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

Sixth session

Geneva, 17-21 June 2002

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Capacity assistance network**

Note by the secretariat

Mandate

1. In its resolution 3 on capacity-building and a capacity assistance network, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants recognized “the value of a mechanism to facilitate and coordinate access to technical and financial assistance to be provided to assist signatories to implement the Convention”, and invited, in paragraph 1 of that resolution, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee “to focus its efforts in the interim period on arrangements for capacity-building for the implementation of the Convention in signatory developing countries and signatory countries with economies in transition, for the consideration of and adoption by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties”.

2. In paragraph 2 of that resolution, the Conference requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, as the interim secretariat for the Convention and in cooperation with the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility, to develop modalities for a capacity assistance network that would perform the following functions and report thereon to the Committee at its sixth session:

* UNEP/POPS/INC.6/1.

** Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Stockholm Convention, resolution 3, paragraph 2.

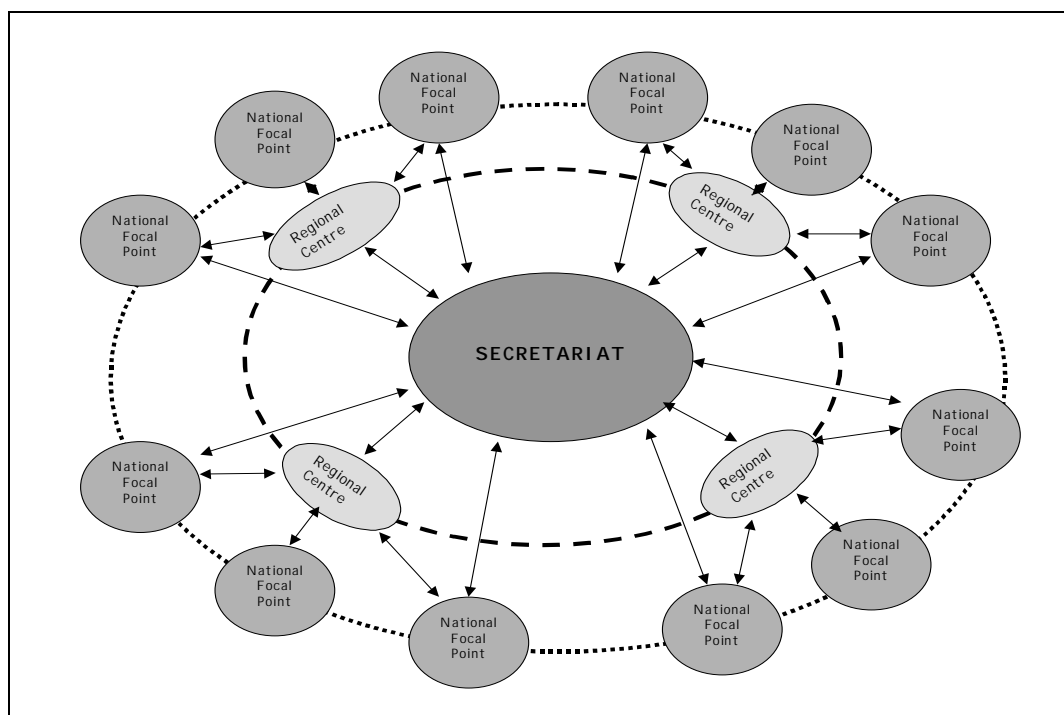
- (a) Identifying and maintaining an inventory of sources of assistance outside those to be provided by the principal entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention that are available for implementation of the Convention;
- (b) Assisting signatories, upon request, to identify and access the sources referred to in paragraph 2 (a);
- (c) Providing signatories with information on categories, sources and requirements for accessing the assistance referred to in paragraph 2 (a);
- (d) Encouraging the involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations in providing assistance.

3. In response to the above, the following concept proposal for the capacity assistance network was developed.

Initial concept: build on Convention infrastructure

4. A capacity assistance network could be based on institutional elements of the Convention, thus avoiding duplication of efforts and maximizing available resources. The network could be organized so as to take full advantage of institutional elements of the Convention at the national, regional and global levels. The elements to be networked include the national focal points required under paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Convention, regional and subregional centres to be established pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 12 and the secretariat established under Article 20 (see figure below).

