



BASEL CONVENTION
the world environmental
agreement on wastes

BASEL CONVENTION bulletin

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this issue of the Basel Convention Bulletin. In this issue, we are pleased to highlight positive global developments for the Basel Convention's scope of activities, and especially for the promotion of the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous and other wastes, one of the Convention's pillars.

In September, a strong call for the international integrated management of chemicals and wastes was made by the General Assembly during the 2005 UN World Summit. Governments voiced their commitment to promote and undertake concrete actions for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes throughout their lifecycle and to ensure that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that minimize significant effects to human health and the environment.

In parallel, the integration of waste issues in the SAICM process, through the inclusion of the life-cycle approach to the management of chemicals as one of the main principles of SAICM, is also a promising step for the sound implementation of the Basel Convention and its commitment to ESM globally.

Other news include the much valued enlargement of the membership of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI) to include three major network operators. Vodafone, France Telecom/Orange and Bell Canada joined the Partnership and will provide further expertise to the Initiative.

In November, the sixth meeting of the Mobile Phone Working Group, which was hosted by Germany, took place in Dessau. The Guidelines from the four project groups and the Guidance Document containing the main outcomes and recommendations will be presented to the Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention in November 2006. In addition, the MPPI is pursuing the development of its pilot collection and treatment schemes for used and end-of-life mobile phones in developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition. The objective of the pilot projects is to test the effectiveness of various guidelines that have been developed as part of the MPPI.

We are pleased to announce new developments, which strengthen our Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs). These include the legal establishment of the BCRC for South America, located in Buenos Aires, and of the BCRC in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. We also wish to highlight a very significant financial contribution by the Government of Finland to the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Arab States located in Cairo. In addition to the legal establishment of the BCRCs, projects run through them -such as the Environmentally Sound Management of Electronic and Electrical Wastes in the Asia-Pacific, whose inception workshop took place in November and which is linked to the BCRCs in Indonesia, China and SPREP (Samoa)- further strengthen the role of the BCRCs in promoting the implementation of the Basel Convention, and in the role they can play in the implementation of related

Asia-Pacific Regional Project for the Environmentally Sound Management of Electronic and Electrical Wastes

A regional programme of action for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of Electronic and Electrical Wastes (e-waste) in the Asia-Pacific region was launched on 25 November 2005, with the support of an initial pledge of USD 300,000 by the Japanese Government, concluding a workshop on the same theme which took place in Tokyo, Japan, on 21-25 November 2005. The event was hosted by the Government of Japan, in cooperation

with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the Japanese National Institute for Environmental Studies. The workshop was organized within the framework of the Basel Convention Partnership Programme and the Pilot Project for the Environmentally Sound Management of e-waste in Asia-Pacific, which was presented at a side-event organized during the G8 Ministerial Conference on the 3Rs Initiative in Tokyo last April.

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Multilateral Environmental Agreements (please see the July issue of the Bulletin for details about the project).

By the end of 2005, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention will have hosted the second meeting of the Joint Working Group of the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization and the Basel Convention on Ship Scrapping. Reports on end-of-year activities will be available on our website (www.basel.int) and in the next Bulletin.

In the new year, the Fifth Open-ended Working Group will take place in April (3-7) and the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention will take place in November (27 November-1 December), a busy time for the Basel Convention. A major theme for discussion will be the development of the most effective and efficient ways to manage the waste and chemical agendas, a process which will need Parties' close attention in the next few months.

Finally, while the Secretariat of the Basel Convention has pursued its efforts in project development and resource mobilization, the securing of resources for the continued functioning and implementation of the Basel Convention will need to remain a top agenda priority. I look forward to the new year, to addressing the above-mentioned issues and to fruitful interactions with all concerned stakeholders. I wish you a pleasant read.

Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto Executive Secretary, Basel Convention



Ms. Kuwabara-Yamamoto

Asia-Pacific Regional Project for the Environmentally Sound Management of Electronic and Electrical Wastes

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The goal of the programme of action is to enhance the capacity of countries in the region to manage e-waste in an environmentally sound way through the building of public-private partnerships and to prevent illegal traffic of hazardous e-waste. The programme is based on actions to be taken at the national and regional levels with the support of the Basel Convention Regional Centres in China, Indonesia, and in the South Pacific (SPREP-Samoa).

