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**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 (d) (ii) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters related to the implementation of the  
Convention: technical assistance: Basel Convention  
regional and coordinating centres**

## **Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. In paragraph 10 of its decision BC-12/10, on Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal requested the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres to submit to the Secretariat:

(a) Their business plans for the period 1 January 2016–31 December 2019 by 30 September 2015;

(b) Their activity reports for the period 1 January 2015–31 December 2016 by 31 December 2016.

2. In paragraph 11 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat, among others things:

(a) To prepare a report on the activities of the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, including an assessment of how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network of centres;

(b) To consider possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating regional centres adopted by the Conference of the Parties,<sup>1</sup> taking into account lessons learned, the views of the centres and the views of Parties.

3. In paragraph 16 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited all regional and coordinating centres undertaking activities on mercury-related issues under the Convention to provide information on those activities to the Secretariat, which was requested to forward it to the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury for possible consideration by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury at its seventh session.

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\* UNEP/CHW.13/1.

<sup>1</sup> Decision BC-11/13, annex II.

4. In paragraph 17 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat, among other things, to continue to organize meetings every two years between the directors of regional centres and the Secretariat.

## **II. Implementation**

### **A. Business plans and activity reports of the regional centres**

5. As at 31 December 2016, 11 out of the 14 regional and coordinating centres had submitted their business plans for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2019 to the Secretariat.<sup>2</sup>

6. As at 23 January 2017, nine regional and coordinating centres had submitted their activity reports for the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016.<sup>3</sup>

7. A report prepared by the Secretariat on the activities of the regional centres, including an assessment of how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network of centres, is set out in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26.

### **B. Possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating regional centres**

8. On 20 April 2016 the Secretariat sent a letter to the regional centres and to all Parties inviting their views on possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating the centres.<sup>4</sup> As at 13 July 2016, the Secretariat had received views from the Governments of Colombia and Honduras and from the European Union and its member States.<sup>5</sup>

9. Taking into account the views received and based on the experience gained from the previous two evaluations, undertaken in 2013 and 2015, the Secretariat recommends that at this time no adjustments to the methodology for evaluating regional centres are needed because the methodology in its current form strikes an acceptable balance between the accuracy of the evaluation results obtained and the resources expended to collect the information needed to achieve those results.

### **C. Activities to facilitate the work of the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centres<sup>6</sup>**

#### **1. Online and other meetings**

10. Between January 2015 and December 2016, the Secretariat organized a total of 23 online meetings and webinars to support the work of the regional centres. Their objectives were to prepare for the 2017 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel and Stockholm conventions; to prepare for the joint meeting of regional centres in 2015 and 2016; to explore possibilities for advancing the United Nations Industrial Development Organization-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Network for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production; and to identify synergistic activities with the chemicals and waste subprogramme coordinators located in UNEP regional offices. The Secretariat also provided support to four of the regional centres in the use of a webinar platform for the implementation of certain activities.

11. Two annual joint meetings of the directors of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions were held in Geneva, one from 5 to 8 October 2015 and one from 31 October to 2 November 2016, with the objective of enhancing the performance of regional centres and fostering regional cooperation and collaboration among them. Reports of both meetings are available on the Basel Convention website.<sup>7</sup>

12. Furthermore, the Secretariat participated in seven meetings of the Steering Committee of the Basel Convention regional centres as an ex-officio member and in fourteen activities organized by the regional centres. Further information on activities carried out by regional centres is provided in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/BusinessPlans/tabid/2336/Default.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/ActivityReports/tabid/2992/Default.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> The methodology is set out in annex II to decision BC-11/13.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/PerformanceEvaluationReports/tabid/4465/Default.aspx>.

<sup>6</sup> The activities described in the present section are undertaken in accordance with joint activity 19 of the 2016–2017 programme of work, on coordination of and support to the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm conventions and coordination and cooperation between the centres.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://synergies.pops.int/Default.aspx?tabid=4624> (2015 meeting) and <http://synergies.pops.int/Default.aspx?tabid=5281> (2016 meeting).

13. On 10 December 2015, the Secretariat organized a meeting of the representatives of the permanent missions located in Geneva of the countries that host the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centres to discuss, among other things, ways to facilitate the activities of those centres and to enhance their national and regional visibility. One outcome of the meeting was agreement that representatives of the permanent missions would be invited to participate as observers in the annual meetings of regional centres.

