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**Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention
on the Control of Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Thirteenth meeting**

Geneva, 21–23 February 2023

Item 3 (b) (iii) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters related to the work programme of the
Open-ended Working Group for the biennium
2022–2023: scientific and technical matters: further
consideration of plastic waste**

**Draft of possible further activities that could be conducted
under the Basel Convention in response to developments in
scientific knowledge and environmental information and health
impacts related to plastic waste as a source of land pollution,
marine plastic litter and microplastics**

Note by the Secretariat

As is mentioned in the note by the Secretariat on further consideration of plastic waste (UNEP/CHW/OEWG.13/6), the annex to the present note sets out possible further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention, prepared taking into consideration the comments received from Parties and others in response to paragraph 10 of decision BC-15/15 and the work undertaken in follow-up to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/14. The present note, including its annex, has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/CHW/OEWG.13/1.

Annex

Draft of possible further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention in response to developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information and health impacts related to plastic waste as a source of land pollution, marine plastic litter and microplastics

I. Consideration of possible further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention

1. Recent developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information underscore that the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution represent a serious environmental problem on a global scale.
2. In considering possible further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention, it is worth acknowledging that while a wide range of activities and initiatives addressing plastic waste are being undertaken by numerous stakeholders at all levels, those under the Basel Convention may have a differentiated status as emerging from the implementation of a legally binding treaty.
3. It is important to consider that the mandate given by the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) to the intergovernmental negotiating committee towards the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution provides that the instrument should include provisions to promote cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, while recognizing their respective mandates, avoiding duplication, and promoting complementarity of action. In this context, thanks to the generous financial support from the Government of Norway, the Secretariat has undertaken a study to map the global governance landscape of plastics and associated chemicals, and to identify governance gaps and complementarities with existing multilateral instruments to provide possible considerations for the role of a new plastics instrument in addressing/regulating plastics and associated chemicals.¹
4. It has been noted that several activities are being conducted under the Convention that provide the opportunity to respond to developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information related to plastic waste, such as those undertaken by the working group of the Plastic Waste Partnership,² established by decision BC-14/13. The Partnership is composed of four project groups,³ of which project group 1 (prevention and minimization) and project group 2 (plastic waste collection, recycling and other recovery, including financing and related markets) are well placed to advance work in this area. The project groups are making progress in the implementation of their workplans for the biennium 2022–2023 and a proposed workplan for the biennium 2024–2025,⁴ prepared by the working group at its third meeting held from 23 to 25 November 2022 in Punta del Este, will be considered by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth meeting.⁵
5. Further activities could be conducted within the framework of the Partnership, should this be mandated by the Conference of the Parties. In particular, the Partnership provides an avenue for multistakeholder action for knowledge sharing, exchange of best practices, capacity building and technology transfer related to the prevention, minimisation and environmentally sound management of plastic waste. It may also serve to improve information exchange related to transboundary movements of plastic waste. The Partnership's broad mandate also highlights the need for coordination and collaboration, as appropriate, on activities with other organizations and initiatives to establish synergies and prevent duplication.

¹ <http://www.basel.int/tabid/9378>.

² UNEP/CHW.15/INF/36; <http://www.basel.int/tabid/8410>.

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<http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/PlasticWastePartnership/Projectgroupsandactivities/tabid/8410/Default.aspx>.

⁴ UNEP/CHW/OEWG.13/INF/16.

⁵ UNEP/CHW.16/19/Add.2.

6. The technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes,⁶ currently being updated, would provide guidance on plastic waste minimization and prevention, including leakage into the environment, as well as identification, handling, separation, collection, storage, and disposal. Given their technical nature, it has been noted that the guidelines are opportunistically placed to provide guidance based on new developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information related to plastic waste to minimize leakages into the environment in the waste phase.

II. List of possible further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention

7. Reflecting on recent developments in scientific knowledge and environmental information as well as the resolution on plastic pollution adopted by fifth session of UNEA and taking into account the activities conducted by the Basel Convention, including the Plastic Waste Partnership and by other international and regional entities, further activities could be considered under the Basel Convention, as listed below:

- (a) Information collection, monitoring and reporting:
 - (i) Invite Parties, on a voluntary basis, to transmit the following information:
 - a. Generation and management of plastic waste and the transboundary movement of plastic waste not subject to the prior informed consent procedure, including statistical information thereof collected through national plastic waste inventory;
 - b. Status of implementation of the plastic waste amendments including through national legislation, action plans and other measures,⁷ including in support of the implementation of the work programme of the Committee administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance;⁸
 - (ii) Request the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to support Parties:
 - a. To quantify or estimate the quantities of plastic waste generated, managed, exported and imported, recycled and disposed of, including through the development of plastic waste inventories and national action plans addressing minimization, environmentally sound management and control of transboundary movements of plastic waste;
 - b. To quantify or estimate the quantities of plastic waste leaked into the environment and to identify priority areas for reducing such leakage;
- (b) Support for the implementation of the Basel Convention provisions relevant to plastic waste:
 - (i) Establish an expert group to develop, subject to the availability of resources and taking into account the practical manuals and guidance in the ESM Toolkit,⁹ practical guidance for the implementation of the Basel Convention provisions relevant to plastic waste on the following:
 - a. Prevention and minimization of plastic waste and its hazardous constituents;
 - b. Environmentally sound management of specific waste streams where plastic is relevant;
 - c. Technologies for the recycling of plastic waste;
 - d. Transboundary movements of plastic waste, including information on illegal traffic;

⁶ UNEP/CHW/OEWG.13/INF/7.

⁷ Decision BC-14/12.

⁸ See activity 3 (f) of the work programme for 2022–2023 and activity 3 of the proposed work programme for 2024–2025 (document UNEP/CHW.16/13).

⁹ <http://www.basel.int/tabid/5839/Default.aspx>.

- e. Financing the environmentally sound management of plastic waste, e.g. through extended producer responsibility;
 - (ii) Invite the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres and the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and the transfer of technology to continue their activities relevant to addressing plastic pollution.
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