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## BAT/BEP Regional Consultations

The Stockholm Convention requires Parties to promote and use Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP) in managing releases of unintentionally produced POPs. In doing so, they should take into consideration guidance to be adopted by the COP. An expert group has developed draft guidance on BAT/BEP for the consideration of the COP at its first meeting.

Given the importance of BAT/BEP, UNEP Chemicals and the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, with support from Switzerland and the Canada POPs Fund, are undertaking regional consultations to assist countries in preparing for the discussion at COP-1.

The consultations will: enable early use of the guidelines by countries in developing their action plans for unintentionally produced POPs; identify sources and issues not yet addressed in the guidelines; and allow consultations among governments in regions on these issues in advance of COP-1. Six consultations for developing countries and countries with economies in transition took place between February and April 2005.

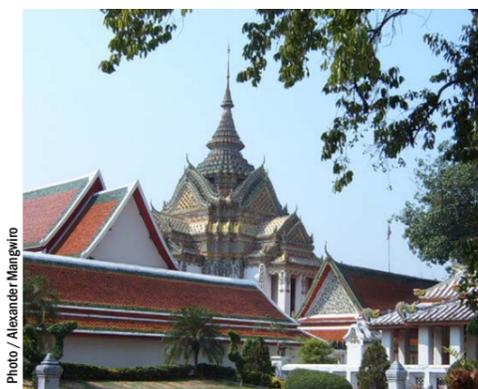


Photo / Alexander Mangwiro  
 Bangkok

## Strengthening the capacity of Stockholm Convention focal points

Stockholm Convention focal points are key players in ensuring communication between national stakeholders, Convention Parties and the Conference of Parties. With this in mind, the Canada POPs Fund, the Swiss Government and Stockholm Convention Secretariat initiated a project to strengthen the capacities of focal points in developing countries in order to fulfill their role and successfully implement the Convention.

The project organizes regional workshops as a forum for focal points to discuss their roles and needs and to identify ways of undertaking their tasks. It also strives to initiate a few national pilot studies aimed at

setting the basis for the focal points' work. The first regional workshop, hosted by the Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Eau et de l'Environnement, was held in February 2005 in Marrakech, Morocco and was attended by 33 African focal points.

Participants took complete ownership of the meeting and issued a set of recommendations and terms of reference for the focal point that they wish to share with other regions. They also agreed on the need for a network of focal points supported by an information exchange system using the UNEP/EPA Chemical



Photo / Cyrille Stévé  
 Participants at the Workshop held in Marrakech

Information Exchange Networks (CIEN) and the Environmentally Sound Technology Information

System (ESTIS). This effort will be extended to other regions.

*The UNEP Chemicals Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.*

*UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.*

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United Nations Environment Programme

# UNEP Chemicals Newsletter

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## Status of Stockholm Convention Ratifications

As of 4 April 2005, there were 97 Parties. New Parties since the last issue: Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, European Community, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Monaco, New Zealand, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom.

## Rotterdam Convention's First Chemical Review Committee

RC/CRC.1 was held in Geneva on 11-18 February 2005 and attended by 26 experts plus observers. The CRC established operational procedures and considered fourteen chemicals for addition to Annex III. Chrysotile asbestos was the only chemical which met all criteria for inclusion and the CRC agreed by consensus to recommend that this chemical be considered for inclusion in the Rotterdam Convention. A decision guidance document is being prepared, and will be finalized by the CRC and forwarded to the RC/COP-3 in 2006 for a decision.

## Stockholm Convention – COP.1

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants will take place from 2-6 May 2005 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. A ministerial level segment will take place 5-6 May.

Priorities for the meeting include: evaluation of the continued need for DDT use in disease vector control, review process for specific exemptions, guidance to the financial mechanism, format and timing of Party reporting, effectiveness evaluation, and establishment of the POPs Review Committee. The COP will consider guidance documents on: POPs wastes guidelines developed under the Basel Convention; preparation and updating of national implementation plans; technical assistance; a toolkit for evaluating releases of dioxins and furans; and best available techniques and best environmental practices for unintentionally produced POPs.