The programme's activities will center on:

- Assessing the current situation through the conduct of national inventories, establishing mechanisms for information exchange and monitoring the impacts of the management of e-waste on human health and the environment.
- Preventing illegal traffic and minimizing e-waste generation by establishing quantitative goals, introducing cleaner production measures, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and developing economic and regulatory incentives to stimulate best practices.
- Achieving the Environmentally Sound Management of e-waste by promoting the use of sound recycling technologies adapted to national specificities and developing appropriate methods for evaluation, testing, characterizing and classifying electrical and electronic wastes.
- Awareness raising and training through the establishment of a regional information collection and dissemination clearing house accessible to all concerned stakeholders (eg. Governments, IGOs, industry, NGOs, municipalities, research institutions) in order to increase awareness and public participation on e-waste issues at all levels and develop training curricula for trainers.

The programme was needed due to the rapid industrialization of a number of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region which has led them to be commodity-dependent and needing to access large quantities of secondary raw materials. High quantities of used and end-of-life electronic wastes are therefore being exported to developing countries in this region for the purpose of re-use, repair, refurbishment, recycling and recovery of non-ferrous and precious metals at facilities which do not always operate in an environmentally sound manner.

The workshop was opened by Her Excellency Ms. Yuriko Koike, Minister of Environment, Government of Japan, and was attended by over 100 participants from Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs), academia and research institutes, and industry.

Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, the Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention said:

"The proper implementation of the Basel Convention ensures that hazardous e-waste be managed in an environmentally sound manner as it provides the tools for the transparency and traceability of e-wastes destined for recycling or recovery." She added that there is a need, therefore, to combine the development of international recycling systems of resources with a mechanism that is capable of providing information about and monitoring such systems to ensure their accountability and soundness. This, however, cannot be achieved without intensified efforts by the international community to help developing countries strengthen their capacity to implement the Convention. Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto concluded: "I therefore wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting the workshop and for supporting the programme with a most significant initial pledge".

Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom3)

SAICM's purpose is to achieve increased efficiency and coherence in international chemicals management, and to fill existing gaps in chemicals management at the national, regional and global levels, covering all aspects of chemical safety.

UNEP Governing Council, at its seventh Special Session in February 2002, adopted Decision SS.VII/3 on a "Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management" (SAICM). The Governing Council decided that there was a need to further develop a strategic approach and endorsed, as a foundation for such an approach, the IFCS Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000. The initiative was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. In February 2003 a progress report was considered by UNEP Governing Council. The Council adopted decision 22/4 IV endorsing the concept of an international conference to be held around the end of 2005.

A first preparatory meeting, SAICM PrepCom1, was held in Bangkok on 9-13 November 2003, following on from the IFCS Forum IV meeting. SAICM PrepCom2 was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 4-8 October 2004. SAICM PrepCom3 took place in Vienna, Austria, on 19-24 September 2005. An "International Conference on Chemicals Management" (ICCM) to adopt the completed SAICM is scheduled for Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 4-6 February 2006, immediately before the 9th Special Session of UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

The Basel Convention Secretariat (SBC) participated in SAICM PrepCom3 on 19-24 September 2005. The primary objective of SAICM PrepCom3 was to produce a final text to be forwarded to the ICCM, to be held on 4-6 February 2006 in Dubai. During the

week, delegates discussed the SAICM high-level declaration, the overarching policy strategy, and the global plan of action. The SBC participated in the financial group and in the contact group on the global plan of action. A side-event was also organized on 21 September to share experiences gained and lessons learned from the Basel Convention's Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (please see relevant article).

The over-arching priority for the Basel Convention, as related to the SAICM process, is to include waste management considerations in the process where appropriate. Therefore, the inclusion of the life-cycle approach to the management of chemicals as one of the main principles of SAICM was most welcome. Further, the inclusion of the promotion of the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes as a priority in the draft high-level declaration, together with the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the prevention of illegal traffic in toxic, hazardous chemical products and wastes was also a significant step for the Basel Convention. In the global programme of action, the Basel Convention Secretariat and the Basel Convention Regional Centres were successfully included as actors in appropriate work areas and activities.

Overall, however, the discussion left many items unresolved such as financial considerations and the final scope of SAICM for example. The draft programme of action was left far from complete and a number of activities vital for achieving the 2020 goal of using and producing chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment were not settled. These include activities on heavy metals and endocrine disruptors for example. There was a fairly strong push by some countries to water down SAICM by turning it into a voluntary initiative. Other issues related to

the compulsory financing of SAICM were strongly resisted by some developing countries. These issues will need to be negotiated at the ICCM in February 2006, before SAICM can be adopted as scheduled. There was also general agreement that, whatever its final institutional form, the implementation of SAICM will need to be a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach, ensuring the open, transparent and inclusive participation of all relevant stakeholders. It was also decided that UNEP would continue to function as the SAICM Secretariat with WHO given some responsibilities, while the role of the IFCS remained uncertain. Most participants agreed that the ICCM could serve as an oversight or review body.

