

Draft proposal for the organization of the high-level segment

(Version of 12 May 2016)

By decisions BC-12/23, RC-7/13 and SC-7/31, the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions decided, among other things, to convene their next meetings in Geneva from 24 April to 5 May 2017, back to back with one another, including joint sessions, where appropriate, on joint issues. In the same decisions, the conferences of the parties also decided that the meetings will include a high-level segment, which will be no more than one day's duration.

During their teleconferences held respectively on 25 February, 2 March and 24 February 2016, the bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions agreed on the process pertaining to the preparation of the organization of the high-level segment of the meetings of the 2017 conferences of the parties. The process, which is set out in annex III to the present document, involves the development of the present proposal for the organization of the high-level segment.

The present proposal provides a possible approach on how the high-level segment of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions could be organized in Geneva over a one day period in 2017. It is intended as a starting point for further consideration and possible elaboration by the bureaux of the three conferences of the parties. The proposal for the overall organization of work of the meetings of the conferences of the parties for the two-week period and a draft tentative schedule are contained in document 3.

The proposed organization of the high-level segment:

- Builds on the suggestions provided by the conferences of the parties, at their meetings in 2015, as reflected in their reports¹;
- Takes into account views expressed by the bureaux members during their above-mentioned teleconferences, including a suggestion made during the Stockholm Convention Bureau teleconference to take into account lessons learned from the high-level segment at the 2013 meetings of the conferences of the parties. Those lessons learned are set out in Annex II to the present document;
- Draws from the approaches used by other intergovernmental organizations in organizing their high-level segments;
- Reflects comments provided by the Presidents of the conferences of the parties during consultations that took place in April 2016, as per the agreed process, on an initial draft.

Objective

The objective of the high-level segment is to provide an interactive, dynamic and inclusive platform for ministers and other high-level delegates to exchange experiences and to provide political leadership for renewed commitment towards the implementation of the conventions. In doing so, the high-level segment aims to raise political awareness of and support for the conventions, as well as promote a dialogue among ministers, and between ministers and other high-level delegates.

Theme

The theme will be conducive to facilitating exchanges and discussions around the objectives set for the event and contribute to relevant tangible outcomes. The Secretariat will provide initial ideas/concepts on a possible theme for the high-level segment to the bureaux for consideration at their individual meetings in June/July 2016. The final decision on the theme for the high-level segment will be taken by the three Presidents of the conferences of the parties, taking into account the input provided by the bureaux.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the high-level segment could comprise a report of the high-level segment, key messages emerging from the ministerial round table discussions, or a ministerial statement or declaration. Such a ministerial statement or declaration would require a party/parties take the lead in developing a proposal and consulting with parties in advance of the meetings in order to reach agreement in preparation for the meetings of the conferences of the parties.

Main features of the high-level segment

The main features of the high-level segment could include the following:

¹ UNEP/CHW.12/27, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.6/20, UNEP/POPS/COP.6/33.

Session 1: opening, introduction to the theme, ministerial round tables.

Session 2: synthesis of the key messages from the roundtables, high-level discussion, possible ministerial statement or declaration, closure.

To assist ministers and other high-level delegates in engaging in the high-level segment, a briefing note, comprising a programme, an explanation of the theme and information aimed at guiding ministers in the discussion, would be developed after the proposal for the organization of the high-level segment has been agreed to by the three bureaux at their joint meeting in November 2016.

Scheduling

During the above-mentioned teleconferences, the bureaux in their discussions on the organization of the high-level segment expressed views that the high-level segment may be held either at the end or the beginning of the meetings of the conferences of the parties.

If held at the end of the meetings of the conferences of the parties, ministers would be able to provide guidance on any pending matters being negotiated and on a number of decisions on convention-specific issues (e.g. listing of chemicals, compliance) and on joint issues (e.g. review of synergies arrangements). The high-level segment could be organized as follows: The one day duration of the high-level segment would be held in two subsequent sessions - Thursday, 4 May (afternoon session) and Friday, 5 May (morning session). During the ministerial round-table discussions, there would be a possibility of holding a parallel plenary session of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to finalize discussions on outstanding agenda items.

If held at the beginning of the meetings of the conferences of the parties, the high-level segment would be able to provide strategic direction to the negotiations of the meetings. It could be organized as follows: Monday, 24 April would be dedicated to the opening of the high-level segment, following the formal opening of the meetings and adoption of the agendas. During the round-table discussions in the morning, the plenary session of the meetings of the conferences of the parties could proceed with organizational matters of the meetings.

Two possible scenarios for holding the high-level segment either at the end or beginning of the meetings of the conferences of the parties are contained in Annex I of this document for the consideration of the bureaux.

Session structure

In both above-mentioned cases, the high-level segment would be organized in two sessions and is expected to follow the format as outlined below:

Session 1

The opening ceremony of the high-level segment would take place in plenary, welcoming ministers and other high-level delegates, and would consist of opening speeches and introduction to the theme of the high-level segment.

Immediately after the opening ceremony, round table participants would move from the plenary to another location(s) for the ministerial round-table discussions focusing on the theme of the high-level segment.

The round tables² would operate concurrently and would be organized by language preference as no interpretation will be provided. Gender balance and regional representation would also be taken into consideration. Each round table discussion would be moderated, in order to promote an interactive, engaging dialogue among the participants.

² Over 80 ministers and vice-ministers met in nine round tables during the 2013 high-level segment.

Session 2

The high-level segment would resume in plenary for the second session. This session would open with a synthesis of key messages from the round table discussions being presented.

