' efforts to meet their convention-related needs. They would attempt to match potential sources of funding with project proposals of potential recipients. This could involve a secretariat actively working to broker matches between donors and recipients. The mechanism would not provide technical or financial assistance of its own, it would not have resources to develop its own projects and it would not have seed money to initiate demonstration projects. The mechanism would not be mandated to solicit new sources of funding in the absence of specific project proposals. It would act solely as a facilitating conduit connecting proposals submitted with self-identified potential donors. This model could also include many of the functions of the active informational clearing-house discussed above.

4. Catalytic networking

23. Catalytic networking clearing-house mechanisms to facilitate technical and financial assistance would actively encourage, develop, facilitate, coordinate and augment technical and financial assistance, capacity-building and technology transfer. Under this model, the clearing-house would not provide funding or technical assistance of its own, but would actively canvass potential sources of support for project proposals, actively promote additional funding and, assist in the development of new project proposals and related activities. It may even initiate demonstration projects if provided with the resources to do so by outside donors or by the parties. This model could also include many of the functions of the active informational clearing-house discussed above.

III. CAPACITY-BUILDING NETWORKS IN CHEMICALS-RELATED FORUMS

24. This paper examines two capacity-building networks in chemicals-related forums:

(a) Chemicals-related networks under the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee; and

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(b) Potential capacity-building networks for the sound management of chemicals to be endorsed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS).

25. Such capacity-building networks include potential providers of technical and financial assistance and technical expertise and information, and those who might benefit from this assistance and information. These are the focal points within the network. Capacity-building networks tend to facilitate the provision of assistance, information and training simply by providing a network through which the potential providers and recipients are identified and can communicate with one another. They can be complemented by clearing-house mechanisms like those discussed above.

26. Given that only one existing capacity-building network is examined in this paper and another is only in the planning phase, no attempt can be made to provide a comparative analysis or identify models here. These networks are described in the following section.

IV. DESCRIPTIONS OF CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISMS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING NETWORKS EXAMINED

27. This section provides summaries of the clearing-house mechanisms and capacity-building networks examined. For most, a description is provided of the overall objective, legal establishment, operational establishment, design and operation, cost and funding aspects, and review, expansion and evolution processes.

A. OzonAction Information Clearing-house under the Montreal Protocol

28. The 1987 Montreal Protocol protects stratospheric ozone by phasing out the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances, including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), halons, methyl bromide, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform. The Multilateral Fund serves as the financial mechanism of the ozone regime and provides financial and technical assistance to help developing country Parties implement their obligations. Other institutional features of the regime include: binding control measures, including separate phase-out schedules for Article 5 Parties; independent assessment panels to examine relevant scientific, environmental, economic and technological issues; an implementation committee to examine issues relating to compliance with the Protocol; and a secretariat to administer the regime.

29. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house is the clearing-house mechanism for the Montreal Protocol and its financial mechanism. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serves as the secretariat for the clearing-house mechanism. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house is an integrated information exchange service that provides technical, policy and scientific information on a wide range of issues including: alternative technologies, products and services for each use of ozone-depleting substances in each industrial sector; directories of experts, consultants and key ozone focal points worldwide; technical literature abstracts; information on ordering documents; descriptions of national policies, legislation,

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regulations and programmes to phase out ozone-depleting substances; listing of ozone protection workshops, conferences and meetings; news on the latest phase-out initiatives; and public awareness materials.

1. Objective and purpose

30. The objective of the OzonAction Information Clearing-house is to assist Parties to the Montreal Protocol, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, meet their commitments under the Montreal Protocol and its amendments to phase out ozone-depleting substances by providing technical, policy and scientific information on a wide range of issues that will help build the local expertise required for the responsible management of ozone depleting substance phase-out projects.

2. Legal establishment

31. OzonAction Information Clearing-house was created under the auspices of the Multilateral Fund under authority granted by relevant articles of the Montreal Protocol and the delegated authority given to the Multilateral Fund by the Meeting of the Parties. Article 10 (b) of the Protocol (as amended) establishes that the Fund will finance clearing-house functions that will assist Article 5 Parties, facilitate technical cooperation, distribute information, hold workshops and training sessions, and monitor other relevant multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation. Article 9 establishes related background requirements for information dissemination.

3. Operational establishment

32. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house was established by the Multilateral Fund under one of the directives for the Fund given by the Parties in Article 10. The Fund assigned the task of creating the clearing-house mechanism to UNEP, in its capacity as an implementing agency for the Protocol and the Fund, which then created the OzonAction Information Clearing-house.

4. Design and operation

33. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house was created under the Multilateral Fund, but does not directly focus on the provision of technical and financial assistance. It is, however, funded by the Multilateral Fund and is overseen by the Parties through authority delegated to the Fund, and its functions directly support and augment the efforts and goals of the Multilateral Fund to assist Parties phase out ozone depleting substances.

34. UNEP operates OzonAction Information Clearing-house through its OzonAction Programme. OzonAction's clearing-house activities consist of global information exchange and regional networking of Parties. The information exchange unit of the OzonAction Programme assists with identifying, sourcing, selecting and implementing alternative technologies equipment and services. It also helps in understanding and designing policy instruments to control ozone depleting substance use. OzonAction provides a policy mentor network that matches developed country policy experts with developing country counterparts. Training activities are implemented at the

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regional level, while support is also provided for national level activities. All programmes are designed to increase the involvement of local experts from industry and academia.

35. Most relevant to this paper are OzonAction's information exchange and regional networking activities. These networking and information collection, processing and dissemination services are performed by UNEP but OzonAction Information Clearing-house staff members regularly liaise with experts from the ozone regime's Technical and Economic Assessment Panel and its Technical and Economic Options Committees, as well as with representatives of Governments, industry, and non-governmental organizations. This helps the OzonAction Information Clearing-house obtain as much information as possible, to keep abreast of new technical developments and to stay informed of the needs of end-users.

36. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house collects and provides technical, policy and scientific information on a wide range of ozone-depleting substance phase-out issues, including, but not limited to: alternative technologies, products and services for each ozone-depleting substance in each industrial sector using or producing ozone-depleting substances; technical literature abstracts and information on ordering documents regarding these alternatives and other issues; directories of experts, consultants and key ozone focal points worldwide so that Parties can contact them directly if they wish; descriptions of national policies, legislation, regulations and programmes to phase out ozone-depleting substances; news on the latest phase-out initiatives; listing of ozone protection events, including workshops, conferences and meetings in all regions; and public awareness materials.

37. OzonAction uses a wide variety of mediums to disseminate this information, including: the OzonAction website; a diskette set containing a comprehensive database; mail; fax; a quarterly newsletter; a query-response-service; technical assistance materials; workshops; video presentations; and media campaigns. In this way, all end-users can use the medium most appropriate to their situation. As technologies have improved over the last decade, the OzonAction Information Clearing-house has made increasing use of the internet but still provides information through other mediums and also responds to specific information requests. In addition, it makes every effort to draw the attention of ozone focal points, private industry and other end-users to the internet and other resources.

38. OzonAction publishes its quarterly newsletter in five languages, and provides an on-line version of the newsletter in English, French and Spanish. It publishes policy documents developed jointly with the Stockholm Environment Institute. It also holds regular regional workshops with end-users and maintains an active query-response service in which OzonAction Information Clearing-house staff-members respond to specific questions or attempt to put end-users in contact with particular experts from Governments, international organizations, industry, non-governmental organizations, or research institutions.

5. Cost and funding aspects

39. The OzonAction Information Clearing-house is funded by the Multilateral Fund, as mandated under Article 10 of the Montreal Protocol. The Fund itself is supported by mandatory contributions by non-article 5 Parties using a modified United Nations scale of assessment. The total level of replenishment of the Fund is set every three years in negotiations among the Parties. However, determining the specific cost allocations for clearing-house mechanism-only functions within the overall OzonAction set of activities has been problematic during this preliminary research phase, as UNEP shares some of the cost burden. For example, in 1997, UNEP pledged \$1.05 million for recurring information exchange activities and an additional \$335,000 for the OzonAction newsletter, website maintenance and other clearing-house functions.