At the conclusion of SAICM PrepCom3, the recognition that SAICM would need significant resources, however, did not result in a firm commitment by donors to provide funding.



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*For a full summary of SAICM PrepCom3,
please go to the Earth Negotiations Bulletin at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/saicm/prepcom3/>*

*For SAICM official documents, please go to:
<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/>*

Vodafone, France Telecom/Orange and Bell Canada Join Basel Convention Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative

Telecom operators Vodafone, France Telecom/Orange and Bell Canada joined the Basel Convention's Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI) on 5th July 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland, by signing a Declaration. Vodafone, France Telecom/Orange and Bell Canada joined the 12 largest manufacturers of mobile phones worldwide, which have been members of the MPPI since its beginning. These are Alcatel, LG, Matsushita (Panasonic), Mitsubishi, Nokia, Philips, Motorola, NEC, Samsung, Sharp, Siemens and Sony Ericsson. The occasion coincided with the fourth meeting of the Basel Convention's Mobile Phone Working Group. A special side-event on MPPI also took place on 5th July.

"The joining of Vodafone, France Telecom/Orange and Bell Canada is truly beneficial to the MPPI. It broadens the area of expertise of the Partnership and reinforces the commitment of all stakeholders to protect the environment through the MPPI" said Marco Buletti, the Swiss Chairman of the Mobile Phone Working Group.

Luc Perrouin of France Telecom/Orange, said, on behalf of the new MPPI members (which include Bell Canada and Vodafone), "this initiative perfectly meets our respective sustainability goals and we are very proud to contribute to this important partnership between Governments, industry and NGOs in order to promote the ESM of used and end of life electronic devices for the benefit of all stakeholders".

The number of mobile phones is growing every year: in 2004 approximately 630 million mobile phones were sold worldwide. It is expected that the

number of subscribers to mobile telecom-services will reach 2 billions in the year 2006.

The Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative is a unique public-private partnership composed of experts from Parties and Signatories to the Basel Convention, Basel Convention Regional Centres, representatives of mobile phone manufacturers, telecom operators, refurbishers, recyclers, environmental, industrial and developmental NGOs and representatives of the Basel Convention Secretariat. The MPPI aims to (1) improve the environmental friendliness of mobile phones, (2) influence consumer behaviour and (3) promote the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones. Four project groups operate under the Mobile Phone Partnership. These groups address refurbishment and re-use, collection and transboundary movements, recycling and material recovery, awareness raising on design considerations and training for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of used and end-of-life mobile phones. These groups are finalizing comprehensive guidance documents under each project topic, as well as an overall

guidance document for the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones.

"The widening of the MPPI's telecom operator base and the upcoming pilot projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition show much progress in the implementation of the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones, the ESM of end-of-life products being one the pillars of the Basel Convention" said Ms Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention.

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For a full report of the side-event, please go to:
http://www.basel.int/industry/side_event/MPPI%20-%20OEWG%204%20Side%20Event%20Report%20.doc



The signing ceremony (photo A.Jaron)

The Basel Convention Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative: Lessons Learned and Roadmap to Success

During the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in September in Vienna, Austria, (please see relevant article) a side-event was organised on the experiences gained and lessons learned from the Basel Convention's Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI). A summary of the side-

event was circulated as the experience of the Basel Convention may be useful for the SAICM-Process which foresees that partnerships can play an important contribution to its implementation.

The Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative is a unique public-private partnership composed of experts from Parties and Signatories to the Basel

Convention, Basel Convention Regional Centres, representatives of mobile phone manufacturers, telecom operators, refurbishers, recyclers, environmental, industrial and developmental NGOs and representatives of the Basel Convention Secretariat. The MPPI aims to (1) improve the environmental friendliness of mobile phones, (2) influence consumer behaviour and (3) promote the environmentally sound management of used

and end-of-life mobile phones. Four project groups operate under the Mobile Phone Partnership. These groups address refurbishment and re-use, collection and transboundary movements, recycling and material recovery, awareness raising on design considerations and training for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of used and end-of-life mobile phones. These project groups are finalizing guidelines under each project topic, as well as an overall guidance document for the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones.

Plans are being finalized to initiate the establishment of pilot collection and treatment schemes for used and end-of-life mobile phones in developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition. The objective is to test the effectiveness of various guidelines that have been developed, as part of the MPPI. The key deliverables from the project expected are: a successful mobile phone collection and recovery scheme operating in a selected country or region, raised public awareness regarding recovery and recycling schemes, raised public awareness regarding the MPPI.

The following points illustrate the positive experience gained from the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and form part of a roadmap to successful partnership initiatives.