After presentation of the synthesis, a moderated, interactive high-level discussion linked to the outcome of the round tables discussions would be held in plenary. During this discussion, the ministerial statement or declaration (if so decided by the bureaux) could be presented, with ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalent) having the opportunity to make interventions and exchange views on their political insights of the synthesis, the high-level theme and on the ministerial statement or declaration.

Following the closure of the high-level segment, under the scenario where the high-level segment is held at the end of the meetings, key decisions on convention-specific and joint issues could be adopted in a plenary session of the conferences of the parties in the presence of the ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalents).

Participation

Session 1: The opening and introduction to the theme would be open to all participants of the meetings of the conferences of the parties. The ministerial round-tables would be open to ministers and deputy ministers only (or their equivalent).

Session 2: Attendance would be open to all participants, however participation in the discussions would be limited to ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalent).

The bureaux are invited to consider whether this level of representation seems appropriate to them or whether an opportunity should be provided for participation of delegations not represented by a minister or deputy minister (or their equivalents), such as ambassadors, secretaries of state or heads of delegations.

One or more representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations could be invited to contribute to the discussions of the high-level segment.

High-level Dinner

A high-level dinner will be hosted by the Government of Switzerland.

Financial support for high-level participation

Fund-raising efforts will be undertaken to facilitate the participation of ministers and deputy ministers at the high-level segment, as well as any additional envisaged activities.

Annex I: Scenarios for the tentative scheduling for the high-level segment of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland

Scenario 1: Tentative schedule for the high-level segment taking place at the end of the meetings of the conferences of the parties

	Thursday, 4 May	Friday, 5 May
Morning session 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	<i>(Plenary sessions of the COPs)</i>	- Synthesis of the key messages from the round tables - High-level discussion - Possible ministerial statement or declaration - Closing of the high-level segment
		<i>(Plenary sessions of the COPs)</i> - Possible adoption of key decisions
Afternoon session 3-6 p.m.	- Opening of the high-level segment and introduction to the theme - Ministerial round-table discussions	<i>(Plenary sessions of the COPs)</i>
TBC	High-level dinner	

Scenario 2: Tentative schedule for the high-level segment taking place at the beginning of the meetings of the conferences of the parties

	Monday, 24 April
Morning session 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	<i>(Opening of the meetings, adoption of the agendas)</i> - Opening of the high-level segment and introduction to the theme - Ministerial round-table discussions
Afternoon session 3-6 p.m.	- Synthesis of the key messages from the round tables - High-level discussion - Possible ministerial statement or declaration - Closing of the high-level segment
TBC	High level dinner

Annex II: summary of some key lessons learned from the high-level segment of 2013 meetings conferences of the parties

Scheduling of high-level segment

The high-level segment of the 2013 meetings of the conferences of the parties (Geneva, 28 April – 10 May 2013) took place near the end of the meetings (the afternoon of Thursday, 9 May and the morning of Friday, 10 May 2013). This scheduling offered ministers an opportunity for providing high-level input during the final decision-making stages of the negotiations.

Opportunity for participation by all delegations

Ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalents) were invited to participate in roundtables during the 2013 high-level segment. The roundtables permitted open exchange of views and experiences among peers, which was very much appreciated by the ministers. However there was no opportunity for participation of delegations not represented by a minister or deputy minister (or their equivalents).

Theme of high-level segment

The theme chosen for the 2013 high-level segment was “Synergies and the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions at the national, regional and global levels”. This generated much interest among participants and led to substantive discussions within the roundtables that fed into the key messages of the meetings. Similarly, a theme focusing on substantive issues which contribute to the objectives of the conventions and which generate a high level interest would be chosen for the 2017 high-level segment.

Statements vs. Interactive dialogues

During the 2013 high-level segment, ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalents) were engaged in interactive dialogues rather than the serial statements and made interventions that fit into the flow of discussions during interactive panel and/or plenary sessions. In 2017 the same approach could be followed to promote interactive dialogue among ministers and other high-level delegates.

Outreach and funding

Information materials relevant to the organization of the high-level segment were sent to participating ministers and deputy ministers (or their equivalents) and also were made available on the website of the meetings in a timely manner. In addition, mission briefings and webinars were organized to provide updated information. These were intended to ensure good level of understanding of the substantive issues as well as logistical arrangements among the participants of the high-level segment resulting in the smooth running of the high-level discussions. Likewise, it is envisaged to provide such information to the high-level participants in a timely manner.

In 2013, funding was made available to attend the high-level segment for one minister or deputy minister from each developing country and country with economies in transition that was party to at least one convention. Fund raising efforts would be made in 2017 to secure similar participation of ministers.

Annex III: Process for the organization of the high-level segment of the 2017 conferences of the parties

The organization of the high-level segment will build upon views expressed by parties at the 2015 Triple conferences of the parties³, as well as successful approaches used for past high-level segments. It will be coordinated by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the bureaux of the three conventions.

May 2016: In close consultation with the Presidents, the Secretariat prepares a first proposal for the organization of the high-level segment, including on the date of the high-level segment.

June/July 2016: The bureaux discuss the organization of the high-level segment at their individual bureaux meetings based on the proposal developed by the Secretariat and the Presidents.

July-November 2016: The Secretariat prepares a revised proposal for the organization of the high-level segment in cooperation with the Presidents.

November 2016: The bureaux consider the revised proposal at their joint meetings and agree on the organization of the high-level segment.

³ See meeting reports of the 2015 COPs (UNEP/CHW.12/27, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/21 and UNEP/POPS/COP.7/36), sections on venue and date of the next meeting of each of the conferences of the parties.