Photo / David Ogden

Punta del Este, Uruguay

The latter were developed by an expert group that met for the third time in Tokyo in October 2004 and agreed on the guidance and the process for its submission to the COP. The meeting is also expected to agree on the permanent location of the Secretariat.

## Rotterdam Convention

The first meeting of the COP was held in Geneva, 20-24 September 2004. The meeting was very successful, and was attended by more than 500 delegates. The Conference decided to add fourteen new chemicals to Annex III of the Convention and also agreed to add an Annex to the Convention on arbitration and conciliation. Additionally, the Conference finalized financial rules for the Convention, established the Chemical Review Committee, and decided that the Secretariat should be hosted jointly in Geneva and Rome.

The COP also decided to promote activities for the regional delivery of technical assistance, based on the assessment of needs following regional workshops and a study on technical assistance needs. In October, the Secretariat met with Regional

Officers from FAO, UNEP and the Basel Convention Regional Centres to discuss cooperative approaches to technical assistance. A national workshop on implementation was held in China in December 2004, and a regional implementation workshop was held with the CILSS (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) countries in January 2005. A programme of upcoming workshops can be accessed on the Rotterdam Convention website ([www.pic.int](http://www.pic.int)).

### Status of Rotterdam Convention Ratifications

At 1 March 2005, 83 countries and the European Community had deposited instruments of ratification for the Rotterdam Convention. There are currently 41 chemicals subject to the Rotterdam Convention, including 24 pesticides, 6 severely hazardous pesticide formulations and 11 industrial chemicals.

## From the Director



Antigua harbour

The omnibus decision on chemicals taken by the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNEP Governing Council (21-15 February 2005) signals governments' view that the global chemicals agenda has matured into an issue in its own right. Four areas were identified for action including: increased cooperation and coordination between

UNEP, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and other international players; completing

development of the strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM); assessment of lead and cadmium to determine whether they warrant international action; and expansion of the mercury programme.

Other priorities for UNEP Chemicals include key meetings for the Rotterdam Convention (COP-2 in September 2005 and the second meeting of the Chemical Review Committee in February 2006) and the Stockholm Convention (COP-1 in May and possibly the first POPs Review Committee in late 2005). Action on all these priorities confirms UNEP's commitment to the WSSD goals on chemicals. Add to this the ongoing capacity assistance and various other activities, and it promises to be a rather busy year indeed.

*John A. Buccini, Director, UNEP Chemicals*

## Jim Willis

In January 2005, I joined UNEP Chemicals for an 11 month assignment as Director, succeeding Jim Willis, who has returned to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, where he is Director of the Chemicals Control Division.

Jim has left his mark on the international chemicals scene. In his time here from November 1995 to October 2004, he steered the evolution of UNEP's chemicals programme to its current highly respected status as a

leading force in global chemicals issues. In doing so, he was instrumental in developing both the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and the first global assessment of mercury. He leaves a long list of achievements of which UNEP can be rightly proud, and which provide the platform for the Chemicals programme priorities for 2005, several of which are addressed in separate articles in this newsletter.

*John A. Buccini*

## Strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM)



Saly, Senegal

The second session of the SAICM Preparatory Committee (PrepCom2) took place in Nairobi from 4 to 8 October 2004. It was attended by around 350 participants, including representatives of 115

Governments and

a wide range of sectors with an interest in chemical safety. PrepCom2 agreed on a tripartite structure for SAICM comprising a high-level declaration, an overarching

policy strategy and "concrete measures". In preparation for the final session (PrepCom3, Vienna, 19-24 September 2005), regional consultations will be held from March to May 2005 and a large body of inter-session work is being undertaken by the secretariat and SAICM participants. Documents and further details of the inter-session work and meetings can be found at [www.chem.unep.ch/saicm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm). The completed SAICM is to be considered for adoption at the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), which will be held in conjunction with the 9th special session of UNEP Governing Council in Dubai at the beginning of February 2006. SAICM will provide a policy framework and agreed targets for international chemical safety activities from 2006 to 2020. It is hoped that the governing bodies of all relevant intergovernmental organizations will consider endorsing SAICM and integrating it into their work programmes and budgets.

