

**OEWG-I/5 Decision VI/31: Sustainable partnership on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones**

The Open-ended Working Group,

Recalling decision VI/31 on the sustainable partnership on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile telephones,

Noting with appreciation the progress made by the Mobile Phone Working Group established under decision VI/31 in the preparation of draft terms of reference and a draft 2003-2004 work programme for the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative,

1. Adopts the terms of reference for the Mobile Phone Working Group contained in appendix 1 to the present decision;
2. Adopts the 2003-2004 work programme for the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative contained in appendix 2 to the present decision;
3. Invites Parties and Signatories to indicate their interest in joining the Mobile Phone Working Group to the secretariat by 13 June 2003;
4. Encourages stakeholders to contribute to the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative both financially and in other ways.

Appendix 1

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
MOBILE PHONE WORKING GROUP**

The Mobile Phone Working Group was established under decision VI/31 of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. Decision VI/31 includes most importantly the full text of the commitment from mobile phone manufacturers, *Sustainable Partnership on the Environmentally Sound Management of End-of-Life Mobile Phones*.

The Mobile Phone Working Group is the operational body to the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile telephones. It is the Basel Convention's primary mechanism for progressing the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, including with respect to:

- Advice to the Parties and signatories;
- Consultations between experts, industry and the Parties and signatories to the Convention;
- Initiation and oversight of projects under the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative work programme.

**Membership and operation**

The Mobile Phone Working Group comprises experts from Parties and Signatories interested in the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative plus representatives of the mobile phone manufacturers and the secretariat of the Basel Convention. As appropriate, other stakeholders (such as other United Nations bodies, network providers, operators and recyclers, non-governmental organizations and consumers) will be invited by the Group to join or otherwise participate actively in the work of the Mobile Phone Working Group. This involvement will normally be through project groups, involving a broader stakeholder set, to oversee and conduct specific projects. A priority task for project groups will be to elaborate project profiles and develop firm cost estimates.

The Mobile Phone Working Group is chaired by a member, elected by the Group, and assisted by the secretariat of the Basel Convention. The contact within the secretariat is the Senior Programme Officer responsible for Basel Convention Partnerships.

The recommendations of the Mobile Phone Working Group have no legal or binding status.

The Mobile Phone Working Group shall operate on a consensus basis.

### **Duties and responsibilities**

The Mobile Phone Working Group is established under decision VI/31 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention and is governed by that decision. It is mandated to:

- (a) Elaborate draft terms of reference for the group, including its working structure (e.g. for subgroups);
- (b) Develop, in cooperation with the secretariat, a draft concrete work programme setting priorities and identifying specific programmes for the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones, taking into account the fields of common interest for cooperative work identified in the announcement by the mobile telephone manufacturers;
- (c) Work intersessionally;
- (d) Set priorities based on the work programme;
- (e) Initiate and oversee the implementation of the work programme of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, noting that the work programme is a dynamic document;
- (f) Work in a transparent way by making information or reports of meetings available to Parties, signatories, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders;
- (g) Ensure that intersessional inputs or comments from Parties, signatories, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders are considered by the Group;
- (h) Report regularly, through its Chair, to the Open-ended Working Group and to the Conference of the Parties.

### Appendix 2

#### **BASEL CONVENTION MOBILE PHONE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE WORK PROGRAMME 2003–2004**

At its sixth meeting, in Geneva in December 2002, the Conference of the Parties established a small group of experts from Parties and/or signatories interested in a sustainable partnership on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile telephones plus representatives of the mobile phone manufacturers and a representative of the secretariat (decision VI/31). The Conference indicated that, as appropriate, other stakeholders<sup>1</sup> would be invited by the group to participate actively in its work.

That group, the Mobile Phone Working Group, will have responsibility for the Initiative's work programme, and will work under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group. The mandates of the Mobile Phone Working Group and the roles and responsibilities of the Mobile Phone Working Group, the Open-ended Working Group and the secretariat of the Basel Convention are itemized in decision VI/31.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as other United Nations bodies and agencies, network providers, operators and recyclers.