6. Review, expansion and evolution

40. The Parties regularly review the operation of the OzonAction Information Clearing-house through the Multilateral Fund Executive Committee's oversight of its implementing agencies. The Meeting of the Parties also has authority to review, the operation of the implementing agencies directly. In addition to these and other formal reviews, the OzonAction Information Clearing-house also regularly solicits feedback and reviews of its operations from end-users, so that it can continue to improve its service. The Parties also provide regular feedback and informal reviews to the OzonAction Information Clearing-house through information consultations, workshops, Meetings of the Parties, and other forums.

41. As a result of such reviews, the OzonAction Information Clearing-house regularly adjusts its methods of collection, analysing and distributing information. In general, the types and total amount of information collected and distributed by OzonAction Information Clearing-house appears to have grown significantly. The evolution of the OzonAction Information Clearing-house also reveals increasing use of new computer technologies to collect, distribute and update information.

B. CC:INFO programme under the Framework Convention on Climate Change

42. The Framework Convention on Climate Change aims to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Convention distinguishes between Annex I Parties (developed country and country with economy in transition Parties), Annex II Parties (developed country Parties) and non-Annex I Parties (developing country Parties) with regard to control measures and other requirements. GEF acts as the financial mechanism of the Convention to help provide financial and technical assistance.

43. The secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change operated the CC:INFO programme between 1993 and 1997. Since then different partner organizations have taken up different parts of the original CC:INFO programme package.

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1. Objective and purpose

44. The CC:INFO programme had two main objectives. The first was to improve the availability of information on country activities relating to climate change and the availability of resources for such activities, in order to match demands for resources in particular countries with the supply of such resources in other countries and in international organizations. The second was to contribute to improved information exchange between organizations that supported climate change activities, as well as between and within countries, in order to help initiate enabling activities i.e., (capacity-building and support projects) to help developing countries implement the Convention. The CC:INFO programme did not itself provide resources but rather supplied information about their availability.

2. Legal and operational establishment

45. The CC:INFO programme was created in 1993 by the interim secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change jointly with UNEP.

3. Design and operation

46. The secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change operated CC:INFO programme jointly with UNEP and in cooperation with a number of organizations, including GEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Information, mostly project documents, was collected and processed by CC:INFO programme staff into database sets that included information on individual and organizational contacts and profiles, activities and projects, as well as bibliographical information. In addition, project documents and other information received by the CC:INFO programme project team were archived in the Library and Documentation Centre of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The information was distributed primarily via the CC:INFO report, which was initially available only in print, but was later also made available via CD-ROM and the Convention web site.

4. Cost and funding aspects

47. Part of the cost for creating and operating the CC:INFO programme came from the budget for the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The programme also relied upon financial, in-kind or participatory contributions from UNEP, partner organizations, including GEF and UNDP, and Governments.

5. Review, expansion and evolution

48. The operation of the CC:INFO programme was reviewed in documents prepared for and considered by the Conference of Parties and its subsidiary bodies. After several years of operation, the Parties decided that CC:INFO programme had served the objectives set for it and that continuing its operation was unnecessary. At recent meetings of the Conference of the Parties, however, decisions (e.g., decisions 10 and 11 of the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting) adopted with regard to capacity-building may lead the Parties and the secretariat to relaunch the CC:INFO programme but with a focus on all aspects of capacity-building. This possibility is currently being studied.

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C. Global Mechanism under the Convention to Combat Desertification

49. The Convention to Combat Desertification aims to combat desertification and drought, particularly in Africa, by providing support to affected country Parties to assist them develop and implement effective long-term strategies to combat desertification. The Convention includes four regional implementation annexes that articulate core requirements of the Convention with respect to the particular conditions in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The core of the Convention to Combat Desertification, which entered into force in 1996, is the development and implementation of national action programmes by affected countries, in cooperation with donors, international organizations, local populations and non-governmental organizations. The action programmes focus on identifying and addressing factors contributing to desertification. Affected country Parties and developed country Parties have separate but interconnected responsibilities with respect to action programmes.

50. A clearing-house mechanism, known as the Global Mechanism, was established to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channeling of substantial financial resources to combat desertification.

51. The Global Mechanism coordinates and facilitates partnerships between project developers and potential sources of funding, including programmes and bodies of the United Nations, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), GEF, UNEP, the World Food Programme (WFP), regional development banks and regional and subregional organizations, as well as interested non-governmental organizations. The Global Mechanism does not provide funding or assistance on its own. Instead, it provides a mechanism for assisting in the identification of outside sources of funds and assistance, as well as for assisting countries in applying for those funds and assistance.

1. Objective and purpose

52. The objective of the Global Mechanism is to increase the flow of resources for implementation of the Convention, while increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms. The Global Mechanism specializes in partnership building around the objective of mobilizing financial and technical resources for implementation of the Convention.

53. The Convention to Combat Desertification, article 21, paragraph 4, mandates the promotion of actions leading to the mobilization and channeling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties. The Convention also places strong emphasis on a multi-source funding approach and on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms (Article 21, paragraphs 1 (b) and 4).

2. Legal and operational establishment

54. The Global Mechanism was established by paragraph 4 of Article 21 of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Paragraph 5 of that same article

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outlined the process required operational establishment of the clearing-house mechanism. The Conference of the Parties, at its first meeting, was instructed to designate an organization to house the Global Mechanism; to make arrangements with the organization housing the Global Mechanism regarding its administrative operations, drawing to the extent possible on existing budgetary and human resources; and to agree upon modalities, in cooperation with designated organizations, to develop the Global Mechanism and to ensure that the operation of the Global Mechanism would, first, identify relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes available to implement the Convention; second, provide advice to Parties on innovative methods of financing and sources of financial assistance; and, third, facilitate coordination among Parties and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with regard to funding patterns in order to facilitate them. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties was instructed to review the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism and to take appropriate action.

55. At the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, by paragraph 1 of decision 24/COP.1, the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was designated to house the Global Mechanism. This decision also gave further explicit instructions regarding the operational development of the Global Mechanism, including a specific delineation of its functions. The Conference of the Parties also endorsed collaborative institutional arrangements between IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank in support of the Mechanism. These arrangements are seen as essential ingredients in meeting the Global Mechanism's objectives. IFAD has already initiated a number of actions to put these arrangements in place.

56. The operational development and operational strategy of the Global Mechanism continue to be considered at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, taking into consideration experience gained at the country, regional and subregional levels and comments made by the Facilitation Committee, as requested in decision 18/COP.2.

3. Design and operation

57. The Global Mechanism specializes in partnership building around the objective of mobilizing and channeling relevant financial and technical resources for implementation of the Convention. It acts to support and facilitate efforts to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of existing technical and financial sources, as well as to promote access to new and innovative financial resources. Its design and operation are more those of a broker institution than an informational clearing-house.

58. The Global Mechanism uses its own resources to support the development of action programmes and initiatives deriving from them. It may also act as a co-financier in order to facilitate early implementation of initiatives (mostly using voluntary contributions). The Global Mechanism is not a fund, however, and its primary objective is that of bringing together demand with existing and potential supply of funding relevant to implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

59. Countries apply directly to the organization that provides funding, and not to the Global Mechanism. The Global Mechanism helps applicants identify

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potential sources of funding, including programmes and bodies of the United Nations, particularly FAO, GEF, UNEP, WFP, regional development banks, and regional and subregional organizations, as well as interested non-governmental organizations.

60. Functionally, the Global Mechanism is housed in, works with and receives financial and in-kind support from, IFAD. Staff positions for the Global Mechanism include those of Managing Director; Senior Programme manager; Financial Analyst/Systems Manager; Senior Programme Development Officer; Programme Development Officers; support staff; and consultants. The Global Mechanism and the Convention secretariat must cooperate in order to avoid duplication and enhance effectiveness of implementation and, to that end, have taken a number of relevant initiatives. At the field level, the Global Mechanism will rely on the offices of the United Nations Resident Coordinator as well as FAO field services.

61. The Facilitation Committee provides support and advice to the Global Mechanism. Members of the Facilitation Committee currently include the three founding members, IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank, as well as three regional banks (the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank), the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, FAO, GEF, UNEP and, in an ex-officio capacity, the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism. These institutions have relevant experience in one or more areas covered by the mandate of the Global Mechanism. The member institutions of the Facilitation Committee agree to support implementation of the Convention through their own regular programmes and the Global Mechanism has begun developing collaborative initiatives with FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, IFAD and the World Bank.