Lessons learned:

- All stakeholders need to be involved in the initiative from the beginning; transparency is of paramount importance as are the mechanisms developed to ensure transparency.
- Balanced participation between developed and developing countries is part of the original aim of the Mobile Phone Partnership. Mechanisms need to be developed at the start to ensure that developing countries are engaged in the process and their travel to meetings is financed.
- Sound coordination of activities throughout the process is important. Mechanisms for this need to be in place from the beginning.
- Concerning operational aspects, meetings and teleconferences need to be planned in advance with consideration to the time needed for stakeholders to provide input and comments on documents and to participate in activities.
- Confidence building among different stakeholders with different priorities and mandates is crucial.

Prerequisites for success:

- Success of the initiative rests on finding committed officials (from key countries, the Secretariat and the private sector) for the Partnership and to lead projects.
- Sufficient resources (human and financial) need to be mobilized and secured at the start. Sustainable financing for projects needs to be secured with stakeholders.
- Clearly establish mechanisms for reaching consensus among different interest groups at the beginning of the initiative.
- The work programme needs to be flexible and allow for adjustments along the way.
- Partnerships should be based on a step by step approach.

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United Nations 2005 World Summit

Ecosystem services are a necessary precondition for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The recently concluded Millennium Ecosystem Assessment found that the carrying capacity of the Earth is already severely degraded. Fifteen out of the twenty-four most critical ecosystems services for human well-being are in decline, and the environmental threat of climate change will accelerate this decline even further.

The MDGs will not be met unless the sustainable use of ecosystems services is made an integral part of the development strategies for developing countries.

At the United Nations World Summit of 14-16 September 2005, leaders from across the globe re-emphasized the importance and their commitment to promote and undertake concrete actions for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes throughout their lifecycle and

to ensure that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that minimize significant effects to human health and the environment.

The last time such an explicit commitment was made by world leaders was in Chapter 20 of Agenda 21, which enshrines the importance of the sound management of hazardous wastes. The World Summit is the first time in nearly 13 years that this message was brought back to the forefront and a new





pledge was made to taking concrete actions and measures at all levels for the sound management of hazardous wastes which is directly related to the objectives and work of the Basel Convention.

In July 2005, the Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention, Ms Kuwabara-Yamamoto, participated in a High-Level Brainstorming Workshop for Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) on Mainstreaming Environment Beyond MDG7 (Ensuring Environmental Sustainability), together with several representatives of UNEP and UNON. The aim of the gathering was to find ways to bring the experience of MEAs into the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in order to operationalize environmental matters in the MDG process. At the workshop, the importance of

integrating environmental concerns into the follow up from the 2005 World Summit, including the mainstreaming of the environment into poverty reduction strategies, was underlined.

A process for the future based on short, medium and long-term activities was drawn up, in collaboration with the UNDP/Millennium Project with a view to building partnerships with other key players such as UNESCO, FAO and civil society organizations for example. These activities centre around creating appropriate platforms to promote cooperation between MEAs and the achievement of MDGs, developing national sustainable development strategies, providing a catalogue of best practices for the preparation of environmental strategies as part of the MDG-based development strategies, among others.

The SBC supports and will cooperate with the implementation of the outcomes of the workshop.



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UNEP Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force Meeting

The UNEP Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force met on 23 June 2005 in Geneva. It was organised by the UNEP Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force/Post Conflict Assessment Unit and attended by environmental authorities from the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, UNEP national coordinators, UNEP/DTIE, WWF, IUCN and SBC.

The representatives of environmental authorities made presentations on the impacts the tsunami had on their countries and subsequent environmental recovery needs.

Common issues raised included: the redistribution of wastes, including hazardous wastes, (medical and clinical wastes, asbestos and mixed

wastes in the rubble), the contamination of surface and groundwater and soil contamination. All countries were pleased with the assistance received from international organisations including UNEP and NGOs. It was also pointed out that environmental issues surfaced later in the response to the disaster.

All countries highlighted the need for a proper long-term waste management strategy, ecosystem based marine and coastal management and better coordination (nationally and internationally).

Reports by UNEP country offices in The Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and Somalia, and NGOs (WWF, IUCN) were also presented. They highlighted their roles in the preparation

of the rapid environmental assessment reports as well as advisory roles to the affected countries.

The Task Force ended its work on 1 July 2005 and in its place an Environmental Recovery Programme will be established in Geneva with a core team that would focus on specific activities. In addition, programme management groups will be stationed in The Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The Basel Convention Secretariat would provide assistance when required.

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Launch of Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

A Basel Convention Regional Centre was legally established on 27 July 2005 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention and H.E. Ms. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment, Islamic Republic of Iran, signed a Framework Agreement.

The Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) in Tehran is one of 14 BCRCs around the world. Its functions are to deliver training, technology transfer, information, consulting and awareness raising activities on matters relevant to the implementation of the Basel Convention and to the environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes in the countries it will serve, which are Bangladesh, Islamic Republic of Iran, The Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan.

The Regional Centre may also contribute to the promotion of a lifecycle approach to the management of hazardous materials through the coordinated implemen-

tation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. It will establish a regular line of communication with neighbouring BCRCs, using their expertise to conduct seminars, workshops, training courses and exhibitions, and consulting them with a view to ensuring cooperation and coordination of activities.

“The formal establishment of the BCRC in Tehran will greatly support the implementation of the Basel Convention in the region as well as the coordinated implementation of related Multilateral Environmental



Agreements through mutually beneficial activities.” said Ms Kuwabara-Yamamoto. She added that the Centre would assist countries in their quest for improving resource efficiency and the sound recycling or recovery of materials.

H.E. Ms. Ebtekar welcomed the creation of the Centre and underlined that “it represents an important opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran to contribute to the implementation of the Basel Convention and sustainable development in the region”.

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The BCRCs are located in Argentina, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovak Republic, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (Samoa), South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

Legal Establishment of Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for South America.

A Framework Agreement was signed on 8 July 2005 by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC) and the Government of Argentina sealing the legal establishment of the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) for South America, located in Argentina. The signing ceremony took place on the last day of the Basel Convention's fourth Open-ended Working Group meeting in Geneva.

The BCRC for South America, located in Buenos Aires, will support the implementation of the Basel Convention in the countries under its umbrella, which are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. It will build legal, technical and institutional capacity in the field of the environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes in the countries affiliated to it, and work on the transfer of environmentally sound technology and the minimization of the generation of hazardous and other wastes.

An important area for work of the Basel Convention is the provision of training and technical assistance through its 14 Regional Centres. The Basel Convention is the first global

environmental agreement that has established Regional Centres. The Centres promote cooperation among Parties in the respective regions, enhance local capacities and support the implementation of the Basel Convention.

The Agreement was signed by Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara -Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention and by Ambassador Alberto Dumont, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the International Organisations in Geneva, on behalf of the Government of Argentina.

Ms. Kuwabara -Yamamoto said: “I very much welcome the signing of the Agreement as it empowers the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America to work as a natural partner in the implementation of the Basel Convention and related programmes”.

The Regional Centre may also contribute to the promotion of a lifecycle approach to the management of hazardous materials through the coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

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Additionally to Argentina, the BCRCs are operating in China, Egypt, El Salvador, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovak Republic, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (Samoa), South Africa, Trinidad and Uruguay.

Finland Contributes 1,000,000 Euros to the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Arab States located in Cairo, Egypt

An agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC) was signed on 30 June 2005 by Mr. Aapo Pöhlö, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and by Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention, settling a contribution of 1,000,000 Euros by the Finnish Government to the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer (BCRC) for Arab States from 2005 to 2007.

The contribution goes towards the project "A Better Environment for Human Health and Well-Being" which will improve hazardous waste management in Arabic speaking countries. The BCRC for Arab States was formally established as an independent legal entity in October 2004 and is located at the University of Cairo. The countries served by the Centre are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi

Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Mr. Pöhlö said: "Environmental issues, especially environmental protection are one of the priority areas in the Finnish development co-operation. I am very satisfied that the project "A Better Environment for Human Health and Well-Being" can now be implemented and I hope that the results of this work will serve the Arabic speaking world on their way to a sustainable future."

For Dr. Mortada Murad El Aaref, Director of the Centre, "this most generous contribution from Finland will enable the Centre to serve the countries affiliated to it in the best possible way and my deepest gratitude goes to the Government of Finland for it. This represents a very positive step for the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Cairo but also for other Centres as it further legitimizes the BCRCs' role in technology transfer and support for the implementation of the Basel Convention through its Regional Centres".

The Centre will provide cost-effective and efficient means of assisting countries in the region which do not have the resources and capacity needed to implement the provisions of the Basel Convention.

Mrs. Kuwabara-Yamamoto said: "I wish to express my gratitude to the Government of Finland for this important contribution towards the environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes in Arabic speaking countries and the enhancement of the capacity of the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Egypt. This substantial contribution comes at the time when the sustainable financing of all Regional Centres is vital".

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Second International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production

The Basel Convention Secretariat (SBC) participated in the Second International Expert Meeting of the Marrakech Process on 5-8 September 2005 in Costa Rica, organized with the financial support of the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom (1). The first meeting took place in Marrakech, Morocco, on 16-19 June 2003.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls in Chapter III for the development of "a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production." The framework should strengthen international cooperation and increase exchange of information and best practices to facilitate the implementation of national and regional programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production.

