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

Seventh session
Geneva, 14-18 July 2003
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Preparations for the Conference of the Parties

**DEVELOPMENT OF INTERIM GUIDANCE TO ASSIST COUNTRIES IN
THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS****

Note by the secretariat

1. In its article 7, subparagraph 1 (a), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants requires each Party to develop and endeavour to implement a plan for the implementation of its obligations under the Convention.
2. In the context of a project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the development of national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention in 12 countries, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, with the financial support of the Government of Denmark, developed a draft guidance document on planning and developing those national implementation plans. The draft guidance document is referred to in document UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/8.
3. At its sixth session, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in its decision INC-6/6, invited Governments to provide comments on the draft guidance document and other views on such guidance to the secretariat by 31 October 2002. The decision requested the secretariat to prepare, based on comments received and relevant existing guidance material, interim guidance to assist countries in developing their national implementation plans, taking into account the differing situations, needs and experiences of those countries. The secretariat was requested to submit that interim guidance document to the Committee for consideration at its seventh session.

* UNEP/POPS/INC.7/1.

** Stockholm Convention, article 7, paragraph 3; Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Stockholm Convention, resolution 1, paragraph 4 (in document UNEP/POPS/CONF/4, appendix I); decision INC-6/6, in the report of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on its sixth session (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/22), annex I.

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4. In response to decision INC-6/6, comments were received from 11 Governments. Transcriptions of all those comments are given in document UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/18.

5. Based on the comments received and relevant existing guidance material, the secretariat has prepared the draft interim guidance for developing a national implementation plan (UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/20). The objective of the interim guidance is to assist countries in the process of developing national implementation plans in a non-prescriptive manner that allows each country to develop its national implementation plans to address its specific needs. The process described therein is designed to be completed within two years, although it may be completed in a shorter period. For Parties developing national implementation plans in advance of the entry into force of the Convention, the time frame can be extended.

6. The interim guidance has been developed taking into account the following considerations:

(a) National implementation plans should be tailored to meet the needs of the Party and should be suitable for use by the Party to meet the obligations of the Stockholm Convention;

(b) National implementation plans should build on existing work and assessments where available;

(c) National implementation plans should take due account of the aims of sustainable development in the sense of implementing socially, economically and environmentally appropriate policies and actions to maximize overall benefits, and they should be linked to related initiatives, where possible, to ensure maximum efficiency and reduce duplication of effort;

(d) National implementation plans should be able to respond to the listing of new chemicals in addition to the initial 12 persistent organic pollutants listed in the Convention;

(e) Interim guidance on the development of national implementation plans should be used in conjunction with the Convention text and Annexes and should not be considered as a legal interpretation of the Convention text or as a point-by-point analysis of the measures required in a particular country.

Possible action by the Committee

7. The Committee may wish:

(a) To consider the information provided in the present note;

(b) To consider, comment on, and endorse with any amendments, the draft interim guidance provided in document UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/20;

(c) To request Governments that make use of the interim guidance in developing their national implementation plans to provide comments to the secretariat on how to improve the usefulness of the guidance;

(d) To request the secretariat to produce a revised version of the interim guidance taking into consideration comments received for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting.