62. The main issues discussed by the Facilitation Committee have included the Global Mechanism's operational strategy, the programme of work, and the modalities and membership of the Facilitation Committee. It has been agreed that Facilitation Committee meetings should also be used to organize briefings for the senior management of the hosting institution, with the aim of raising the profile of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the role of the Global Mechanism in its implementation.

63. The guiding principles for the operation of the Global Mechanisms specify that it must be: oriented towards issues of financial assistance (including the transfer of technology); geared toward promoting multi-source, multi-channel financing; demand-driven but also proactively responsive to the needs and priorities of the Parties; highly flexible in operation, responding to emerging opportunities; value-added rather than duplicative with respect to existing mechanisms and facilities; lean and efficient, drawing on other institutions, including its housing institution, to the extent possible, as well as access to the United Nations system-wide capacities and facilities; and emphasizing neutrality and universality in all its operations.

64. The Global Mechanism performs, or plans to perform, the following interrelated functions as part of its normal operations:

(a) Matching donors and recipients of financial and technical assistance in the area of desertification;

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(b) Mobilizing and channelling financial resources by identifying potential sources of financing from bilateral donors, the United Nations system, multilateral financial institutions, regional and subregional financial mechanisms and non-governmental organizations, foundations and other private sector entities, and establishing relationships and maintaining contacts with them;

(c) Promoting actions leading to cooperation and coordination through partnership building, marketing and awareness-raising;

(d) Establishing and updating database inventories of the financial needs of affected developing country Parties for carrying out action programmes, as well as other relevant activities related to the implementation of the Convention, on the basis of information provided under relevant articles of the Convention;

(e) Establishing and updating database inventories of relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes and available financial resources in the form of a comprehensive database, incorporating information both from Parties and from various financial mechanisms;

(f) Disseminating information from the database inventories to Parties on a regular basis and making it available, on request, to interested intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(g) Providing interested Parties and organizations with information on funding patterns;

(f) Offering advice on innovative financing methods and sources of financial assistance;

(g) Helping Governments develop national action plans to combat desertification;

(h) Collecting and disseminating other appropriate information regarding the Convention and its implementation;

(i) Analysing and advising on issues within its competency; and

(j) Facilitating and promoting the acquisition, adaptation, development and transfer of appropriate technologies, knowledge, know-how and practices, which are relevant to combating desertification and land degradation.

65. The Global Mechanism is to develop a master database that will serve a number of purposes. It will provide a baseline against which the future effectiveness of the Global Mechanisms will be measured. At the same time, it will collect and supply information on development assistance flows and needs and identify criteria for allocating available resources. It will not be restricted to bilateral and multilateral organizations but will also involve the private sector, primarily private development foundations and international non-governmental organizations. The Global Mechanism database will be built on the basis of pre-existing databases, but will organize information in such a way that it serves the purpose of the Convention and

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will be developed in consultation with the end users. Over time, the database will be extended to include information on issues such as development indicators, the developing country Governments' own investment in dry land development, and land degradation. Such information, to be incorporated from existing databases, will be used to explore interrelations between desertification and land degradation and financial flows and investments trends.

66. A database on best practices for land conservation is also being established jointly with UNEP. In addition, IFAD is using resources supplied by GEF to develop a pipeline of investment projects in the drylands, to be co-financed with GEF.

67. In its first year, the Global Mechanism gave priority to establishing relations with developing countries and subregions, seeking to establish a mode of cooperation with them and to demonstrate ways in which the Global Mechanism can contribute to the development of action programmes and related initiatives.

4. Cost and funding aspects

68. Funding aspects for the Global Mechanism are complex. Secretariat and administrative operations of the Global Mechanism are funded by Parties to the Convention and by IFAD. The Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Mechanism do not have a dedicated financial mechanism to administer funds for Convention-related projects and activities. Instead, the Global Mechanism mobilizes substantial funding from existing and potentially new sources and facilitates, coordinates, rationalizes and strengthens their provision, use and management.

69. The Global Mechanism operates three accounts to support its operational functions, as defined in the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties and IFAD. In order to render these accounts fully operational, legal interpretation and precise definition of the purposes for which they may be used were required and these were agreed upon at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The first account, a core budget administrative account, is used to support the operation of the office of the Global Mechanism and is funded by the standard assessed contributions that the Parties pay to fund the Convention to Combat Desertification. The second account, voluntary contributions administrative expenses account, is used to support the core administrative and other operations of the Global Mechanism but is capitalized with voluntary contributions. The third account, a basic resources account to finance the Convention to Combat Desertification, is also supported by voluntary contributions. It is used to support to Parties to the Convention in developing national action programmes and subregional action programmes and related initiatives, as well as for developing strategic initiatives which have a potential for generating financial resources for Convention implementation.

70. The 1999 budget for the Global Mechanism supported by assessed contributions by Parties to the Convention is \$913,000 for administrative and operational expenses. The approved budget for the Global Mechanism in 2000 is \$1,300,000. For 2001, it is \$1,350,000. In accordance with its commitment in its submission to house the Global Mechanism, IFAD has

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generously contributed an initial \$2.5 million of a total pledge of \$10 million to the basic resources account. The Technical Advisory Group will advise on the use of funds from this account. A number of Parties have also submitted voluntary contributions to the voluntary contributions administrative expenses account.

5. Review, expansion and evolution

71. The operational strategy of the Global Mechanism is revised at each Conference of the Parties, taking into consideration experienced learned at the regional and subregional levels and comments made by the Facilitation Committee. This process was mandated by decision 18/COP.2. The operational strategy has already been revised in light of comments made at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties and by the Facilitation Committee at its fourth and fifth sessions. These were taken into account in the revised strategy submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting, as part of the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities mandated by decisions 24/COP.1, 25/COP.1, and 18/COP.1. The results of this review are available in decision 9/COP.3.

D. Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity

72. The Convention on Biological Diversity seeks the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Convention addresses the rapid loss of species and ecosystems due to human intervention and a realization that biological diversity is a valuable asset for current and future generations. Parties are obligated to make proactive efforts to create protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity, monitor the components of biodiversity, integrate its conservation into national plans and policies, and develop the necessary legislation for its protection. The Convention also spells out the rights and obligations of the Parties to engage in scientific and technological cooperation. To assist the prompt implementation and enforcement of the Convention, a system of national reporting has been created. The Conference of Parties is the supreme body of the Convention on Biological Diversity and is supported by a number of subsidiary bodies and its secretariat. GEF serves as the financial mechanism for the Convention.

73. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity operates the Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention. The Clearing-house Mechanism facilitates information collection and exchange on biodiversity and implementation issues and promotes technical and scientific cooperation at all levels among the Parties. It gathers and organizes information in a decentralized manner with partners in national Governments and elsewhere and attempts to coordinate efforts among them and with the Convention secretariat to address topics of common interest. A key feature of the Clearing-house Mechanism is its network of national focal points, to which guidance is provided in establishing more focused clearing-house mechanisms at the national level. These national clearing-house mechanisms are linked into the global Clearing-house Mechanism, whose administrators receive guidance from a regionally balanced informal advisory committee.

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1. Objectives and purpose

74. The objective of the Clearing-house Mechanism is to promote and facilitate access to and exchange of information and scientific and technical cooperation for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The guiding principles of the operation of the Clearing-house Mechanism are for it to be "neutral, cost-effective, efficient, accessible, independent, and transparent".

2. Legal and operational establishment

75. Article 17 of the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes general obligations regarding the exchange of information by Parties. Paragraphs 3 of article 18 on technical and scientific cooperation established a specific obligation to create a clearing-house mechanism. The Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention was established in response to that mandate.

76. At its first meeting, the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity formally established the Clearing-house Mechanism (see the report of the meeting in document UNEP/CBD/COP/1/17, decision I/3). In that decision, the Conference of the Parties requested that the secretariat prepare for its second meeting a comprehensive study containing specific costed recommendations regarding the establishment of the Clearing-house Mechanism, taking fully into account the views expressed at its first meeting and submitted to the secretariat in writing, as well as the need to draw on all relevant existing institutional structures.