The meeting was attended by 150 experts from 70 countries and represented government agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, consumer organizations, business and industry (2). Five working groups had lively discussions on their corresponding themes which were 1 Production

Processes and Industrial Development, 2 Urban Planning and Waste Management, 3 Sustainable Consumption and Product Development, 4 Regional and National Strategies for Sustainable Consumption and Production, 5 Energy, Climate and Air Pollution.

The SBC was represented by Mr. Miguel Araujo, who described global challenges related to waste management, with a particular focus on waste minimization which links to cleaner production. The importance of acting at the source was also highlighted.

Four Tasks Forces were also organized during the meeting in support of the Marrakech Process on the following issues; Sustainable Lifestyles, Sustainable Products, Cooperation with Africa, and Sustainable Public Procurement

Of particular interest to the waste management community is the creation of a fifth Task Force on Integrated Waste Management following a proposal to explore the feasibility of creating a global partnership, network or Marrakech taskforce on solid waste management and waste minimization, which could

involve organizations such as the World Bank, UNEP, development agencies and regional development banks. The newly created Task Force is to be co-chaired by El Salvador and SBC with the participation of the Basel Convention Regional Centre located in El Salvador. Argentina, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Sweden and Turkey have expressed initial support while input is being sought from Japan, other Asian and African countries, the World Bank, from the International Solid Waste Association as well as private companies such as SITA (France), Waste Management (USA), Rang Sells (Sweden). Draft terms of reference are in preparation.

For background information about the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production (The Marrakech Process) please check:
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/issuues/consumption/Marrakech/conprod10Y.htm>

1- The lead agencies of the Marrakech Process are UNEP and the UN Division for Sustainable Development (DESA)
2- The international organizations present were UNEP/DTIE, UNESCAP, UNDESA, ETC RWM, UNEP, UNIDO, European Commission, the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention.

UNEP-UNCTAD World Trade Organisation's Regional Workshop on Trade and Environment for Latin American and Caribbean Countries

Ms. Y. Velezuela of the Government of the Dominican Republic attended the UNEP-UNCTAD World Trade Organisation's Regional Workshop on Trade and Environment for Latin American and Caribbean countries in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 19-21 July 2005 on behalf of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC). Officials from each country in the region, representing environment and trade issues participated in the workshop.

The workshop aimed to strengthen the capacities of Latin American and Caribbean countries to maximise the contribution that trade makes to sustainable development through increasing the integration of trade, environment and development objectives into national policymaking. The SBC presented the Convention and issues related to trade and the transboundary movement of hazardous and other wastes, with a particular emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean.

The workshop looked at the role of integrated assessment in ensuring the development of mutually supportive trade and environment policies, and at the current negotiations on environmental goods and services, particularly those issues relevant to developing countries in the region.

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Green Customs Meeting

The Green Customs Initiative's, of which the Basel Convention is a partner organisation, was set up to build the capacity of customs officials, who are at the forefront of every country's efforts to combat illegal trade in commodities such as ozone depleting substances, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and endangered species, which can seriously undermine the effectiveness of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). A series of regional workshops is currently taking place (please check www.greencustoms.org for venues and dates). The Director of the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) for the Caribbean, Dr R. Sookhoo, participated in the Caribbean Regional Workshop on the Green Customs Initiative and

Montreal Protocol held on 6-9 September 2005 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

A presentation was made on the background of the Basel Convention and the role the Convention can play in the activities of the Green Customs Initiative. Special emphasis was put on the possible role the BCRC for the Caribbean could play in the development of coordination and collaboration mechanisms between the pertinent MEAs and other international and regional agencies.

Other observations made at the meeting included the usefulness of developing an integrated

document with information on notification, shipment, transport and reporting common to all MEAs present at the workshop.

It was also noted that the participation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), other trade-related Conventions and further awareness raising efforts would be beneficial to the Initiative.

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Regional Workshop for Arab States on the Environmentally Sound Destruction of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Decontamination of POP Containing Waste in the Context of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC), UNEP-Chemicals, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Arab States based in Cairo and the Government of Jordan jointly organized the above-mentioned regional workshop in Amman from 28 to 31 August 2005. The workshop followed a similar event organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South American States in Sao Paolo on 6-10 December 2004.

Government delegates from Environment and Health Ministries in the region received training on waste disposal operations as developed in the Basel Convention General technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with persistent organic pollutants (http://www.basel.int/pub/techguid/pop_guid_final.pdf).

Training was also delivered on the Stockholm Convention Draft Guidelines on Best Available Technologies and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) and on the FAO Guidelines on the Sound Management of Pesticides and their Disposal.

