



**Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention
on the Control of Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Thirteenth meeting**

Geneva, 24 April–5 May 2017

Item 4 (b) (iii) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters related to the implementation of the
Convention: scientific and technical matters:
classification and hazard characterization of wastes**

**Classification and hazard characterization of wastes: review of
cooperation with the World Customs Organization and its
Harmonized System Committee**

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its decision BC-10/10, on the review of cooperation with the World Customs Organization and its Harmonized System Committee, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal requested the Secretariat to pursue its cooperation with the secretariat of the World Customs Organization and the Organization's Harmonized System Committee, Harmonized System Review Subcommittee and Scientific Subcommittee.

2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties to submit to the Secretariat lists of wastes covered under the Basel Convention for consideration by the Harmonized System Committee and requested the Secretariat to continue to move forward, under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group, with the issue of identifying the wastes covered by the Basel Convention in the World Customs Organization Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System ("Harmonized System"). The Secretariat was also requested to report regularly to the Open-ended Working Group and the Conference of the Parties on progress.

3. At the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties the Secretariat reported on progress in its cooperation with the World Customs Organization. The Conference of the Parties took note of the information presented.¹

II. Implementation

4. As reported to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting,² the Harmonized System Review Subcommittee at its forty-sixth session, held in Brussels in November 2013, considered a

* UNEP/CHW.13/1.

¹ UNEP/CHW.12/27, paras. 108–110.

² UNEP/CHW.12/7.

proposal by the Secretariat for amending the Harmonized System that had been prepared on the basis of lists of wastes submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Peru pursuant to decision BC-10/10.³ The Subcommittee decided that, owing to the complexity and magnitude of the proposal, it would continue to work on it during the sixth review cycle of the Harmonized System, which runs from November 2014 to June 2019.

5. The Subcommittee considered possible ways of amending the Harmonized System in response to the proposal at its forty-seventh to fiftieth sessions, held between November 2014 and May 2016. At its forty-eighth session, the Subcommittee agreed to work on developing separate definitions, headings or subheadings for wastes under specific chapters of the Harmonized System. The Subcommittee also agreed that it would hold further discussions focused on how to amend the Harmonized System to allow for the classification of electrical and electronic wastes and, after considering a possible amendment, decide whether and how the discussions could be extended to other chapters and categories of waste. At its fiftieth session, the Subcommittee considered a proposal for such an amendment to the Harmonized System submitted by Australia and agreed to use it as a basis for its further work. To that end, the Subcommittee requested the secretariat of the World Customs Organization to prepare for consideration at its fifty-first meeting, to be held from 12 to 16 December 2016, a working document that incorporated comments received from delegates on the Australian proposal.

6. At the tenth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group a number of representatives, while expressing support for the ongoing work, requested further information on the status of the deliberations of the World Customs Organization on the proposal for amendments to the Harmonized System in respect of certain categories of wastes submitted by the Secretariat, in particular with regard to the classification of electrical and electronic waste.⁴ Following its consideration of the matter, the Open-ended Working Group adopted decision OEWG-10/12, by which it requested the Secretariat to prepare for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting a report outlining the status of the work of the World Customs Organization on the Harmonized System related to the Basel Convention, including a list of all relevant proposals for new and revised Harmonized System entries under consideration by the World Customs Organization, including for waste end-of-life vehicles, electrical and electronic waste and waste pneumatic tyres.

7. At the time of the drafting of the present note, pursuant to decision OEWG-10/12 the Secretariat was in the process of engaging a consultant to prepare a report on the status of the work of the World Customs Organization on the Harmonized System related to the Basel Convention. That report is set out in the annex to document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/19.

III. Proposed action

8. The Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Takes note* of the report on the status of work of the World Customs Organization on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System related to the Basel Convention;⁵
2. *Requests* the Secretariat:
 - (a) To continue, under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group, its cooperation with the Harmonized System Committee and relevant subcommittees of the World Customs Organization in order to facilitate the inclusion of wastes covered by the Basel Convention in the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System;
 - (b) To report on progress to the Open-ended Working Group at its eleventh meeting and the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting.

³ UNEP/CHW.11/9, annex.

⁴ UNEP/CHW/OEWG.10/13, paras. 102–108.

⁵ UNEP/CHW.13/INF/19.