Nothing in this Work Programme shall prohibit any partner in the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative or member of the Mobile Phone Working Group from undertaking additional action to promote the environmentally sound management of mobile phones.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative work programme is to promote the objectives of the Convention in the area of the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile telephones. In particular, the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative work programme should:

- Achieve better product stewardship;
- Influence consumer behaviour towards more environmentally friendly actions;
- Promote the best refurbishing/recycling/disposal options;
- Mobilize political and institutional support for environmentally sound management;
- Result in an Initiative that could be replicated to build new public/private partnerships for the environmentally sound management of hazardous and other waste streams.

In meeting its objectives, decision VI/31 indicates that the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative work programme is required to consider:<sup>2</sup>

- Initiatives (regulatory, voluntary, economic) for reused phones that re-enter the market to ensure high quality and standards that satisfy the product requirements of manufacturers, network providers and operators alike;
- Rules that govern transboundary movements of mobile phones to be reused;
- Advice on any programmes, legislation and /or regulations for an effective collection of end-of-life mobile phones;
- Rules that apply to transboundary movement of end-of-life mobile phones to be sent for refurbishing, recycling and recovery;
- Guidance on environmentally sound practices for recycling and recovery;
- Elaboration of the role of the Basel Convention Regional Centres in assisting countries in developing legislation, establishing potential recycling companies, raising awareness, disseminating information and capacity-building.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Manufacturers**

Improved end-of-life management, product design and consumer participation can all contribute to minimizing adverse environmental impacts of mobile phones. Manufacturers of these products have already committed themselves to contributing to meeting this challenge, and their practical efforts to date require acknowledgement.

Manufacturers have made significant progress over the past 15 years in redesigning mobile phones that are more environmentally conscious. Their voluntary efforts have resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of materials used in mobile phones, the use of more environmentally friendly materials, more energy-efficient chargers, and batteries that are also smaller, made of more environmentally conscious

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<sup>2</sup> Mobile phone manufacturers committed themselves to consider the following six bullet points under the 12 December 2002 Declaration, "Sustainable Partnership on the Environmentally Sound Management of End-of-Life Mobile Phones".

materials and much more efficient in their use of resources. (For example, the average weight of a mobile phone has reduced from over 0.5 kg to less than 0.1kg, cadmium has been eliminated from batteries, chargers use a tenth of the energy and phones can run 10 times longer between recharging).

In general, the further commitment of manufacturers to the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative reflects their company commitments to continuous improvement, and their actions under the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative will build upon this responsible track record.

The challenge arises primarily not from any lack of responsible effort from manufacturers but from the popularity of the product, its extremely rapid growth across the globe, and from the perceived and real obsolescence of mobile phone models. The popularity of the product is reflected in the growth in the global market, from 16 million subscribers in 1991 to more than 1 billion mobile phones today. In 2002 alone, almost 400 million new mobile phones were manufactured. Worldwide, the average life of the mobile phone in the hands of the first user is about 1.5 years; in poorer countries where cost is a greater factor, it is 2.5 years; in more developed countries, it can be as low as 1 year.

Appropriate refurbishing can and does extend the usable life of the mobile phone considerably and delays the end of life for large numbers of mobile phones for up to seven years. However, the introduction of 400 million-plus new mobile phones per year to the existing stockpile is an indication of the size of the challenge to be addressed.

#### **Other stakeholders**

The stakeholder set needed to address this challenge includes but also extends beyond manufacturers. It includes governments (at international, national, provincial and municipal levels), environmental non-government organizations, recyclers, network providers/operators and consumers.

Decision VI/31 explicitly anticipates that other stakeholders (in particular, other United Nations bodies, network providers, operators and recyclers) will be invited where appropriate by the Mobile Phone Working Group to participate actively in its work, and are critical for success. Discussion to date has centred on the timing and nature of such involvement and the balance to be struck between ensuring the Mobile Phone Working Group is comprehensive in membership without being so large as to be unwieldy.

