



Basel Convention



Rotterdam Convention



Stockholm Convention



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PRESS RELEASE

UN chemical experts recommend that widely used flame retardant be phased out of global production and use

Three other chemicals proposed for listing in the Stockholm Convention on POPs are to be evaluated for management of their risks

19 October 2012, Geneva – A UN expert body has recommended that the industrial flame retardant *hexabromocyclododecane* (HBCD) be eliminated from the global marketplace to protect human health and the environment. HBCD is used mainly in expanded polystyrene and extruded polystyrene. It is also used in textile coatings and in high impact polystyrene for electrical and electronic equipment.

The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee, a subsidiary body of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), adopted a recommendation to include HBCD in the Convention's Annex A for elimination, with specific exemptions for expanded and extruded polystyrene needed to give countries time to phase-in safer substitutes. The recommendation will now be sent to the Parties to the Stockholm Convention for consideration at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled to be held from 28 April to 10 May 2013, in Geneva.

The Committee adopted a total of 12 decisions, including on industrial chemicals *chlorinated naphthalenes* (CNs) and *hexachlorobutadiene* (HCBD), and the pesticide *pentachlorophenol* (PCP) and its salts and esters, which now will move forward to the next stage of review.

The Committee adopted risk profiles of CNs and HCBD. Regarding *short-chained chlorinated paraffins*, the Committee agreed that the information was currently insufficient to support a decision on the risk profile and agreed to consider any new information that may be made available to the Committee and to consider the chemical again at its eleventh meeting.

“As the premier scientific body supporting the global elimination of persistent organic pollutants, the POPs Review Committee has built upon its past successes and recommended yet another highly toxic POP – HBCD – for global elimination, and made great progress in its work on several other hazardous chemicals,” said Jim Willis, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

Note for Editors:

The Stockholm Convention on POPs regulates chemicals that are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic, to protect human health and the environment globally. [Article 8](#) of the Convention entails the reviewing process of new chemicals and [Annex D](#), [Annex E](#) and [Annex F](#) specify the information required for the review.

The POPs Review Committee consists of thirty-one scientific experts elected by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention charged with undertaking scientific review of chemicals proposed for listing. The Committee met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 19 October 2012.

Chlorinated naphthalenes (CNs) were used for decades for wood preservation, as an additive to paints and engine oils, and for cable insulation and in capacitors. Until the 1970s, CNs were high volume chemicals.

Hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD) was a widely used fumigant used to control pests and as an industrial solvent. HCBD also occurs as a by-product during production of other chlorinated solvents.

Pentachlorophenol (PCP) is an organochlorine compound used as a pesticide and a disinfectant. A wealth of data on the adverse effects of pentachlorophenol in mammals show developmental, immunotoxic and neurotoxic effects. Human survivors of toxic exposures may suffer permanent visual and central nervous system damage.

Short-chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCP) are a group of industrial chemicals used in metalworking, and the formulation and manufacturing of products such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics and metalworking fluids. They are of concern because they are persistent, have been found in remote areas such as the Arctic, and could accumulate to levels that are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms.

The ninth meeting of the POPs Review Committee will be held in Rome, Italy, from 14 to 18 October 2013 back-to-back with the Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

The following ten persistent organic pollutants had been recommended previously to the Conference of the Parties by the POPs Review Committee and have now been added to the Convention:

- Alpha hexachlorocyclohexane
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- Chlordecone
- Hexabromobiphenyl
- Hexabromodiphenyl ether and heptabromodiphenyl ether (commercial octabromodiphenyl ether)
- Lindane
- Pentachlorobenzene
- Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride
- Technical endosulfan and its related isomers
- Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and pentabromodiphenyl ether (commercial pentabromodiphenyl ether)

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