Figure 1. Capacity assistance network based on organizational infrastructure being established under the Stockholm Convention



5. The success of the network is predicated on active involvement of partners at all levels. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector may all play important roles in ensuring that the network is fully operational and contributes to implementation of the Convention.

6. There is also a potential within the clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants, established pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Convention (see UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/7), to incorporate information exchange elements of the capacity assistance network to avoid possible duplication and enhance administrative efficiency.
7. The Conference of the Parties would approve the work plan and budget of the capacity assistance network.
8. The capacity assistance network would be complimentary to the activities undertaken by the Global Environment Facility as the principal entity entrusted with the operations of the financial mechanism on an interim basis as stated in Article 14 of the Convention.
9. Consistent with paragraph 2 of Article 12 of the Convention, developing-country Parties and Parties with economies in transition would be eligible to receive assistance from the capacity assistance network, and during the interim period prior to entry into force, signatory developing countries and signatory countries with economies in transition would also be eligible for this assistance.

Institutional components

10. The key institutional components of the capacity assistance network would include:

(a) National level/national focal points: Paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Convention requires that each Party designate a national focal point for the exchange of information relevant to the Convention. As part of their role as national focal points, it is proposed that the units be responsible, *inter alia*, for identifying technical assistance needs within their countries and communicating these needs to the secretariat through the regional centres. They would also be responsible for overseeing development of proposals for assistance working with the help of the regional and subregional centres and the Convention secretariat (see below). The national focal point could also be responsible for identifying opportunities for providing technical or financial assistance to other Parties.

(b) Regional level/regional and subregional centres: Paragraph 4 of Article 12 of the Convention requires establishment of regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and the transfer of technology to developing countries Parties and Parties with economies in transition relating to implementation of the Convention (see also UNEP/POPS/INC.6/16). Once established, the centres could be networked among themselves and with the national focal points in their regions in order to facilitate the provision of assistance tailored to specific needs in a region. In addition to their foreseen role in support of capacity-building and technology transfer, the centres could assume the function of “financial brokerage” envisaged in the capacity assistance network concept. The centres would identify and maintain an inventory of sources of assistance outside those to be provided by the principal entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, in particular sources whose activities are focused within the region or subregion. The centres could provide advice to national focal points on submitting proposals for assistance and help identify technical resources (e.g., consultants) within their regions or subregions. Consideration would be given to encouraging partnerships between the regional and subregional centres.

(c) Global level/secretariat: Article 20 of the Convention establishes a secretariat, which, *inter alia*, is to service the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, facilitate assistance to the Parties, particularly developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, on request for implementation of the Convention and ensure the necessary coordination with secretariats of other relevant international bodies. The secretariat would be responsible for overall coordination of the network by facilitating communication and exchange of information between the national, regional, subregional and global levels. Its duties would include keeping an inventory of active sources of financial assistance and a database of pending requests for assistance. It could also maintain strong working relationships with potential sources of funding in order to help identify overall funding needs for implementation of the Convention. The

secretariat would report to the Conference of the Parties, or the Committee during the interim period prior to entry into force of the Convention, on the operation of the capacity assistance network at all levels.

- (d) Sources of financial and technical assistance:
- (i) Intergovernmental organizations could be involved in the capacity assistance network using existing arrangements. The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals could work directly with the secretariat and be used as a coordinating mechanism to involve its member organizations working on issues related to the Convention and identify potential needs as well as areas in which they can be of assistance. Other intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme, World Bank and regional development banks, would interact at all levels, for example directly with the secretariat, regional centers – including through their regional offices where appropriate and with the national focal points.
 - (ii) Bilateral development agencies, in coordination with their national focal points, would be actively involved in the network and thus able to promote their funding programmes as well as identify opportunities to tailor their assistance. They would be in direct contact with other national focal points, the regional centres and the secretariat, therefore, expanding their potential areas of impact.
 - (iii) Non-governmental organizations and civil society are potential sources of technical assistance and can also play a direct role in the execution of projects. Their potential to mobilize funding and raise awareness would be influential at the regional and national levels. The regional centres would develop strategies to encourage the involvement of the private sector by highlighting investment opportunities in areas relevant to their interest. Additionally, with the help of the regional centres, Governments and other partners could generate an enabling environment suitable for attracting technology-transfer enterprises. Local technologies would be exposed to a wider range of potential users. The ways for engaging these actors would be fully elaborated during the feasibility and pilot studies proposed below.