77. The resulting document, UNEP/CBD/COP/2/6, presented potential options and recommendations regarding the objective, functions, structure, operation, action plan and budget of a pilot phase for the Clearing-house Mechanism. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties considered and endorsed most of document, thereby operationally establishing a pilot phase for the Clearing-house Mechanism. The Conference decided that the Clearing-house Mechanism should be developed through specific and focused areas of activities related to the promotion of international technical and scientific cooperation, and by gradually building up its functions in response to a clear and identified demand based on experience gained and resources available. It should be developed in a neutral, transparent, cost-effective, efficient and accessible manner; and as a decentralized mechanism using such resources as print and electronic media, including the internet. By making full use of existing facilities, any duplication or overlap of activities should be avoided. Clearing-house mechanism development of the Clearing-house Mechanism would be facilitated by enhancing networking between existing national, regional, subregional and international centre of relevant expertise, as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions and the private sector.

78. At the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision III/4 further requested Governments and other bilateral and multilateral funding institutions to provide funding for capacity-building related to the implementation of the Clearing-house Mechanism. It also recommended that one

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important role of the Clearing-house Mechanism at the national level should be to provide relevant information linkages to the national focal points and relevant thematic focal points. All Parties were requested to designate their Clearing-house Mechanism national focal points and make them operational as soon as possible. Finally, the Conference of the Parties requested those Parties with access to the internet to connect their national Clearing-house Mechanism homepage to the global Clearing-house Mechanism homepage on the internet.

79. At the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision IV/2 requested all Governments and funding institutions to provide funding for the development and implementation of the Clearing-house Mechanism, including support for national as well as regional and subregional clearing-house mechanism activities. The Conference of the Parties recommended that each Party organize an appropriate national clearing-house mechanism steering committee or working group. The Conference of the Parties instructed the Executive Secretary to encourage the development of a network of partners; to provide encouragement for and facilitate the coordination of biodiversity-related networks, activities and focal points that may constitute clearing-house mechanisms; to encourage their linkages within the Clearing-house Mechanism network; to facilitate support to those Parties without adequate internet access, preparing and disseminating to them updated information arising from the secretariat's own functions on CD-ROM or diskettes; and to produce a tool-kit prototype containing necessary information for national focal points to build their national clearing-house mechanism.

3. Design and operation

80. The Clearing-house Mechanism promotes technical and scientific cooperation at all levels among the Parties. It also facilitates information exchange on relevant articles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (e.g., conservation, monitoring, research and training, access to genetic resources, technology transfer, and financial mechanism) and thematic areas (e.g., biosafety, traditional knowledge, species and taxonomy, protected areas and capacity-building). A wide range of organizations make use of the network, including other conventions, international agencies and institutions, government departments, non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups and scientists.

81. Under the authority of the Conference of the Parties, the Clearing-house Mechanism is hosted by the Convention secretariat in Montreal. The secretariat provides information to the Clearing-house Mechanism 'nodes' (major focal points), facilitates partnership and information-sharing, and carries out coordination activities of the Clearing-house Mechanism in collaboration with all focal points. The secretariat receives advice from the Informal Advisory Committee, a group of 15 people consisting of two people drawn from each United Nations geographic region and five non-country members representing international institutions. Their role is to assist and guide in the development of the network. Advice from the Informal Advisory Committee is developed through consensus.

82. The Clearing-house Mechanism gathers and organizes information in a decentralized manner with partners in national Governments and elsewhere, coordinating efforts among them and with the secretariat to address topics of common interest. Synergies have been actively promoted with other multilateral environmental agreements and biodiversity-related international instruments.

83. A key feature of the Clearing-house Mechanism is its network of focal points. There are different types of focal points: national, regional subregional and thematic in development. Each focal point has the responsibility of developing its own supporting network of clearing-house mechanisms; for that reason, the Clearing-house Mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity is sometimes referred to as a network of networks. The national clearing-house mechanisms are housed within government ministries, such as those on natural resources, forestry or agriculture. They are responsible for coordinating the activities of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention within their countries. These focal points promote awareness and activities and facilitate information exchange and partnerships among local stakeholders. Since its pilot launch in 1996, the Clearing-house Mechanism has evolved into a network with 137 national focal points around the world, of which 104 have e-mail facilities and 73 have created their own internet homepages.

84. The Clearing-house Mechanism gathers, analyses, coordinates, distributes and facilitates the exchange of information on a wide variety of information that addresses the main provisions of the Convention, namely: in situ and ex situ conservation, monitoring, species and taxonomy, protected areas, sustainable use of biodiversity, national reports, technical and scientific cooperation, incentive measures, capacity-building, research and training, access to genetic resources, equitable sharing of benefits, access to and transfer of technology, handling of biotechnology, financial resources, agro-biodiversity forests, inland waters and marine and coastal biodiversity, indicators, etc. Among the information resources concerning financial resources is a database of the funding opportunities available to Parties and other actors in the field of biodiversity.

85. The Clearing-house Mechanism uses a wide variety of mediums to distribute its information, including its website, internet databases, CD-ROM databases, e-mail list-servers, the link of national focal points, hardcopy documents, newsletter, awareness brochures, user guides, regional workshops, mail, fax, and telephone. In this way, end-users can use the medium most appropriate to their situation.

4. Cost and funding aspects

86. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity pay for most of the secretariat's costs of creating and operating the Clearing-house Mechanism through the budgets approved by the Conference of Parties for the operation of the Convention secretariat. The proposed cost for the initial establishment and operation of the Clearing-house Mechanism in 1996 was \$670.000. GEF, in its role as the financial mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity supports most of the costs to developing countries of

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creating, and some of the cost of operating, Clearing-house Mechanism national focal points. As of 6 December 1999, GEF had provided more than \$800,000 to fund 69 Clearing-house Mechanism focal points in developing countries -- an average of \$11,661 for each.

87. At the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision II/3 requested GEF to explore modalities of support for the Clearing-house Mechanism. At the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision III/4 endorsed the GEF approach to provide financial assistance to Clearing-house Mechanism nodes through enabling activity projects and requested GEF to operationalize its proposal. At the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision IV/2 requested GEF to be a catalyst in the development and implementation of the Clearing-house Mechanism; to support capacity-building activities and country-driven pilot projects as critical components in the implementation of the Clearing-house Mechanism at the national, subregional, biogeographic, and regional levels; and to provide increased support for country-driven projects to establish and strengthen biodiversity information systems such as training, technology and processes related to the collection, organization, maintenance and updating of knowledge and information and its communication to users through the Clearing-house Mechanism. To assist recipient countries in preparing enabling activity projects, GEF prepared detailed operational criteria, outlining the scope of activities that might typically be undertaken, and indicative cost norms. Proposals conforming to those criteria are eligible for quick approval through expedited procedures. The GEF enabling activity projects provide assistance for a broad stocktaking of biodiversity, analysis of options to meet Convention obligations, formulation of plans and strategies, and preparation of national reports to the Conference of the Parties.

88. Clearing-house Mechanism nodes commonly receive technical or in-kind support from their respective national Governments (42 per cent of respondents). Technical support is also received from the international development community (37 per cent, composed primarily of developing countries), local partners (23 per cent) and international partners (15 per cent).

5. Review, expansion and evolution

89. The operation of the Clearing-house Mechanism is reviewed by the Parties, through subsidiary bodies of the Convention, with the intention of monitoring and improving its effectiveness. Regional workshops to address scientific and technical information needs were held in 1997 and 1998, and recommendations were formulated with a view to shaping the future work of the Clearing-house Mechanism.

90. At the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision IV/2 instructed the Executive Secretary to undertake an independent review of the Clearing-house Mechanism pilot phase at the end of 1998, to be presented to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). In 1999 the Clearing-house Mechanism underwent an independent review of its operations, which resulted in a final report of the pilot phase of the Clearing-house Mechanism, and a strategic plan and longer-term programme of work for its continued operation. On the basis of this review,

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the Conference of Parties, at its fifth meeting in May 2000, will take appropriate decisions on the future operation of the Clearing-house Mechanism.