The workshop engaged the participants in discussing long-term planning, the prioritisation of activities in the context of their national management plans for hazardous wastes, and related financial commitments.

The technologies and techniques qualified as environmentally sound in the Basel Convention guidelines were reviewed with a focus on operating conditions and the costs involved. A decision making model for the preparation of POPs containing waste disposal operations and for the selection of POPs waste treatment technologies developed by SBC was introduced to participants through practical training exercises with a view to being utilized in their respective countries.

Among the recommendations made by the participants were the study of the possible development of a regional approach for the ESM of POPs as wastes, the need for improved monitoring and control of transboundary movements of chemicals and hazardous wastes in the region, and enhanced training both at the regional and national levels to assist parties in the conduct of POPs waste disposal programmes.

A site visit to the Pesticides Residue and Formulation Analysis Laboratories of the Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture was also included in the programme.

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Implementation of the Basel Convention General Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Wastes Consisting of, Containing or Contaminated with Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Since the above-mentioned guidelines were adopted by the Sixth Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention in October 2004, the efforts of the Basel Convention Secretariat (SBC) to help Parties implement them have been three-fold;

First, SBC has initiated the preparation of a decision-making model for the undertaking of POPs waste (1) disposal operations under the Basel Convention. The tool is composed of a training manual for the review and selection of destruction and decontamination technologies for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and other POPs Waste, a compendium of fact sheets which help review POPs waste destruction and treatment technologies in a comprehensive and systematic manner, and an IT based system to help use this material. The training manual aims at reviewing the performance, operative conditions and costs of disposal operations that have been identified as potentially environmentally sound in the Basel Convention Guidelines. These are pre-treatment, destruction and irreversible transformation methods as well as other disposal methods when destruction or irreversible transformation does not represent an environmentally preferable option (2). A first version of the tool is expected to be released by the SBC before the end of 2005 with the knowledge that it would need further consolidation to include developments taking place in the context of the Stockholm Convention for example.

Secondly, SBC, in close collaboration with UNEP-Chemicals, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs), has organized several regional workshops on the environmentally sound destruction and decontamination of POPs containing waste in the context of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions. Such workshops were held for South American countries in December 2004 and for Arab States in August 2005 (please see relevant article). SBC will be organizing further workshops, in particular in Africa in support of the implementation of the African Stockpile Project. The delivered training addresses the main aspects of the preparation and implementation of POPs waste disposal operations as developed in

the Basel Convention technical guidelines, the Stockholm Convention Draft Guidelines on Best Available Techniques and Provisional Guidance on Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) as well as the FAO Guidelines on Pesticides Management and their Safe Disposal.

Thirdly, field activities such as the Regional Project for the Undertaking of Inventories and Preparation of PCB Management Plans in Central America are being implemented by SBC and BCRCs.

The development of these mutually supportive clusters of activities aim at rendering the Basel Convention more instrumental in the field of POPs waste disposal operations in the medium-term. A concrete objective of this programme is to give BCRCs the methodological tools and capacity to provide expert, transparent, and non-partisan advice to authorities and operators concerning the ESM of POPs. In this regard, BCRCs are being progressively invited to take a more active role in the monitoring and control of the POPs waste disposal operations that are carried out by the countries served by them (3), including on such activities as inventories, analysis, packaging, storage, proper disposal operations and transboundary movements.

- 1- 'Destruction and decontamination technologies for PCBs and other POPs Wastes under the Basel Convention', Volume C, 2005 (SBC).
- 2- Section G: Environmentally sound disposal, General Technical Guidelines for the ESM of POPs.
- 3- Recommendation of the regional workshop for Arab States, Amman, 28-31 August 2005.

These developments highlight the need for the setting up of hazardous waste management schemes in the context of which the BCRCs, given their unique position as regional institutions for the implementation of the Basel Convention, may be expected to take a proactive role as service providers and monitoring entities concerning the ESM of hazardous waste.

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Joining the Party

The Basel Convention has 166 Parties. Since our last Bulletin, Swaziland acceded to the Convention on 8 August 2005. Both Ghana and Bahrain ratified the Ban Amendment, on 9 June 2005 and on 25 July 2005 respectively, as well as Liberia, on 16 September 2005, bringing the total of Parties to the Ban Amendment to 59. Ghana and Liberia also acceded to the Protocol (on 9 June 2005 and 16 September 2005 respectively) which brings the number of Contracting Parties to the Protocol to 7

Call for National Legislation on Basel Convention

In early 2004, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention started to collect texts of national legislation and measures of the Parties to the Convention on the implementation of the Basel Convention, both in hard copy and in electronic form.