### 30 years of service

UNEP Chemicals has achieved much in the last decade. Elsewhere in this issue we recognise the leadership of Jim Willis, but we should also look behind the scenes at the person that has kept the funds flowing, got staff their salaries, kept up with the ever increasing rules and regulations, concluded the MOUs and agreements for projects in all parts of the world, and made sure that participants got to meetings and workshops everywhere. In our case, this person is Cairine Cameron, our Administration Officer, who has spent nearly half her UNEP career with us. She joined UNEP in 1975 and worked with 4 different UNEP offices before joining IRPTC in 1988 (which later became UNEP Chemicals). We all value and respect her ability to cope with the ever increasing challenges of the UN administrative system while maintaining her invariably high standard of work.

## Termite experts support project on POPs alternatives

Termite control is one of the major issues regarding POP pesticides in many countries. Several POP pesticides have been used for termite control and the Stockholm Convention allows Parties to register for time-limited exemptions for use of chlordane, heptachlor and mirex as termiticides. A global termite expert group with members from all regions of the world was established jointly by UNEP and FAO in 2000 to guide countries in efforts to eliminate POPs in termite control. The group met in Geneva in February 2005 to develop guidance materials for national action plans on alternative strategies and to set the scene for a joint FAO/UNEP project to assess problems and benefits of termites and to demonstrate integrated pest management

(IPM) based alternatives. The project that is to be funded by GEF involves 6 countries in 5 regions and is now in its preparatory phase, with full project implementation planned for late 2006. It will receive continued active support from the group of termite experts. More information is available at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops/>



Photo / B. Thorne, Univ. Maryland, USA

**Mastotermes darwiniensis** - a very primitive termite type that attacks homes and other structures in the Northern Territories of Australia.

## Basel Convention

The seventh meeting of the Basel Convention Conference of the Parties adopted, in October 2004, general technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of POPs as wastes and specific technical guidelines on PCB wastes. This is the result of the hard work of Parties and Signatories, UNEP, industry and environmental NGOs sharing their know-how, expertise and experience. These technical guidelines will be considered by the first meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Stockholm Convention in May 2005 in Uruguay.

This unique ground-breaking venture between the Basel and Stockholm Conventions has materialized, in concrete and useful terms, what governments have been calling for - making use of the synergies between Conventions and avoiding duplication of effort. It is a significant step forward in demonstrating how such principles are being transformed into action. The common aspirational goal of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions is to protect human health and the environment. In working together, the Parties to both Conventions are enhancing their ability to achieve their common goal worldwide.

## Action on heavy metals among key decisions at GC. 23

Under a strengthened mercury programme, governments asked UNEP to conduct a study on the amounts of mercury being traded and supplied worldwide and to improve communication of the risks that mercury poses to vulnerable groups. A new initiative, development of pilot partnerships between governments, organizations and the private sector, was also agreed to reduce mercury pollution, for example, from coal fired power stations and chlor-alkali plants. Such partnerships may also focus on mercury wastes and stockpiles and improving understanding of how mercury moves around the planet. Under the partnerships, governments may make experts and information on environmentally-friendly techniques available to those countries and industries requesting assistance. UNEP is asked to publicize the results and success of these partnerships through a dedicated web site and Governments agreed to

review progress at GC24, where they will assess whether further global action is needed and, if so, review options including the possibility of a legally binding instrument.

UNEP was also requested to conduct a focussed global assessment of cadmium and lead transport, as governments want to understand better how the two metals are transported through the atmosphere, seas and rivers, to establish whether action at global level is needed to address the health and environmental effects of these metals.



Photo / Cecilia Zaratis, ACPO

**Traditional fever thermometer and its non-mercury alternative**

### 25 years of service

If you have ever wondered who is responsible for all the bulletins, workshop proceedings, and brochures that come from UNEP Chemicals, the answer is Salem Milad. Salem joined UNEP in 1980. He works hard behind the scenes to bring all our achievements front stage and to our clients. All publications and information dissemination are managed by him. Salem also looks after the internal reporting that is a feature of the UN system. In June this year, Salem will be leaving us to go on well earned retirement. We wish him and his family all the best and will miss his vast experience and quiet manner.