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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Sixth session

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Arrangements to provide comparable monitoring data **

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In order to facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Convention states that:

“the Conference of the Parties shall, at its first meeting, initiate the establishment of arrangements to provide itself with comparable monitoring data on the presence of the chemicals listed in Annex A, B and C as well as their regional and global environmental transport.”

2. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Stockholm Convention, held in Stockholm on 22 and 23 May 2001, in its resolution 1, paragraph 4, invited the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee “to focus its efforts during the interim period on those activities required or encouraged by the Convention that will facilitate the rapid entry into force and effective implementation of the Convention upon its entry into force, including, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties the development of, arrangements to provide comparable monitoring data.” (UNEP/POPS/CONF/4, Appendix I).

* UNEP/POPS/INC.6/1.

** Stockholm Convention, Article 16; Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the Stockholm Convention, resolution 1, paragraph 4.

3. Beginning in September 2000, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through its chemicals programme ("UNEP Chemicals"), undertook two assessment and monitoring related activities that may be useful, in whole or in part, to the Committee in its deliberations. These activities are the Regionally Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Global Network on the Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Environment, which are described below.

II. II. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY REGIONALLY BASED ASSESSMENT OF PERSISTENT TOXIC SUBSTANCES

4. The overall objective of this two-year, US\$ 5 million project is to deliver a comprehensive regionally based assessment of the damage and threats posed by persistent toxic substances, and to evaluate and agree on the priorities among chemical related environmental issues at the regional level. This is to help focus subsequent interventions by the GEF and UNEP on the most important and pressing issues. There will be 12 regional reports that will include assessment of the sources of persistent toxic substances in the environment, their concentrations and impact on biota, their transboundary transport, and an assessment of the root causes of the problems and capacity to manage these problems. Consolidation of the results of the regional analyses will provide an assessment of global priorities. The results of the assessment will be widely disseminated via the Internet and other media.

5. The data collection phase of the project is almost complete. Technical workshops on sources and environmental transport and on environmental impacts are presently being held in the regions. Regional priority setting meetings will be held in the second half of 2002. It is expected that the 12 regional reports and the global report will be publicly available in mid-2003. Further information may be found at the project website <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pts/>.

III. GLOBAL NETWORK ON THE MONITORING OF PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

6. UNEP Chemicals has initiated work to create a network that would link together programmes and institutions responsible for, or participating in, monitoring activities on persistent organic pollutants. The aim of the network is to foster cooperation, compatibility and consistency among monitoring programmes to measure persistent organic pollutants and to improve the accessibility of produced data to the widest possible audience. The network would build on and utilize to the fullest extent possible the results of the GEF Facility Regionally Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances project, as well as existing activities and programmes in other international and regional organizations.

7. During 2002, it is planned to establish agreements with major monitoring programmes and to establish a core group of organizations to provide advice on the further development of the network. An Internet website will be launched in 2002, together with electronic discussion groups to promote the exchange of views among experts on issues, e.g., analytical methods, sampling, and matrices.

8. UNEP Chemicals intends to initiate development of monitoring programmes on persistent organic pollutants in those parts of the world that are not presently covered. During 2002 and 2003, steps will be taken to identify potential participating institutions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and to attract donors that might be interested in providing proper equipment, training and operational support until self-sufficiency has been achieved.

9. Sampling and analysing all 12 persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention entail large costs for all involved. Priorities need to be set among the persistent organic pollutants, as well as matrices and media, number of samples, sampling intervals, etc. The Secretariat plans to hold a meeting for interested organizations and institutions in late 2002 or early 2003 to explore possibilities for a broad

consensus on a base set of media, matrices, samples and chemicals to be included in a programme. This could help establish a base line for the effectiveness evaluation required by Article 16 of the Convention. This might also provide a basis for further harmonization between monitoring programmes.

10. In 2003 and 2004, the partners of the network will begin generating data, according to the base set referenced in the previous paragraph, from all parts of the world, subject to available funding.

11. The estimated cost for 2001 and 2002 for the creation and operation of the Global Network on the Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Environment as described above amounts to about US\$ 360,000 for consultancies and meetings, including a core group meeting and a workshop of interested institutions. The United States has provided US\$ 350,000 for the initial phases of the project. For 2003 and 2004, the actual costs would depend on the extent to which new institutions and programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition were identified and established as partners to the network. A first rough estimate of these costs is US\$1 million per year. Donor funding for activities for these years has not yet been identified.

IV. POSSIBLE WORK BY THE COMMITTEE

12. The Committee may wish to consider the activities underway within UNEP and to collect and generate assessment-and monitoring-related data as a potential contribution to its work in this area, bearing in mind other related activities that may be taking place. Should the Committee find that the ongoing work is a useful contribution towards making arrangements to provide comparable monitoring data, the Committee may wish to endorse such activities and make recommendations that could further enhance their usefulness. The Committee may also wish to encourage countries and organizations that have not already done so to participate in these activities and to encourage donors to contribute financially to the creation and operation of the Global Network on the Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Environment.