As of September 2005 the Secretariat has received the national legislation from 78 Parties to the Convention, which can be found on the SBC website at the following URL: <http://www.basel.int/legalmatters/natleg/frset-main.html>. (some texts are only available in the national language of the country concerned). Please send national legislation texts to: Sophie Schlingemann, Legal Consultant to SBC, Email: sophie.schlingemann@unep.ch Tel. +41-(0) 22 917 83 41

Second Regional Latin American and Caribbean Training Programme on Environmental Law and Policy

The Basel Convention Secretariat (SBC), represented by Mr. Miguel Angel Hildmann, Vice President of the Compliance Committee, participated in the Second Regional Latin American and Caribbean Training Programme on Environmental Law and Policy in Panama City on 25 July-5 August 2005 as a presenter. The workshop was organized by UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and is part of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. It was organized for the Spanish speaking countries of the Latin American and Caribbean

region, including Brazil. The workshop was designed to build the capacity of the participants (1) in environmental law and policy development and application, and to promote interest in the compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as the Basel Convention. A detailed presentation about the Basel Convention was therefore given and related issues of relevance to the region were addressed. As a follow up to the training workshop a special website was set up to allow participants to further interact on the development and implementation of environ-

mental law in Latin America and the Caribbean (please check www.unep.org/DPDL).

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1- from all related sectors from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela, as well as from the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO)

Basel Convention Secretariat Staff News

Ms. Claudia Fénel joined the Secretariat of the Basel Convention as Senior Programme Officer for the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Programme. Her work will focus on the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and other partnership initiatives, on Article 14 work on financial mechanisms and other resource mobilisation activities.

Ms. Fénel, a US citizen, has worked in the environment field for the past 22 years with over 12 years at the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Directorate, and 10 years experien-

ce working for the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). At OECD, her work focused on the development of international programmes such as pollutant release and transfer registers and the extended producer responsibility programme. She has also worked on trade issues, environment technology subsidies, integrated pollution prevention and control, among others. Her work at the US EPA concentrated on enforcement cases and policy for the Toxic Substances Control Act and the Pesticides Act (FIFRA) along with other national waste and international programme development. Her education includes environmental sciences, geography and law.

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Ms. Dima Yared is currently an intern with the Legal Unit of the SBC. She obtained her BCL and LL.B degrees from McGill University (Montreal, Canada) in 2000 and has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 2001. Following two years of private practice in corporate and commercial law, she is currently completing her DEA in International Law at the Graduate Institute of International Relations in Geneva, Switzerland.



Ms Claudia Fénel

Ms Dima Yared

List of Upcoming Meetings

- Sixth meeting of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, Dessau, Germany, 14 to 16 November 2005
- 2nd meeting of the Steering Committee on the project for the development of a regional strategy for the environmentally sound management of ULAB, San Salvador, 28 to 30 November 2005
- 3rd Regional Workshop of National Inventories and national plans for the environmentally sound management of PCB and PCB-containing equipments in Central America, San Salvador, 28 November to 2 December 2005
- Meeting of the Board of Directors of BCRC, El Salvador, 31 November 2005
- 2nd meeting of the Executive Committee of the municipality project in Guayaquil, 24 to 25 November 2005
- Inception workshop for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes in Asia and the Pacific, Tokyo, Japan, 21 to 25 November 2005
- OECD Seminar on material management and WG Waste Management, Policy and Recycling, Seoul, Korea, 28 November to 2 December 2005
- Workshop on the Coordinated Implementation of Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes Conventions, Muscat, Oman, 10 to 12 December 2005
- Joint ILO/MIO/BC working group on ship scrapping, Geneva, 12 to 14 December 2005
- International Workshop on Sustainable Health Care Management, United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, from 15 to 16 December 2005.

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- Regional Forum on the integrated waste management in urban areas and the development of public-private partnerships, Curitiba, Brazil, January 2006
- International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), Dubai, UAE, 5 to 6 February 2006
- 2nd meeting of the Expanded Bureau to COP8, Geneva, 14 to 15 February 2006
- Basel Convention Compliance Committee meeting, Geneva, 25 to 26 February 2006
- 5th session of the Open-ended Working Group, Geneva, 3 to 7 April 2006
- 2nd conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention (COP-2), May 2006
- 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, 27 November to 1 December 2006 tentative

Update on the activities of the Basel Convention Regional Centres

BCRC Egypt

Training programme on waste disposal by landfilling in hyper arid areas, Manama, Bahrain, 26 to 28 November 2005

BCRC Uruguay

GRULAC Regional Workshop on the context of the UNEP/GEF POPs Labs project. Montevideo, Uruguay, 5-9 September 2005, BCRC Uruguay and UNEP Chemicals

Basel Convention Bulletin

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*the world environmental
agreement on wastes*

