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BASEL CONVENTION

Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Tenth meeting
Cartagena, Colombia, 17–21 October 2011
Item 3 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: capacity-building

Cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union

Note by the Secretariat

The annex to the present note contains an information note submitted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) entitled "Input document to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention". It has not been formally edited by the Secretariat and is presented as received.

* UNEP/CHW.10/1.

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

INPUT DOCUMENT TO THE 10TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE BASEL CONVENTION

Cartagena Colombia, October 17-21, 2011

As the Specialized Agency of the United Nations mandated to ensure Information and Communication Technologies connectivity across the globe, and to ensure safety for human life through ICTs, ITU is contributing to the successful implementation of international treaties and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.

In accordance with Article 10 of the Basel Convention on International Cooperation, ITU is ready to support countries to ensure successful cooperation in "… developing the technical capacity… especially those which may need and request technical assistance in this area".

ITU and UNEP are finalizing a Cooperation Agreement aimed at ensuring efficient use of resources to achieve common goals.

The following are some of the key activities currently being undertaken by ITU which could contribute to the ongoing work on Basel Convention:

1. ***E-waste Management and Disposal Projects***

2. ***Capacity Building:*** ITU regularly build capacity of countries through face - to - face symposia in this area. For instance, ITU organized the *Sixth Symposium on ICTs, the Environment and Climate Change* on 7-8 July in Ghana, which concluded with a Call to Action addressing the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The main focus of the event was to move forward the agenda on using ICTs to monitor climate change, mitigate and adapt to its effects and identify future requirements for ITU's related work including standardization of ICT equipment and networks as well as development activities[1]. The outcome document calls for the adoption of a 'closed loop' approach to manufacturing and recycling which will reduce the need to extract and process raw materials.

3. ***Establishment of an Enabling Environment:*** A positive regulatory and legal environment is important particularly for the deployment of effective use of ICTs in environmental protection. The Global Symposium of Regulators, GSR 2011, organized by BDT, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies and the Communications Regulatory Commission of Colombia (CRC), focused on smart regulatory measures regulators can take to achieve broadband for all, foster innovation, and address the complexities and challenges of the broadband ecosystem. It also raised the issue of e-waste and presented a Discussion Paper on e-waste and recycling, which proposed to:

    - Raise awareness on the dangers of e-*waste;*
    - Encourage the consideration of e-waste management in the design of ICT policy;
    - Create an urgency for the adoption of strategic policy and regulatory approaches that are sensitive to local context;

- Encourage a move to more concerted cooperation in handling e-waste at the regional and international level.

4. ***Climate Monitoring and Mitigation****:* ITU-R SG7 adopted the new recommendation "*Use of remote sensing systems in the study of climate change and the effects thereof*" (ITU-R RS.1883). This Recommendation encompasses guidelines on the provision of satellite-provided remote sensing data for studying climate change. ITU-R SG7 also published the new ITU-R Report RS. 2178 "*The essential role and global importance of radio spectrum use for Earth observations and for related applications.* ITU-R SG5 developed the new ITU-R Recommendation M.1874 "*Technical and operational characteristics of oceanographic radars operating in sub-bands within the frequency range 3-50 MHz*". ITU-D SG2 is also working on Question 22/2 "Utilization of ICT for disaster management, resources, and active and passive space-based sensing systems as they apply to disaster and emergency relief situations".

   On the mitigation field ITU has continued working on a commonly agreed standard methodologies to measure the life cycle impact of ICTs in containing GHG emissions (estimated to be around 2 to 2.5 per cent of the total of GHG emissions) in the ICT sector as well as the reduction of the emissions from other sectors. In this regard two New Recommendations have been recently approved:

   - ***ITU-T L.1000*** " *Universal power adapter and charger solution for mobile terminals and other ICT devices*". This Recommendation provides high level requirements for a universal power adapter and charger solution that will reduce the number of power adapters and chargers to be produced and recycled by widening their application to more devices and increasing their lifetime. The solution also aims to reduce the energy consumption. The longer life cycle and possibility of avoiding device duplication reduces the demand on raw materials and waste. The power adapter and charger solution is designed to serve the great majority of mobile terminals, or other ICT device[1.]

   - ***ITU-T L.1400***: "*Overview and general principles of methodologies for assessing the environmental impact of ICT*". This Recommendation presents the general principles on how to assess the environmental impact of ICT and outlines the different methodologies that are being developed to assess the environmental impact of *(a) ICT goods, networks, and services; (b) ICT projects; (c) ICT in organizations; (d) ICT in cities; and (e) ICT in countries or group of countries.*

   - ***New questions for ITU study groups.*** ITU has added two new Study Group questions to further advance on the use of ICTs in climate change adaptation. ITU-T SG-5 Question 21/5 "*Environmental protection and Recycling of ICT equipment/facilities"* and Question 23/5 "*Using ICTs to enable countries to adapt to climate change*". ITU-D SG1 has added

[1] *By some estimates, the new UCS standard can lead to a 50% reduction in standby energy consumption, elimination of up to 82,000 tonnes of redundant chargers, and a subsequent reduction of 13.6 million tonnes in GHG emissions each year.*

Question 24/1 "*Strategies and policies for the proper disposal or reuse of telecommunications/ICT waste material*" and Question 24/2 "*Question on ICT and Climate Change"*.

5. ***Green Technologies:*** ITU launched the first *Green ICT Applications Challenge* to find the best and most innovative Concept Paper for an ICT application that would help combat climate change. The application **"*Smart Recycling*"**, which was awarded winner, aims to help mobile users locate recycling and garbage bins within their area, and provide advice generally on recycling. The application will benefit citizens, government recycling programs and private recycling companies by creating a more sustainable and resource-efficient future through community engagement and eco-design.

   - ***International Agreement on 'green ICT' methodology***: Under this Agreement, ITU will address conflict minerals and environmentally-friendly batteries and will produce a report on due diligence guidelines for conflict minerals supply, and will also study the benefits and disadvantages of the standardization of batteries for mobile terminals and other ICT devices, looking at energy efficiency over the battery life cycle, eco-design information, battery lifetime and exchangeability, safety and environmental protection, recycling and reuse. This could lead to a reduction of harmful materials used in batteries and an increased lifespan of ICT products.

6. ***Collaboration with other UN agencies****:* ITU has continued to strengthen its cooperation with other UN Agencies, as well as with other international and national organizations involved in preventing further climate change. Examples of this include collaboration with UNEP and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, WMO, UNU, UNIDO, UNESCO, on issues related with e-waste.

7. ***Key areas of Cooperation identified with UNEP and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention.***

   a. UNEP/SBC may be invited to participate in the work of ITU Study Groups on Environment and Climate Change, in accordance with ITU rules and practices, to provide input on the management of used and end-of-life computing equipment and hazardous waste;

   b. ITU may be invited to participate in the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, in accordance with UNEP/SBC rules and practices, to provide input relative to the environment and ICT sector*;*

   c. The Parties (ITU and UNEP/SBC) will cooperate in the preparation and organization of sessions on the environment and management of electronic waste at the WSIS Forum;

   d. The Parties will cooperate in the development, dissemination and evaluation of a worldwide survey on electronic waste development, in collaboration with the United Nations University and others;

   e. UNEP/SBC may be invited to participate in the development of ITU's sustainability standards for the ICT sector, in accordance with ITU rules and practices;

f. The Parties will cooperate in the development of technical assistance projects in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the field of electrical and electronic waste.