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

Ninth meeting

Bali, 23–27 June 2008

Item 7 (d) of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of the decisions adopted by
the Conference of the Parties at its eight meeting:
Partnership Programme**

Basel NGO Forum Partnership

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its decision VI/32, the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties welcomed further the increased participation of industry organizations, as well as environmental and development non-governmental organizations in concrete project activities for the environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes. This decision further affirmed that the increased participation of such organizations is necessary to achieve the aims of the Basel Convention and encouraged environmental and development non-governmental organizations to get involved in concrete at the regional and national levels in support of the aims of the Basel Convention. Decision VI/32 invited environmental and development non-governmental organizations to support environmentally sound management projects.

2. In its decision VII/3, the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties further encouraged broader civil society, including environmental non-governmental organizations, to provide technical and financial support for the Basel Convention Partnership Programme and become involved in specific activities at the regional, national and international levels. Decision VIII/5 called on Parties to facilitate the broader participation of civil society, including environmental non-governmental organizations, in the provision of technical and financial support for the Basel Convention Partnership Programme and to become involved in specific activities at the regional, national and international levels.

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3. Experience indicates that the engagement of non-governmental organizations facilitates the implementation of the convention through their advocacy and activities at the community, national, regional and international level. Presently, no organised body exists which brings together the advice and council of NGOs to the Parties or the Secretariat in its work.
4. As a way to address this issue, a proposed concept of creating an independent Basel NGO Forum is presented in this information note, as a means to engage non-governmental organizations from all sectors (e.g. health, environment, child labour, to human rights).
5. Parties are requested to review the concept proposed and provide comments and input at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the proposal to create such a Forum.

II. Background

6. Environmentally sound management as a strategic goal necessitates a collective responsibility of all stakeholders – governments, civil society, environmental and non-governmental organisations and industry. Governments recognise the value and importance of participation by civil society in environmental management and are responding to the public desire to be included in the decision-making processes on matters that affect them.
7. NGOs continue to play a primary role in advocacy and in working with the public and local communities to raise awareness about issues or requirements with respect to the Convention and in improving the recycling and safe disposal of end-of-life products through communication and local action (such as providing information on what needs to be done to sort e-waste waste, or how to take back an obsolete products to a depot, etc). Ministers recognized the significance of such input and adopted the [1999 Basel Ministerial Declaration](#) emphasizing the vital importance of Public- Private Partnerships. In 2002, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the [Basel Convention Partnership Programme](#) and in 2004, Ministers issued a statement on partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge. The Conference of the Parties tasked the Secretariat with carrying out a work programme on public-private partnerships in cooperation with all relevant and interested parties.
8. While NGOs have been active in the context of the Basel Convention and in the Partnership Programme, there is no existing mechanism or body that exists from which Parties or the Partnership Programme can identify as interested partners or to obtain systematic input to initiatives or programmes the wide-range of NGOs. Nor is there an organised body, which brings together the advice and council of the NGO communities to the Parties or Secretariat in its work.

III. UNEP NGO Workshop - 2006

9. At the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, an NGO workshop was held in parallel to the Conference of the Parties to learn about the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and discuss how these agreements could be useful for their work. UNEP sponsored about 20 NGO participants who represented well-established environmental, health and community organizations: the largest percentage of participants came from Africa. The POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), the Basel Action Network (BAN), INECE, and UNEP's Regional Office for Africa provided lists of potential NGO representatives.
10. The participating NGOs met during the week of the Conference of the parties to develop a joint statement to be delivered to the Plenary at the end of the week; they were also invited to discuss "next steps" in building NGO support for and use of the conventions. As a result, the concept of creating a UNEP-facilitated club or network of NGOs in the chemicals and wastes area was explored together with joint fund-raising activities.
11. Further work has been completed through the Information Unit of the Basel Convention A project is ongoing with INECE (International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement). The first phase has been completed, namely the preparation by INECE, in consultation with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention of a project concept including the following points:
 - (a) Promotional campaign that engages existing and prospective SBC partners, and enhances the development of the Basel Convention Regional Centres;
 - (b) Strategy to develop and market stories of success through multiple media platforms;
 - (c) Web strategy for the Basel Convention Regional Centers and SBC (consistent branding while maintaining individuality) to improve reach and impact;

- (d) Strategy for Web-based technical assistance, and other mechanisms, to foster national implementation of the Basel Convention; and
 - (e) Donor education campaign that includes the use of film and other media.
12. The second phase of the project will focus on the implementation of the five points.

IV. Why Create an NGO Forum

13. The Basel Convention Partnership Programme is the pillar of the Basel Convention which engages non-governmental organisations (NGOs) directly. Partnerships offer a unique setting for dialog and practical interaction between all stakeholders on a specific topic of concern. To this end, a Forum could interact directly with the Partnership programme and provide input to other aspects of convention work. It would provide a body on which Parties and programmes under the Convention could call on for advice and assistance, as appropriate.

14. When the Basel Convention came into force in 1992, a partnership approach was seldom adopted, which lead to difficulties in making progress on environmentally sound management of wastes and confrontations between different stakeholders involved. The establishment of a Basel NGO Forum could help ensure that a more diverse and involved participation of non-governmental environment and development organisations. Fundraising for activities and to cover participation costs could be more effectively undertaken through an established body, than individually. This is particularly important for local or national and regionally-based NGOs.

15. The creation of an NGO Forum could be a way to expand public participation through broader NGO involvement and input at the international, national and local leveling in order to:

- (a) enhance and strengthen the knowledge and participation of civil society in environmental management and to promote awareness;
- (b) share experiences and best practices with respect to public involvement in environmental decision-making;
- (c) facilitate transparency and access to current information on non-governmental and governmental public participation initiatives; and
- (d) provide support and advance actions by Parties that contribute to the Millennium Development Goals.

16. The development of an independent NGO Forum could bring different NGO partners together for strategic thinking, by identifying possible options for the future and in designing workable solutions that would help ensure the protection of human health, and the environment. It could also provide a place for NGOs to share experience, knowledge and discuss activities, as well as coordinate and collaborate efforts that would be required to move ahead in designing tools to help promote, facilitate or enhance activities that help Parties to implement the Convention.

17. The envisaged Basel Business Forum (see UNEP/CHW.9/INF/17) and the Basel NGO Forum would have the opportunity to coordinate and share information by meeting in parallel to the intersessional meetings of the organs of the Convention and during the Conference of the Parties.

V. Moving forward

18. In order to launch a process that is manageable it is proposed to form an independent Board or interim group of interested Parties to help shepherd the organization. This Board or group would lead the work and the gradual build up of the forum. It could organise the format of the work according to the substantial issues requiring pressing attention by the public, industry, businesses and/or governments. Regular linkages of this forum with the anticipated Bali Business forum should be considered.

19. The outcome of the work of the forum could be disseminated through and be subject to training courses organised by the network of the Basel Convention regional centres. This could be an important way of unfolding the work of the global forum at the regional level.

20. A structure whereby NGOs could provide input into the various activities of the Convention in a systematic and organized fashion would be of benefit to Parties, signatories and observers, as it could enrich discussions at intergovernmental level.