91. Several priorities for action were identified in the independent review referred to above, including the need for a better description of the functions of the Clearing-house Mechanism, for increased awareness about it, for simpler and more easily translatable language, for the promotion of synergies, for the identification of infrastructure needs, for the monitoring and evaluating of activities and for the long term planning of a sustainable kind. The Informal Advisory Committee, the Clearing-house Mechanism national focal points and partners were identified as key contributors in this process.

E. Technical Cooperation Trust Fund to Support the Establishment of Regional Centres under the Basel Convention

92. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal aims to reduce the threat posed by hazardous wastes and otherwise to protect human health and the environment by minimizing and controlling the generation and movement of such wastes. The Convention obligates Parties: to minimize the generation of hazardous waste; to control and reduce international movements of hazardous wastes; to prevent and punish illegal traffic of hazardous wastes; to ensure the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes; to ensure the availability of adequate disposal facilities for hazardous wastes; to notify and gain the consent of import and transit countries prior to shipment of hazardous wastes; to use movement and tracking forms when shipping hazardous wastes; and to report regularly on these and other obligations.

93. The Basel Convention gives special consideration to developing countries in the form of technical and financial assistance. The Convention focuses on technical assistance, development of technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of waste streams and disposal operations, and assistance for developing countries in the development of legal and technical capacities. The Conference of the Parties established a technical cooperation trust fund to support developing countries and other countries in need of technical assistance in the implementation of the Convention. Another mechanism of importance under the Convention is the facilitation by the secretariat of bilateral assistance activities among Parties. Such activities have been carried out under the framework of the Convention in accordance with Article 10, on international cooperation and, where appropriate, Article 9, on illegal traffic. The Technical Cooperation Trust Fund to Support the Establishment of Regional Centres under the Basel Convention, along with secretariat facilitation efforts, satisfy the broad definition of clearing-house mechanism used in this document.

1. Objective and purpose

94. The Technical Cooperation Trust Fund to Support the Establishment of Regional Centres was established by UNEP to support developing countries and other countries in need of technical assistance in the implementation of the Basel Convention. The Parties seek to provide assistance with the legal, technical, institutional and scientific issues that arise in the implementation of the Convention.

2. Legal and operational establishment

95. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties invited the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a technical cooperation trust fund to support developing countries and other countries in need of technical assistance in the implementation of the Basel Convention. Annex II to the report of Conference recorded the intention for UNEP to establish a technical cooperation trust fund. The Open-ended Ad Hoc Committee for the implementation of the Convention (now called the Working Group for Implementation) has identified the specific needs of different regions and subregions for training and technology transfer. The Working Group for Implementation, as requested, determined the modalities for the establishment and functioning of such centres, as well as for the establishment of appropriate funding mechanisms of a voluntary nature for the establishment of such centres.

96. In response to the request of the Conference of the Parties, the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund was established by UNEP for a trial period of two years, beginning 1 January 1993. The Technical Cooperation Trust Fund would be financed from voluntary contributions made by Parties to the Convention, as well as by non-Parties.

97. At its second meeting, in 1994, the Conference of the Parties extended the mandate of the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund from 1995 to 1998. This mandate was further extended to the end of 2004 at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in 1998.

3. Design and operation

98. The Technical Cooperation Trust Fund acts to support developing countries and other countries in need of technical assistance in the implementation of the Basel Convention. The Convention focuses on technical assistance, the development of technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of waste streams and disposal operations, and assistance for developing countries in the development of legal and technical capacities. In addition, the secretariat of the Basel Convention attempts to facilitate bilateral assistance activities among Parties.

99. As part of its normal operations, the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund performs, or plans to perform, the following interrelated technical assistance activities:

- (a) Development of national legislation, regulations, and standards;

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(b) Identification of main hazardous waste streams and preparation of national plans for the management of hazardous wastes;

(c) Fostering of the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and technology transfer activities, through training and other means;

(d) Funding participation of developing country experts or delegations to the Conference of Parties and subsidiary bodies; and

(e) Ad hoc advice and information provided to Parties, non-Parties, and others (e.g., universities).

100. UNEP, through the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund, and the Basel Convention secretariat, is responsible for carrying out these and other activities that provide technical assistance to Parties. Central to these efforts is the creation and funding of regional and subregional centers for training and technology transfer on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes.

101. The Convention encourages all Parties and non-Parties in a position to do so, as well as international organizations, including development banks, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make financial or in-kind contributions, through the secretariat, to the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund, to support the creation and operation of such centers as soon as possible. Parties and others are also urged to cooperate actively on a regional basis, in particular those Parties that have the capacity to provide technical support to other countries of the region in need of such assistance.

102. As a result of the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and bilateral support, efforts by the secretariat to channel and facilitate responses to this exhortation in the Convention, regional and subregional centres for training and technology transfer on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes have begun to be established around the world. These centres assist Parties to comply with the technical requirements of the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, as well as with legal and institutional aspects of the implementation of the Convention. Following decision IV/4 of the fourth Conference of the Parties, the secretariat has begun to explore interlinkages with UNEP and other United Nations bodies to establish regional cleaner production centres.

103. The Working Group for Implementation identifies the specific needs of different regions and subregions and then recommends sites for the establishment of regional training and technology transfer centres. Recommendations are based on the results of feasibility studies and on specific guidelines that determine the suitability of a potential pilot centre. Each feasibility study should: identify and prioritize the needs of the region; identify the resources available in the region; identify the resources required to address the needs of the region; identify the benefits to be gained through establishment of a pilot centre; determine whether a centre is immediately required to address the prioritized needs; and determine what resources are available from the region and what resources would be required.

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104. The Basel Convention secretariat created an electronic information system and integrated telecommunications network to improve the gathering, organization, treatment and dissemination of data and to provide assistance to developing countries in the collection and processing of those databases.

4. Cost and funding aspects

105. All secretariat costs are covered by the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Basel Convention (i.e., through assessed contributions). A total of 13 per cent of all financial resources deposited in the two Basel Convention trust funds are paid back to UNEP.

106. Technical Cooperation Trust Fund assistance projects are financed by voluntary contributions made by Parties and non-Parties to the Convention, as well as by interested intergovernmental organizations. The Convention encourages those countries in a position to do so, individually or collectively, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, to consider supplying financial resources and technically qualified persons to collaborate in the preparation of the feasibility studies and other projects in the candidate regions. The secretariat of the Basel Convention may act as a liaison point or broker with individual host countries, to help provide local support for the persons conducting the projects. The candidate regions should also provide, as appropriate, qualified persons to assist the technical representatives in conducting the projects.

107. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in decision II/21, invited Parties to provide additional financial resources for the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and some Parties responded with bilateral donations. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties expressed concern over the delays in payments of the agreed upon voluntary contributions by Parties and non-Parties. The Conference of the Parties stated that voluntary contributions are essential to the effective implementation of the Convention and that it is anticipated that additional voluntary contributions will be received. At its fifth meeting, in December 1999, the Conference of the Parties decided to enlarge the scope of the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund in particular to respond to the needs of developing countries to deal with emergency situations. With the adoption of the Basel Convention Protocol on Liability and Compensation at that meeting, several Parties pledged funds to address the requirements of emergency situations and compensation.

F. Project Preparation Committee under the Central and Eastern Europe Environmental Action Programme

108. The Central and Eastern Europe Environmental Action Programme was created in response to requests for such a programme from environment ministers from Europe, Canada and the United States of America in 1991 at the first "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference. The Action Programme was subsequently endorsed in 1993 by environment ministers at the second "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference. The primary objective of the Action Programme is to address environmental problems requiring urgent action in Central and Eastern European countries as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible through policy reform, institutional strengthening and investment. The Action Programme emphasizes building upon the positive

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linkages between economic development and the environment, encourages policies that tackle the underlying causes rather than the symptoms of environmental problems, urges the use of cost-effectiveness as a criterion in allocating scarce financial resources, and identifies urgent problems to be addressed. The three main problem solving approaches considered by the Action Programme are: policy reform (e.g., market-based instruments, regulations and enforcement tools), institutional strengthening and investment. The Action Programme has already begun the development of national environmental action programmes that prioritize environmental needs within a country and address possible mechanisms for financing and evaluation.

