Webinar "PCB – A Forgotten Legacy?"

1 November 2016, 13:00 (Geneva time, GMT +01:00)

A series of webinars on Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) by the PCB Elimination Network Advisory Committee members, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Among others, participants from Canada, Venezuela, Iran, Egypt, Lesotho, China, Uruguay, Ecuador and the United Kingdom joined this webinar.

1) **Opening** of the webinar and moderation by Ms. Elsemieke de Boer, UNITAR

2) **Presentation** by Ms. Kei Ohno-Woodall, representing the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat within the Advisory Committee of the PCB Elimination Network (PEN)

   "Stockholm Convention Effectiveness Evaluation, decisions of COP 7 and looking toward COP 8"

3) **Presentation** by Prof. Jacob de Boer, Professor in Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology, VU University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Editor-in-chief of Chemosphere. Prof. de Boer is in charge of Capacity Building Project for UNEP

   "Capacity building for PCB analysis around the world"

4) **Questions and answers** and opportunity to share comments and information

5) **Upcoming activities**

6) **Closure** of the webinar

1) Opening of the webinar

Ms. Elsemieke de Boer, UNITAR

Elsemieke de Boer welcomed the participants and explained that this webinar is the second in a **series of webinars** with the theme **"PCB – A Forgotten Legacy?".** She introduced the speakers and the agenda, and informed the participants that a third webinar will take place on **Tuesday 8 November at 13:00 (GMT + 01:00).**

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2) "Stockholm Convention Effectiveness Evaluation, decisions of COP 7 and looking toward COP 8"

Ms. Kei Ohno-Woodall, representing the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat within the Advisory Committee of the PCB Elimination Network (PEN)

Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention mentions as follows: Evaluate effectiveness of the Convention on the basis of available scientific, environmental, technical and economic information. The first evaluation took place at COP-4 in 2009 and the **second evaluation will take place at Cop-8 in 2017.**

Decisions of COP-7, SC-7/3 on PCB:

- Took note of the preliminary assessment of efforts made towards the elimination of PCB (UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/9)
- Took note of the report on the activities of the PEN
- Encouraged Parties to intensify efforts to meet the 2025/2028 goals
- Requested the Secretariat to prepare a consolidated report and submit it to the effectiveness evaluation committee by 31 Jan 2016

Summary of Effectiveness Evaluation:

1. **Need to get on track to achieve the ESM of PCB by 2025/2028**
    - Need to strengthen national or regional capacities
    - Parties should urgently define rigorous plans for the ESM of PCB throughout its life cycle

2. **Need accurate inventory and more information from Parties**

    - Undertake inventory in a systematic manner
    - Parties to provide accurate information in national reports

3. **Need to increase cost effectiveness and sustainability of PCB elimination projects**

    - Strengthen human and infrastructure capacities for PCB elimination and destruction which will last beyond the duration of the project

Looking toward COP-8:

- Dates and venue: 24 April – 5 May 2017 in Geneva
- President: Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana)
- Schedule of the week will be decided during the joint bureaux meeting in November 2016
- Agenda item 5 (a) (iii) Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)
- Side events, fair

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3) "Capacity building for PCB analysis around the world"

Professor Jacob de Boer, Professor in Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology, VU University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Editor-in-chief of Chemosphere.

The Stockholm Convention requires **analysis of PCBs and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**. In most of the countries that ratified the Convention there is little or no capacity for PCB and other POP analysis. Since 2006 a number of capacity building projects consisting of workshops, on-site training in laboratories at all continents, training in expert laboratories and inter-laboratory assessments is being carried out. This program now enters its **third phase** in which probably the largest inter-laboratory study on POPs ever is being organized, with participation of more than **150 laboratories** demonstrating a high need for POP, including PCB, analysis and a high degree of awareness of importance of high quality data.

- To be effective, monitoring data should "confirm a **50% decline** in the levels of POPs within a 10 year period"
- POPs laboratories must be capable – at any time – to analyse samples for POPs within a margin of ±25%;

Capacity building:

- **Inter-laboratory studies.** Three reference laboratories: the Institute for Environmental Studies of the VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands (IVM), Man-Technology-Environment Research Centre (MTM) and the Spanish Council for Scientific Research, CSIC/CID, Barcelona, Spain
- **Training on-site and in reference labs.** On-site training is needs-oriented
- **Procurement**
- **Mirror analysis:** results of analysis of the laboratories that receive training and the reference laboratories are compared. Choice of the laboratory receiving training selects the samples to be analysed
- **Protocols**
- **Professional instruction movies**
- **Technical advice**

Some remarks on the activities: there is a focus on air sampling, the large number of workshops organized brought people, especially within the regions, together, and new POPs are addressed.

An overview of participation in the three inter-lab rounds (held every other year) show a significant increase from 103 laboratories (1st round) to 106 (2nd round) to 175 (3rd round). Especially the last number of participation is considered very high. The degrees of experiences of the different laboratories differ widely.

On-site training meanwhile revealed a substantial number of **difficulties encountered** in the developing country laboratories. Some of the problems had a clear analytical character: use of test kits; use of packed instead of capillary GC columns, lack of internal standards, analysis of all types of samples (including human samples) according to Aroclor patterns, use of nitrogen as a carrier gas instead of helium or hydrogen, lack of certified reference materials, general absence of quality assurance, etc. Much more **investment in quality is needed** before all countries are at a comparable and satisfactory level in POP analysis. One of the main barriers for successful analysis was, however, the often very low number of samples and resulting in a

lack of routine analyses in the laboratories. To ensure high quality data of PCBs and other POPs, **discussions now focus on the sustainability of the capacity building.**

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4) Questions and answers and an opportunity to share comments and information

1) Ms. Sanaz Jazarfadeh (PEN Advisory Committee member, Iran, Asia and Pacific) asked how a country can qualify for a capacity building project. And, can we have a project in Iran?

Professor Jacob de Boer advised Ms. Sanaz Jazarfadeh to contact Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez (Science and Risk Unit, UNEP Chemicals and Waste Branch, jacqueline.ALVAREZ@unep.org). He further explained that all parties can make such a request and that it is important to have an indication of each countries' needs.

2) Ms. Manal Farag (Stockholm Convention National Focal Point in Egypt) asked Ms. Kei Ohno-Woodall if the 2025 and 2028 deadlines of the Stockholm Conventions will be extended.

Ms. Kei Ohno-Woodall explained that the dates will only be changed if the COP decides to amend the convention.

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5) Upcoming activities

- **Third webinar on "PCB – A forgotten Legacy?", 8 November, 13:00 (Geneva time, GMT +01:00)**

  https://meetings.webex.com/collabs/#/meetings/detail?uuid=M3YM0HHPYJ8BIXF4HOW1NO7ETT-6R2P&ucs=email

- **Eight Conference of the Parties (COP)** to the Stockholm Convention, COP 8, April – May 2017

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6) Closure of the webinar

Ms. Elsemieke de Boer thanked everyone for their participation and invited everyone to the next webinar in the series of PCB – A Forgotten legacy on 8 November 2016 at 13:00 (GMT +01:00).

For more information about the webinars, please contact Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez, jacqueline.ALVAREZ@unep.org or Ms. Elsemieke de Boer, Elsemieke.DEBOER@unitar.org.