Next steps/budgetary implications

11. The next steps to be taken in the initial development of the capacity assistance network include:

(a) Strengthening national focal points: The focal point would be enabled to facilitate in-country coordination and articulation of needs and offers. It is envisaged that the national focal points would be strengthened as a result of the enabling activities of the Stockholm Convention for development of national implementation plans in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition. For the duration of the national implementation plan development projects (typically two years), support is provided to the national focal points through the Global Environment Facility. After this initial period, the need for further assistance for particular national focal points to ensure that they are fully functional within the network may need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Developed countries would also need to ensure that their national focal points are operational and fully incorporated into the network.

(b) Establishing regional and subregional centres: A feasibility study would need to be undertaken to assess the possible roles, functions and locations of the regional and subregional centres, taking into account, where appropriate, existing centres and their geographical distribution to ensure adequate coverage. This is addressed in document UNEP/POPS/INC.6/16 on technical assistance. Such a study could also take into account the feasibility of the capacity assistance network function within the regional centres. The feasibility study could then be followed by a pilot phase to set up or strengthen regional and subregional centres and test the proposed approach to the capacity assistance network with the aim of replicating the experience in other regions if successful.

(c) Supporting a capacity assistance network central function within the secretariat: The secretariat would require additional staff and other resources to service the capacity assistance network and ensure its effective operation.

12. Since national focal points, regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and technology transfer, the secretariat and the clearing-house mechanism are to be established under the Convention regardless of the outcome on the capacity assistance network, the costs of the capacity assistance network would be limited to incorporating and maintaining capacity assistance network functions into existing (or soon to be established) organizational entities or programmes. Emphasis would be put on relying on electronic means to meet the communication and information exchange needs of the capacity assistance network. The proposed feasibility and pilot studies would allow precise evaluation of the recurring costs of the capacity assistance network. Such costs would need to have a sustained source of funding, such as a voluntary trust fund.

13. An indicative budget for a two-year pilot phase of a capacity assistance network involving four regional or subregional centres and 15 national focal points in each pilot region or subregion is provided for in the appendix to the present document. Governments may consider providing the necessary resources to fund this activity.

Possible action by the Committee

14. The Committee may wish to take note of the above proposal and consider establishing a capacity assistance network based on the above-proposed structure. The Committee may also wish to request the interim secretariat for the Convention acting in consultation with the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility to continue to implement measures to ensure a prompt start of the capacity assistance network and report on progress to the Committee at its next session.

15. The Committee may also wish to request intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and international financial institutions to provide the interim secretariat for the Convention with information on how they might contribute to the capacity assistance network.

Appendix

Estimated costs of a capacity assistance network pilot phase for 2003 and 2004Table 1. Estimated costs per organizational unit (in US dollars)

National level – national focal points			
Items of expenditure		2003	2004
Staff costs (in kind contribution by national governments)	Professional staff (1 full-time)	in kind	in kind
	General service (1 half-time)	in kind	in kind
Equipment, communications, miscellaneous		15,000	7,500
Subtotal		15,000	7,500
Regional level – regional and subregional centers			
Items of expenditure		2003	2004
Staff costs (local hire)	Professional staff (1 full-time)	30,000	31,120
	General service (1 half-time)	7,200	7,488
Consultants		25,000	20,000
Official travel		25,000	18,000
Regional meetings of focal points		37,500	37,500
Equipment and supplies		50,000	35,000
Communications, printing, miscellaneous		11,500	10,500
Subtotal		\$186,200	\$159,608
Global level – central unit (within the secretariat)			
Items of expenditure		2003	2004
Staff costs	Professional staff (1 full-time)	124,600	127,092
	General service (1 half-time)	35,950	36,350
Consultants		20,000	20,000
Official travel		14,000	14,000
Meeting costs		16,000	16,000
Premises, equipment, supplies		10,357	6,952
Communications, printing, miscellaneous		9,677	8,451
Subtotal		\$230,584	\$228,845

Table 2. Estimated total costs (in US dollars)

Organizational unit	Quantity	2003	2004
National focal points	60	900,000	450,000
Regional and subregional centres	4	744,800	638,432
Central unit	1	230,585	228,844
Total programme expenditure		1,875,384	1,317,277
Overhead charge		243,800	171,246
Total expenditure		\$2,119,184	\$1,488,523
