

Ministerial statement on partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge

We, the ministers and heads of delegations from the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and other States present on the occasion of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, share concerns and a sense of urgency regarding the unprecedented growth in the generation of hazardous wastes and the challenge posed to countries and regions in managing these wastes in an environmentally sound manner. Bearing this mind, we have discussed and exchanged views on the issue of building partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge.

Experience with the Basel Convention suggests that today's global waste challenge is shaped in large part by several interrelated issues, namely: (a) the rapid accumulation of hazardous wastes and other wastes and the lack of their environmentally sound management in urban settlements, which represent growing concerns for human health and the environment (b) the particular vulnerability of the poor, including children; (c) the sheer volume of wastes and the lack of segregation of hazardous from non-hazardous wastes, which is overwhelming national capacities to cope; (d) the siting of new facilities for hazardous waste and other waste disposal, which is becoming difficult and expensive; (e) the rise of end-of-life equipment as the fastest growing waste stream worldwide.

The achievement of the goals set forth in the Basel Convention and the enhancement of its role will help to deliver significant benefits with global reach:

- (a) The reduction of detrimental impacts on human health, in particular on the poor;
- (b) A lower risk of diseases, injuries and work-related accidents;
- (c) A direct positive impact on reducing levels of land and air pollution, as well as of water contamination;
- (d) A direct effect on the reduction or prevention of the degradation of fisheries in rivers and oceans resulting from the discharge of pesticides, industrial pollution or leachate of hazardous substances;
- (e) A lower risk of food contamination by persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals;
- (f) In the case of the sound management of biomedical or healthcare wastes, an important contribution to the fight against diseases;
- (g) A general improvement in the quality of life of vulnerable sectors of the population, especially in developing countries.

Action at source is the most effective means of protecting our environment from the generation of wastes and their mismanagement, eliminating costly waste disposal, reducing transboundary movements and promoting sustainable development. That is why we choose waste minimizations as the focus for the 2005–2006.

The challenge is to promote a fundamental shift in emphasis from remedial measures to preventive measures such as reduction at source, reuse, recycling and recovery. This new emphasis not only supports demands for a changing world, it is the most promising way forward to deal with hazardous and other wastes in an environmentally sound manner. It is also good for business.

We recognize the need to promote actively sustainable patterns of consumption and production, including through corporate responsibility and accountability, based on the Rio principles and in accordance the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We also recognize the need for close cooperation with other relevant international organizations and conventions in the field of chemicals and waste, in particular the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, bearing in mind the importance of the life-cycle approach.

We renew our commitment to enhance and strengthen our efforts to further reduce the amount of transboundary movements of hazardous and other waste.

We must not lose the forward momentum gained during 2000–2004 in implementing the Basel Declaration on Environmentally Sound Management and the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Basel Convention.

We agree that Parties and other States present, working in close cooperation with their existing and new partners, need to take the following course of action:

1. To endeavour to reduce the generation of hazardous waste, including to reduce the quantity of hazardous and other waste going to final disposal;
2. To consider setting their own targets for waste minimization, individually or in collaboration with others within a specific region, and to report on progress to the Conference of the Parties through the Secretariat;
3. To adopt a partnership approach when dealing with priority waste streams such as persistent organic pollutant wastes, electrical and electronic wastes, household wastes mixed with hazardous wastes, biomedical and healthcare wastes and lead acid batteries;
4. To encourage North-South cooperation, based on the Rio principles, and South-South and private-public coalition as key elements of partnership for meeting the global waste challenge;
5. To review waste streams of concern in their countries and regions and identify priority waste streams for reduction initiatives in the context of the Basel Convention, in partnership with stakeholders and Basel Convention regional centres;
6. To devote more efforts to:
 - (a) Building sustainable partnerships between Parties and all stakeholders;
 - (b) Networking among Parties and Basel Convention regional centres for information exchange and information clearing house functions;
 - (c) Strengthening and promoting the active involvement of the Basel Convention regional centres;
 - (d) Strengthening national capacities to segregate hazardous from non-hazardous wastes;
 - (e) Identifying cleaner production methods that reduce or eliminate the generation of hazardous wastes;
 - (f) Promoting the development of environmentally sound technologies and their transfer to developing countries;
 - (g) Mobilizing new and additional financial resources, including by using existing multilateral financial institutions and mechanisms.

We believe that building partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge will contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Partnerships will bring benefits for all. We reaffirm our commitment to engage in them. We, therefore, encourage Parties and other stakeholders, particularly multilateral financial institutions, to mobilize additional financial resources that are predictable and sustainable for the implementation of this statement.