The prevailing view appears to be that it would be useful to build momentum at a manageable pace and focus input from sectors outside the initial membership on specific projects and/or within subgroups.

A similar initiative supported by UNEP is the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) formed in June 2001 by a number of telecommunication network operators and equipment providers. Both GeSI and the GSM Association (representing network operators<sup>3</sup>) are invited observers to the Mobile Phone Working Group to ensure full advantage is taken of any potential synergies.

#### **RESOURCES**

All stakeholders currently involved in this Initiative have demonstrated a commitment. Parties and Signatories to the Convention, together with manufacturers and representatives of the network providers, have spent much time agreeing the deliverables of this programme. Manufacturers estimate that since June 2002 they have dedicated resources equivalent to almost US\$ 270,000 to the development of the Initiative.

The key element of this Initiative involves the provision of past experience and knowledge of the parameters that make an effective end-of-life solution to the management of used mobile phones. Manufacturers, network operators and those involved in the recycling and refurbishment of used mobile phones bring this

<sup>3</sup> The GSM Association comprises over 680 second- and third-generation wireless network operators. The Association's members provide digital wireless services to over 825 million customers in 193 countries (as at end February 2003).

**Comment [N1]:** ITU source = [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at\\_glance/KeyTelecom99.html](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at_glance/KeyTelecom99.html)

**Comment [N2]:** Source = <http://www.strategyanalytics.com/cgi-bin/greports.cgi?rid=142002120251>

**Comment [N3]:** Source = INFORM = <http://www.informinc.org/wirelesswaste.php>

experience to the Partnership. All participants have confirmed that the intellectual input, which is the key resource that underpins the success of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, will be freely available for the duration of the partnership.

However, funds will be needed to disseminate outcomes and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and know-how to countries that are considering launching collection and recovery schemes and looking for the best available practices. The implementation of the project proposals represents a set of logical, interrelated and mutually supportive activities that can be carried out in a phased manner.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The elements of the Work Programme have been developed bearing in mind the need to:

- Address the six thematic areas detailed above;
- Consider geographic/regional need and economic interest and the best environmental return for Convention resources;
- Build upon voluntary work by stakeholders to date;
- Build upon existing resource strengths such as the Basel Convention Regional Centres;
- Complement the work of like initiatives such as the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI).

Finally, given that the entire life-cycle management of mobile phones is a complex issue involving many players, a stepwise approach for this partnership project has been suggested in the draft Work Programme, involving different stakeholders at different stages.

The following categories of work are proposed for consideration for adoption by the Open-ended Working Group. As a dynamic programme, it is expected that specific projects will vary over time, within and between the four categories. Project profiles, to be elaborated by project groups, are in Attachment C of document UNEP/CHW/OEWG/1/INF/17.

#### **1. Reuse of used mobile phones**

- Initiatives (regulatory, voluntary, economic) for reused phones that re-enter the market to ensure high quality and standards that satisfy the product requirements of manufacturers, network providers and operators alike.

Project 1.1 Development of guidelines for refurbishment and for refurbished mobile phones to re-enter the market

#### **2. Collection and transboundary movement of used mobile phones**

- Advice on programmes, legislation and/or regulations for an effective collection of end-of-life mobile phones.
- Rules that govern transboundary movements of mobile phones to be reused or recycled.

Project 2.1 Best practice guidelines for collection schemes and transboundary movement of used phones

Project 2.2 Trial of implementation of collection and treatment scheme

#### **3. Recovery and recycling of end-of-life mobile phones**

- Guidance on environmentally sound practices for recycling and recovery.

Project 3.1 Identification of existing best environmentally sound practices for recovery and recycling of mobile phones

#### **4. Awareness-raising and training**

- Elaboration of the role of the Basel Convention Regional Centres to assist countries in developing legislation, establishing potential recycling companies, raising awareness, disseminating information and capacity-building.

##### Project 4.1 Awareness-raising and training

- Design and use
- Collection
- Reuse
- Recycling

A priority task for project groups will be to elaborate project profiles and develop firm cost estimates.