109. The 1993 Ministerial Conference also established the Project Preparation Committee to facilitate the identification, preparation and implementation of environmental investments in Central and Eastern Europe. The Project Preparation Committee is a networking mechanism designed to allow international financing institutions and donors to coordinate and cooperate on environment-related investment projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

1. Objective and purpose

110. The objective of the Project Preparation Committee is to serve as a networking mechanism designed to assist international financial institutions and donors to coordinate and cooperate on environment related investment projects and assistance in Central and Eastern Europe. The Project Preparation Committee's mandate is: to disseminate regular information on its activities to the Eastern and Central European United Nations Member States; to assist in providing feasibility studies leading to concrete investment projects; to identify possible sources of financing for small projects as well as large capital intensive projects, including private sector projects; and to take into account efforts within the wider context of the CEE Environmental Action Programme implementation to develop the capacity of Central and Eastern European countries to elaborate project proposals.

2. Legal and operational establishment

111. The Project Preparation Committee was established by paragraph 10.1 of the Ministerial Declaration of the second "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference held in 1993. The Ministerial Declaration initially established the Project Preparation Committee secretariat with a small staff funded through existing resources. The mandate of the Project Preparation Committee was renewed at the Ministerial Conferences in Sofia in 1995 and Aarhus in 1998.

3. Design and operation

112. The Project Preparation Committee is a networking mechanism established to facilitate environment-related investment projects in Central and Eastern Europe, by improving coordination and cooperation between donors, international financial institutions and recipient countries. The objective is to couple donor grants with international financial institution loans, thereby enhancing the environmental profile of the projects, or simply to soften the overall credit burden of the recipient country. The Project Preparation Committee is composed of multilateral and bilateral donors and

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international financial institutions active in Central and Eastern Europe. Donors pledge funds on a grant basis to assist in financing investment projects for the CEE Environmental Action Programme. The Project Preparation Committee matches these funds to loans from the international financial institutions. The Project Preparation Committee meets regularly to discuss projects in all countries of operation and policy-related issues. Regional Project Preparation Committee meetings are also held annually, in order to focus donor and international financial institution attention on projects covering a certain geographical area.

113. The Project Preparation Committee consists of almost all international financial institutions and donors active in the region. The chairmanship rotates among its donor country members. The Project Preparation Committee is supported by a small secretariat housed in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which consists of two staff members, an Executive Secretary and an Administrative Secretary. In addition to preparing for and organizing meetings, the secretariat devotes some effort to matching international financial institution projects with donor grants. It does not screen or evaluate project proposals. The work of the Project Preparation Committee is also carried out on a daily basis by donor-sponsored Project Preparation Committee officers. At present there are two such officers, one at EBRD and the other at the World Bank. During 2000, the first Project Preparation Committee officer will be posted in the field and work at the World Bank in Tbilisi. Project Preparation Committee officers liaise with donors in order to match donor funds with international financial institutions loans. They also assist international financial institutions in developing priority environmental projects.

114. Project proposals are initially submitted through existing channels of communication between recipient countries, donors and international financial institutions. After the recipient country and donor or international financial institution have come to agreement on the contents of the project and the co-financing needed, a Project Preparation Committee member may present the project to the Project Preparation Committee to identify co-financing. In some cases, the Project Preparation Committee has also assisted in the bundling of projects, whereby the international financial institutions provide a loan to domestic financial intermediaries. Some donor countries have established specific Project Preparation Committee co-financing trust funds within EBRD and the World Bank.

115. In the period between the third "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Sofia in 1995 and the fourth Ministerial Conference in 1998, 33 new Project Preparation Committee projects were approved by international financial institution boards or funding agencies. These projects represent a total investment cost of approximately ecu 2.3 billion, with donor assistance amounting to ecu 245 million and international financial institution financing to approximately ecu 1.2 billion. In addition, the Project Preparation Committee had matched 58 environmental projects for which co-financing between two or more donors and/or international financial institutions has been agreed, but it was not clear if these had been approved by the leading funding agency. These matched projects would represent, if approved in the current form, a total investment of about ecu 2.6 billion, with donor assistance amounting to roughly ecu 300 million and international financial institution financing to approximately ecu 560 million. The Project

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Preparation Committee has also assisted in the development and matching of one investment fund and 16 pre-investment studies (national environmental action programmes and European Union accession strategies). These represent a total cost of approximately ecu 85 million, with donor assistance amounting to ecu 14 million.

116. In addition, the Project Preparation Committee has assisted in the bundling of several projects, whereby the international financial institutions provide a loan to domestic financial intermediaries. The Project Preparation Committee has participated in the national environmental funds networks for Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union set up by the Central and Eastern Europe Environmental Action Programme Task Force.

117. The operation of the Project Preparation Committee also includes: disseminating information on its activities to the Eastern and Central European United Nations Member States through a newsletter published jointly with the Environmental Action Programme Task Force on a bimonthly basis; assisting in providing feasibility studies leading to specific investment projects; identifying possible sources of financing for small projects as well as large capital intensive projects, including private sector projects; and developing capacity in Central and Eastern European countries to elaborate project proposals.

118. The Project Preparation Committee provides a forum for discussing project experiences, which has resulted in an improved understanding between donors and international financial institutions and has facilitated the modification of donor and international financial institution practices to meet project investment needs in Central and Eastern European countries. The Project Preparation Committee has also contributed to strengthening capacity in the region for the identification, preparation and financing of environmental projects.

4. Cost and funding aspects

119. Project Preparation Committee donors provide funding for the Project Preparation Committee secretariat officers and EBRD, which houses the secretariat, allocates an annual budget to cover general operating costs such as office space, telephones, photocopying, courier services and internal training. Project Preparation Committee donors and international financial institutions finance the projects.

5. Review, expansion and evolution

120. The Project Preparation Committee is reviewed at each "Environment for Europe" ministerial conference. The next conference will take place in Kiev in 2002. At least once a year, a regional Project Preparation Committee meeting is held in order to focus donor and international financial institution attention on projects covering a certain geographical area. The Project Preparation Committee also holds regular meetings to discuss projects in all countries of operation, in addition to policy-related issues.

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G. Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology under ESCAP

121. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology is a regional institution within the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It was designed to assist member countries of the Asia Pacific region strengthen their technology transfer, adaptation and development capabilities. It is based in India and has a network of focal points in 18 Asian and Pacific countries. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology provides a network of technology transfer services by linking national and international centers involved in technology management and development, and technology buyers and sellers.

1. Objective and purpose

122. The objective of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology is to strengthen the technology transfer capabilities in the region and to facilitate the import and export of environmentally sound technologies to and from member countries.

2. Establishment

123. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology is a United Nations regional institution under ESCAP. The Centre was established in 1977 in Bangalore, India, and moved to New Delhi in 1993.

3. Design and operation

124. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology is intended to promote and facilitate technology transfer between national Governments, businesses and local technology management agencies in the Asia and Pacific region. The Centre identifies and promotes the development and transfer of technologies relevant to the region, placing emphasis on environmentally sound technologies to and from small and medium-scale enterprises.

125. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology implements development projects funded by international donors aimed at strengthening the environment for technology transfer among small and medium-scale enterprises in Asia and the Pacific; in this respect, the Centre makes special efforts to encourage the more extensive participation of women in the field of technology. The Centre undertakes consultant assignments in various technology transfer related areas (institution building, human resources development, studies, partnership development).

