The first joint meeting of the technical and legal working groups convened today under the co-chairmanship of Ms. Mariann Karcza of Hungary and Ms. Riitta Levinen of Finland.

The progress report on the implementation of the Basel Declaration on environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and development of a 10-years strategic plan for the Basel Convention were discussed. Many delegations expressed their great appreciation of this comprehensive and detailed strategic plan that was prepared by the Secretariat and guided by the Expanded Bureau. In this regard, the main comments by the delegates included the call for concrete and prioritized actions. The issues of the Basel Convention Regional Centres and the cooperation with the other environmental Conventions were highlighted. It was also emphasized that the strategic plan should be attractive to be put up for the political agenda. The meeting agreed to establish a contact group to further develop the plan. Denmark offered to host the intersessional meeting. A small working group was formed to discuss the terms of reference of this intersessional meeting under the leadership of South Africa and the European Commission.

The financial limits of the liability under the Protocol on Liability and Compensation were discussed. A small working group was formed under the chairmanship of Spain towards finding acceptance of the proposal submitted by Australia.

The draft guidance elements for bilateral, multilateral or regional agreements or arrangements were also referred to a small working group under Australia. In order to revolve, among others, the way to address precautionary approach/principle and to prevent Article 11 being used to circumvent the Convention.

In order to promote the work on prevention and monitoring of illegal traffic in hazardous wastes a small working group was formed.