

INITIATIVE FOR A SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF END-OF-LIFE MOBILE PHONES

18.11.2002

Abstract:

Mobile phone partnership initiative

Mr. Philippe Roch, State Secretary, Director of Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, Switzerland, in his capacity as President of COP-5 of the Basel Convention, has launched an initiative to set up a pilot project on partnership with industry on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones. The initiative is supported by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC).

This initiative is a result of numerous discussions on the possibility of entering into sustainable partnership with industry to advance the objectives of the Basel Convention and the Basel Declaration on environmentally sound management. This initiative could lead to other projects involving the environmentally sound management of end-of-life products which become wastes.

The mobile phone community was selected for this initiative in view of the facts that

- The mobile phones represent a electronic technology which many people can relate to;
- The technology has a global application;
- Recently, the recovery of such waste electronic and electrical equipment has become a highly topical issue,
- The number of manufacturers involved in the associated global production is relatively limited.

Because the number of manufacturers is manageable, as a first step in this initiative the President invited major mobile phone manufacturers to meet for consultation in order to define the scope of co-operation in the initiative. Later, other appropriate stakeholders such as network providers who are more numerous would be invited into the dialogue.

Goal of the initiative

The overall goal of the initiative is to establish a partnership with mobile phone manufacturers, network providers and other life cycle stakeholders on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones. It would be the first concrete partnership with industrial companies in the framework of the Basel Convention. It is proposed that within such a partnership work in fields of common interest in the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones would be done in close co-operation between the Basel Convention and key stakeholders of the mobile community; such as principal network providers, manufacturers and recyclers. The Secretariat of the Basel Convention with the support of manufacturers would be responsible for bringing the other appropriate stakeholders together.

Proposed course of action

- a. Discussions to continue between the mobile phone manufacturers, Switzerland and the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to elaborate the starting basis for a possible partnership.
- b. Once approvals obtained the mobile phone manufacturers would make an announcement at COP-6 expressing their wish and willingness to enter into a partnership on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones with the Basel Convention, subject to / pending the support of other appropriate stakeholders.
- c. If the initiative is supported (Parties and Signatories to the Convention and other stakeholders) such an announcement could be endorsed in a Decision of COP-6. Switzerland will prepare a draft of such a Decision. This Decision could contain the following main draft elements:
 - Parties welcome the initiative and the announcement of the Mobile Phone Manufacturers expressing their wish and willingness to enter into a partnership on the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones with the Basel Convention.
 - Parties give the Secretariat of the Basel Convention a mandate to establish a small Contact Group to develop a concrete working programme for the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones, taking into account the fields of common interest for co-operative work identified in the announcement of the mobile phone manufacturers, and acknowledge the need for support by representatives of other appropriate stakeholders.
 - Parties mandate the Secretariat of the Basel Convention in cooperation with the Contact Group to start first projects for the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones within funds available and ask the Secretariat of the Basel Convention/Contact Group to regularly report to a suitable subsidiary body of the Basel Convention and finally to report to COP-7 on the progress made.

Discussions up to date

There were two meetings that took place in Geneva, first one on 23 September 2002 (chaired by Mr. Philippe Roch with support of the SBC) and the second one on 31 October 2002 (chaired by Mr. Marco Buletti¹ with support of the SBC). In addition a telephone conference was held on 18 October 2002 (chaired by Mr. Marco Buletti).

The following 8 manufacturing companies attended the meetings and telephone conference: Alcatel (23.9.02), LG, Matsushita (Panasonic), Motorola, Nokia, Samsung, Siemens, Sony Ericsson. Philips could not participate in the meetings, but actively contributed to the discussions through written and verbal comments on draft documents. UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Environment (Paris) and, with observer status, the GSM-Association (31.10.02) also attended the face-to-face meetings.

First meeting on 23 September 2002

Mr. Philippe Roch, State Secretary, Switzerland gave a brief outline of the expectations for this initiative and stressing the importance of investigating experiences of mobile phone manufacturers in their field and in different countries.

Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention brought to the attention of the meeting that this initiative should be viewed in the context of the Basel Declaration, adopted by COP-5, committing the Parties to the

¹ Marco Buletti, Swiss Agency for the Environment Forests and Landscape

environmentally sound management of wastes, including cleaner production and the desirability of establishing partnership with industry.

The manufacturers of mobile phones provided information on the on-going initiatives to promote the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones. In presenting the information, manufacturers unanimously emphasized that there are other important players such as network operators, and other stakeholders whose cooperation and leadership as appropriate is essential in effectively addressing the life-cycle management of mobile phones. Nevertheless, it was recognized that the manufacturers of mobile phones have an important role to play in the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones.

In general, there was support to this initiative and commitment on the part of the manufacturers to work with the President and the Secretariat on the proposed partnership.

The manufacturers agreed to share information on their experience and expressed their interest in promoting the transfer of know-how and in ensuring consistency in approach to the life-cycle management of mobile phones.

Views were exchanged on how to approach this matter and the steps to be taken to make such a partnership work. After this discussion some preliminary and general ideas were identified that could be included in an Announcement of the mobile phone manufacturers that would be made at COP-6.

Telephone conference on 18 October 2002

At this **telephone conference** comments provided by the mobile phone manufacturers on the initiative and elements for a possible future announcement or declaration were further discussed. The conference call was primarily used to clarify further the scope of the initiative for a mobile phone partnership. Progress was made in capturing better common fields of interest for a possible partnership. Additional discussions took place about necessary future identification and involvement of other stakeholders to this initiative. Support of network providers was recognized and it was agreed that representatives of the network providers to be invited into future dialogue.

Second meeting on 31 October 2002

The participants focused their efforts to describe and discuss more concretely the common fields identified in the first meeting and the teleconference. Basing on the elements of common interests identified in the former discussions and new input from the mobile phone manufacturers a draft paper was elaborated for a possible announcement of the mobile phone manufacturers. Such an announcement would also include main elements of interest of the mobile phone manufacturers concerning the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mobile phones as part of co-operation with the Basel Convention. Because some of these main elements may require leadership from stakeholders other than the manufacturers, the initiative referred to in the announcement would be subject to /pending on their support. The Secretariat of the Basel Convention with the support of manufacturers would be responsible for bringing the other appropriate stakeholders together.

It is planned that such an announcement by the mobile phone manufacturers could be made at COP-6 in December 2002. But it was acknowledged that the time available until COP-6 is very

short and the approval by the management of the mobile phone manufacturers will be required. Nevertheless the participants agreed to do their best to seize the momentum offered by the COP-6 conference for such an announcement.

➔ Parties and Signatories to the Basel Convention and other stakeholders, including NGOs are invited to comment on this initiative to the Secretariat of the Basel Convention

Proposed Course of Action: -> see abstract of the initiative.

Report on behalf of:

The Swiss Presidency of the Basel Convention and
Secretariat of the Basel Convention