126. The Centre has an international staff of 20 professional and support personnel. It works through a network of focal points in its member countries. These focal points, mostly situated at relevant ministries or governmental institutions, enable the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology to communicate efficiently with the member countries. These focal points are located in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology has a network of more than 1000 partners in 70 countries with which it works. These include technology brokers, financial brokers, management consultants,

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business development organizations, technical experts, technical institutions, training institutes, government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

127. The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology provides a number of interrelated services in the area of technical assistance, technology transfer and development activities, including:

(a) Matching of technology transfer and business partners: The Centre promotes and facilitates technology transfer by establishing contacts between technology suppliers and seekers. It uses various mechanisms for this purpose, including an in-house data bank on technology opportunities and companies, its technology transfer and technology/business information networks, periodicals on technology opportunities, on-line databases, national focal points, technology transfer events and business meetings. Currently, the Centre is handling more than 250 business-to-business introductions every month and has more than 1,000 partners in some 70 countries. Matchmaking services are usually provided by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on a success-fee basis. Companies interested in selling or buying technologies complete technology offer or technology request forms. Active technology offers and technology requests currently processed by the Centre are featured in its databank;

(b) Assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises: The Centre actively assists small and medium-sized enterprises in technology acquisition, adoption, upgrades and modernization through its technology information services and technology promotion events, such as technology missions, technology demonstration programmes, technology market forums and catalogue exhibitions. The Centre is currently establishing a regional self-sustainable network - a mechanism for the exchange of technology information - of institutions and agencies to facilitate the transfer of sets among small and medium-sized enterprises. Through this network, the Centre provides assistance to intermediaries in developing other technology transfer-related services, such as market analysis, finance syndication, technology evaluation, support services and marketing assistance;

(c) International network for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies: This network is a value-added technology information service established in 1994. Its members are public and private small and medium-sized enterprises and technology transfer intermediaries. The network operates on a membership fee basis with fees ranging from \$300 (regular membership) to \$1,000 (sponsor membership) for developed and newly industrialized countries and \$200 (regular) and \$400 (sponsor) for developing countries. Network members receive an integrated package of services, such as: information on new and international technology offers and requests on a monthly basis; search for technology partners; assistance in technology transfer negotiations; finance syndication and marketing assistance for selected technology transfer projects; consultant subcontracts; discounts on technology information services provided by the Centre and on registration fees for technology transfer events; and publication of the in company profile in network directory;

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(d) Technology transfer services for small and medium-sized enterprises: The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology provides the following technology transfer services to small and medium-sized enterprises and intermediaries: information on technology, business and investment opportunities; matching and pre-selection of prospective business partners; support services (market and feasibility studies, technology evaluation, contract negotiation); finance syndication (loan, venture capital, grants, incentives); and product marketing. The total value of technology transfer contracts among small and medium-sized enterprises facilitated by the Centre in 1996 was more than \$60 million;

(e) Technology transfer and marketing mechanisms: The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology uses the following technology transfer mechanisms: partnerships with intermediaries (consultants, technology brokers, chambers of commerce, industrial associations, business information centres) offering complimentary technology transfer services; international networks of technology brokers; a technology transfer databank, which is updated every day; technology transfer periodicals (Asia-Pacific Tech Monitor; Catalogue of International Technology and Business Opportunities; Value-Added Technology Information Service) which are disseminated in more than 70 countries all over the world; and business meetings, workshops and training programmes;

(f) Technology management programmes: The Centre is actively involved in strengthening technology management capabilities at the institutional and enterprises level and in enhancing their capacity to synergize various factors involved in technology transfer and development. The Centre undertakes continuously to refined its existing technology management programmes to promote regional cooperation and to achieve sustainable growth and development in member countries;

(g) Reports, documents, periodicals and other publications: The Centre publishes a variety of reports, documents and periodicals, including the Catalogue of International Technology Opportunities (updated quarterly); Asia Pacific Tech Monitor a bimonthly publication, which has a wide readership in member countries); and Value Added Technology Information Service in the Areas of Non-Conventional Energy, Waste Technology, Ozone Layer Protection, Biotechnology and Food Processing (bimonthly);

(h) Women entrepreneurship development: The Centre designs and implements a variety of programmes aimed at encouraging the more effective participation of women in the field of technology, including strengthening the capacity of institutions conducting technical and entrepreneurship training for women in the manufacturing sector and strengthening the institutional linkages of agencies supporting entrepreneurship development in participating countries;

(i) Environmental protection: The Centre is concentrating its activities on environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region by identifying, promoting and transferring environmentally sound technologies. To reach these targets, the Centre has built up an environmental network consisting of: human resources available for the region; appropriate technologies (both demonstration and state-of-the-art technologies) for the region; and information transfer strategies. The activities encompass the following

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areas: waste management and technologies; air pollution; waste-water cleaning and purification; ozone layer conservation and protection; energy efficiency and non-conventional energy sources, soil remediation, and biotechnology;

(j) Technology management capacity-building: The Centre continuously refines its technology management programmes to strengthen the national capabilities and promote regional cooperation. It works in areas such as: technology acquisition; technology monitoring and assessment; technology evaluation; valuation of intellectual property rights; and environmental management issues relating to small and medium-sized enterprises. The Centre is further organizing programmes to enhance technical cooperation between developing countries in selected industrial sectors with the active participation of research and development agencies and enterprises.

4. Cost and funding aspects

128. The administrative costs and host facilities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology are provided by the Government of India. Annual contributions are made by member countries. In addition, some projects, such as the International Network for Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, are funded through membership fees.

H. Capacity-building networks under the OECD Development Assistance Committee

129. The OECD Development Assistance Committee is composed of OECD member countries which have agreed to work to expand the total volume of resources made available to developing countries and to improve aid effectiveness. Created in 1960, the OECD Development Assistance Committee is the principal body through which OECD addresses issues related to cooperation with developing countries. The Committee is one of the key forums in which major bilateral donors work together to increase the effectiveness of their common effort to support sustainable development.

130. In 1989, the OECD Development Assistance Committee set up a working party on development assistance and the environment to strengthen the contribution of aid policies and programmes to sustainable development. This group prepares guidelines and recommendation on aid and environment, draft reports on issues concerning aid and the environment, and endeavours to boost the amount, of financial and technical assistance aimed at environmental protection and to enhance its coordination, and effectiveness.

1. Objective and purpose

131. The mission of the OECD Development Assistance Committee is to encourage and improve coordinated, integrated, effective and adequately financed aid international efforts in support of sustainable economic and social development. The mission of the Committee's working party on development assistance and the environment is to help policy makers and practitioners in donor agencies and developing countries prepare strategies to address serious national, regional and international environmental

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concerns within this larger context. The mission of the specific guidelines on environmental aid are to specify the role of aid agencies in assisting developing countries' policies on the relevant environmental issues.

2. Legal and operational establishment

132. The OECD Development Assistance Group, which was set up in 1960, was transformed into the OECD Development Assistance Committee in 1961 when OECD replaced the earlier Organization for European Economic Cooperation.

3. Design and operation

133. The OECD Development Assistance Committee attempts to expand the total volume of resources made available to developing countries and to improve aid effectiveness. It acts as the principal body through which OECD addresses issues related to cooperation with developing countries. The Committee also researches and publishes reports and statistics on aid, capacity-building and other resource flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition and related matters. The working party on development assistance and the environment works on issues within its competency. OECD Development Assistance Committee reports and statistics are considered credible, often authoritative, within many scholarly communities and are widely used and frequently cited in publications related to development. Most of the reports and statistics are available on the internet or in regular publications. A smaller number are available only to OECD members.

134. The work of the OECD Development Assistance Committee is concerned increasingly with support for efforts in developing countries to strengthen local capacities to pursue integrated development strategies. The Committee's 1995 policy statement, entitled "development partnerships in the new global context", identified the following as key elements that need to be integrated in strategies for sustainable development: a sound policy framework encouraging stable, growing economies with full scope for a vigorous private sector and an adequate fiscal base; investment in social development, especially education, primary health care, and population activities; enhanced participation of all people, and in particular women, in economic and political life, and the reduction of social inequalities; good governance and public management, democratic accountability, the protection of human rights and the rule of law; sustainable environmental practices; addressing root causes of potential conflict, limiting military expenditure, and targeting reconstruction and peace-building efforts towards longer-term reconciliation and development.

135. The OECD Development Assistance Committee engages in four principal types of activities as part of its efforts to encourage and improve financial and technical assistance:

(a) It adopts policy guidelines for Members to follow in the conduct of their development cooperation programmes. These guidelines reflect the views and experience of the members and benefit from input by multilateral institutions and individual experts, including experts from developing countries;

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(b) It conducts critical, peer reviews of its members' programmes in development cooperation. These reviews, occurring at three-year intervals, examine: how each relevant member programme applies policy guidance from the Committee; how the programme is managed (including coordination with other donors); the coherence of other policies with development objectives; and the trends in the volume and allocation of resources. Each review is based on an investigation by the secretariat and examiners appointed from two member countries. The study includes broad consultations in the capital of the donor under review and, in most cases, a visit to one or more of that donor's field missions. The process culminates in a meeting of the full Development Assistance Committee, at which the major issues identified in the examination are discussed;

(c) It provides a forum for dialogue, exchange of experience and the building of international consensus on policy and management issues of interest to members; and

(d) It publishes detailed reports and statistics on a wide variety of issues related to resource flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition and related matters. These authoritative statistics and reports are widely used and frequently cited in publications related to development.

136. With regard to chemicals, the OECD Development Assistance Committee aims to assist in obtaining appropriate information on chemicals on a timely basis. It helps integrate national information systems with networks coordinated or managed by international and regional organizations and facilitates the involvement of local communities and other relevant parties.

137. The OECD Development Assistance Committee is one of more than two dozen specialized main committees under OECD. The Development Assistance Committee, however, has three distinctive features. First, it meets more frequently than other committees (at least 15 times a year) and its Chair is based at OECD headquarters. Second, it has the power to make recommendations in matters within its competence directly to countries on the Committee as well as to the Council. Third, its Chair issues an annual report on the efforts and policies of the Committee members. This report has become a standard reference in the field of development cooperation.

138. OECD Development Assistance Committee meetings are attended by Paris-based delegates of member countries and by officials from member country capitals. Once a year, senior level officials from aid agencies gather to take stock of the overall aid effort and to review the OECD Development Assistance Committee's work on current policy issues. The Committee also holds an annual high-level meeting, in which participants are ministers or heads of aid agencies. The high-level meeting provides an opportunity, at a political level, to adopt basic policy directions for the work of the Committee and the common efforts of its members. Members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee are expected to agree on certain common objectives concerning the conduct of their aid programmes.

139. The OECD Development Assistance Committee can establish working parties, expert groups, temporary task forces and informal networks, in which members are generally represented by specialists, to work in particular

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issue-areas. Their respective mandates reflect major ongoing orientations of the Committee: the financial aspects of development assistance; development assistance, the environment; statistics; aid evaluation; gender equality; participatory development and good governance; conflict, peace and development; and institutional and capacity development. The work of the OECD Development Assistance Committee is supported by the Development Cooperation Directorate, one of a number of such directorates in OECD. The Development Cooperation Directorate secretariat has a staff of approximately 40 professionals, plus support staff, organized into four divisions: on peer review and policy monitoring; on resource mobilization and private sector development; on the strategic management of development cooperation; and on the reporting systems.

140. The Development Cooperation Directorate is recognized as a leader in the gathering, analysis and dissemination of statistical and other information on official development assistance, non-aid resource flows to developing countries and the outstanding debt of developing and other non-OECD countries. The Directorate's Reporting Systems Division compiles statistics on aggregate flows of aid and other resources, including their type, terms, sectoral breakdown, and geographical distribution among developing countries. The division also compiles data on resource flows to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union.

141. OECD Development Assistance Committee statistics aim to meet the needs of policy makers in the field of development cooperation and to provide a means of assessing the comparative performance of aid donors. They are used extensively in the peer reviews conducted for each member every three to four years; to measure donors' compliance with various international recommendations in the field of development cooperation (terms, volume); and as one basis for OECD and other analyses of many issues related to the provision of financial and technical assistance, aid, capacity-building, development and development cooperation.

142. The OECD Development Assistance Committee issues a number of reports of concern to capacity-building networks and the provision of financial and technical assistance. Its guidelines on environment and aid are designed to help policymakers as well as practitioners in donor agencies and developing countries devise strategies to address serious national, regional and international environmental concerns. They are aimed at assisting Committee members to improve and coordinate policies that will integrate development and environment imperatives. Chemicals-related guidelines include the Guidelines for Aid Agencies on Chemicals Management; and the Guidelines for Aid Agencies on Pest and Pesticide Management. Funding activities have included training and information, assistance for the selection of least toxic alternatives and safe storage and labeling. Funds have also sometimes been allocated to support the participation of developing country representatives in international meetings.

4. Cost and funding aspects

143. The operation of the OECD Development Assistance Committee is supported by its members. Costs within the Committee and the working group on the environment include those for the Development Cooperation Directorate, the

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peer reviews, the collection of statistics, the creditor reporting system, and the drafting and publication of reports as well as standard computer and office expenses.

I. Potential capacity-building network under IFCS

144. The third meeting of the Intersessional Group of IFCS in December 1998 included a thematic session on strengthening national capabilities and capacities for the sound management of chemicals. During the session, a working group discussed a proposal for the development of a capacity-building network for the sound management of chemicals, to enhance coordination and cooperation and to develop partnerships to assist both developing and developed countries to enhance the effectiveness of capacity-building projects. The proposal received broad-based support. The meeting stated that it supported the establishment of a capacity-building network for the sound management of chemicals. It invited the United Nations Institute on Training and Research (UNITAR), in collaboration with other Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) participating organizations, including UNEP, FAO, OECD, the World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), countries and other interested parties, to develop draft terms of reference for the network, for discussion and possible adoption at the third session of IFCS in 2000.

145. In response to that invitation, UNITAR prepared a short discussion paper to provide a starting point for discussion among interested parties. On 25-26 January 2000, UNITAR convened a meeting of some 30 representatives of Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders involved in capacity-building activities to discuss the paper and prepare draft terms of reference for the capacity-building network for the sound management of chemicals. The results of this meeting have been incorporated into a decision document for the third session of IFCS scheduled for October 2000. The information that follows is summarized from that document (IFCS/FORUM III/l2w).

1. Overall goal

146. The capacity-building network on the sound management of chemicals being considered within IFCS would be a multifaceted information exchange mechanism designed to enhance effective cooperation among countries and organizations that provide and/or receive assistance related to the sound management of chemicals. The network, as proposed, would have an overall and long-term goal of facilitating the systematic exchange and public accessible information and experiences that are relevant to planning, implementing, evaluating and coordinating capacity-building projects for the sound management of chemicals. As such, it would contribute to international, regional, and national efforts to raise awareness about the need for increased assistance to strengthen national capacities and capabilities for the sound management of chemicals.

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2. Policy framework

147. The capacity-building network on the sound management of chemicals, as proposed, would be endorsed and advised by the IFCS. The network would follow the general IFCS principles of cooperation, i.e., involvement of and partnerships among Governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to promote the sound management of chemicals in all countries. The network would provide a general framework for ensuring linkages among global, regional and national capacity-building activities, including those facilitated through IFCS regional groups and in the context of international agreements involving chemicals management.

3. Activities and services

148. Activities implemented through, and services provided by the capacity-building network on the sound management of chemicals, as proposed, would involve:

(a) Developing a mechanism in which countries that seek external assistance can provide information about relevant activities and needs to potential external partners;

(b) Providing interested parties with up-to-date information on past, ongoing, and planned capacity-building projects implemented by countries and organizations providing external assistance;

(c) Providing Governments and other stakeholder groups in countries seeking assistance, with information about technical assistance and funding sources available from countries and organizations that provide support, including information on how to apply for such assistance;

(d) Ensuring that guidance and training material developed and used by countries and organizations is better known and accessible to all interested parties; and

(e) Ensuring that practical lessons learned through relevant projects for the sound management of chemicals are shared with others as a basis for more effective implementation of future projects.

4. Operation

149. The capacity-building network on the sound management of chemicals, as proposed, would not have any implementing functions. Certain coordination, information exchange and related functions would, however, be undertaken by a central coordinating node or by one of the network's partners. Various locations for the central node will be considered including: within a country participating in IFCS; within the IFCS secretariat; or within an intergovernmental organization active in the field of chemicals management capacity-building (e.g., one of the GEF implementing agencies - UNEP, UNDP or World Bank; or UNITAR). Specific functions of the central coordinating node would include overseeing the development of network services, developing and maintaining a central Internet homepage, serving as the secretariat for the network's advisory group, and maintaining communication with participating countries and organizations. An advisory or steering group comprised of

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countries, intergovernmental organizations and stakeholder non-governmental organizations would provide guidance to the network and mobilize external support.

5. Cost and funding aspects

150. Countries and organizations which are in a position to do so, would be encouraged to support the development and operation of the capacity-building network on the sound management of chemicals. Such support could include:

- (a) Taking the lead for coordinating or implementing a particular network service;
- (b) Providing financial contributions to the organization housing the central coordinating node of the network; or
- (c) Seconding staff to that organization.