14. The Secretariat has continued to carry out technical assistance activities through regional centres, thanks to generous financial support provided by the European Union and the Governments of Germany, Norway and Switzerland in 2015 and 2016. A report on capacity-building and training activities undertaken and planned by the Secretariat is set out in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/34-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/24-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/22.

15. The report on the review of the synergies arrangements (UNEP/CHW.13/INF/43-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/29-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/46) presents a number of findings relevant to regional centres, technical assistance and capacity-building. Among other things, the report recommends that the Secretariat work with each regional centre to produce a gap analysis and action plan to ensure that the centre is “appropriately resourced and skilled” to fulfil its role in the delivery of technical assistance. The Secretariat will take this recommendation into account, subject to availability of resources, when undertaking activities to facilitate the work of the centres.

## 2. Framework agreements

16. The Secretariat on behalf of the Conference of the Parties entered into new framework agreements with the Government of Argentina and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2 November 2016 and 3 December 2016, respectively. In addition, the Secretariat has reiterated to the Government of Slovakia that it is available to enter into a framework agreement in order to formalize the establishment of the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Slovakia, which has been serving Parties from the Central and Eastern European region.

17. In a note verbale dated 9 June 2015, the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva informed the Secretariat that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment had assigned the Russian State Scientific Research Institution “VNII Ekologia” to perform the functions of the Basel Convention Regional Centre in lieu of the autonomous non-profit organization Centre for International Projects (ANO-CIP). In a subsequent note verbale dated 16 March 2016, the Permanent Mission provided the Secretariat with a feasibility study concerning the capacity of VNII Ekologia to serve as a Basel Convention regional centre for the Commonwealth of Independent States.

18. Acknowledging receipt of that information, the Secretariat on 23 July 2015 sought clarification as to whether this development was intended to have any consequences with regard to the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for the Central and Eastern European region, which was also hosted by ANO-CIP, and reminded the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation of the process for establishing a regional centre under the Basel Convention. In a further note verbale dated 24 June 2016, the Permanent Mission informed the Secretariat that the Ministry of Natural Resources was preparing a decree on establishing a national coordination centre for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention, which would be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting in support of its nomination of an entity to serve as the Stockholm Convention regional centre for the Central and Eastern European region.<sup>8</sup>

19. The Secretariat informed the bureaux of both the Basel and the Stockholm conventions of these developments during their meetings on 11 and 12 July and 28 and 29 June 2016, respectively. As at 15 November 2016, no further information had been received from the Russian Federation.

20. On 4 November 2016, the Secretariat received a letter<sup>9</sup> signed by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador on the decision of the Government of El Salvador to terminate the framework agreement between the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the Government of El Salvador concerning the establishment of a Basel Convention regional centre for training and technology transfer for the Central American Subregion, including Mexico. Pursuant to article XIX of the framework agreement, the termination will become effective on 4 May 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The communications received from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva are available from <http://www.basel.int/?tabid=4847>.

<sup>9</sup> Available from <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/TheCentres/BCRCCAM/tabid/4840/Default.aspx>.

## D. Mercury-related activities undertaken by the regional centres

21. The Secretariat sent a letter to the regional centres on 22 December 2015 inviting them to provide information on mercury-related activities undertaken by them. In response to this request ten regional centres provided information, which was subsequently forwarded by the Secretariat to the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention and made available for the seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury.<sup>10</sup>

## III. Proposed action

22. The Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:<sup>11</sup>

### *The Conference of the Parties*

#### 1. *Takes note of:*

(a) The business plans for the period from January 2016 to December 2019<sup>12</sup> and activity reports for the period from January 2015 to December 2016<sup>13</sup> submitted by the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres;

(b) The report on the activities of the regional and subregional centres;<sup>14</sup>

(c) The newly signed framework agreement between the Secretariat on behalf of the Conference of the Parties and both the Government of Argentina<sup>15</sup> and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran;<sup>16</sup>

2. *Requests* the Secretariat to take the steps necessary to effect the signing, pursuant to decision VI/3, of framework agreements with the Government of Slovakia in order to formalize the establishment of the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Slovakia for Central and Eastern European Countries, and the Russian Federation in order to formalize the establishment of the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Commonwealth of Independent States;

3. *Requests* the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres to submit to the Secretariat for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting:

(a) Their business plans for the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023 by 30 September 2019;

(b) Their activity reports for the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 by 31 December 2018;

4. *Requests* the Secretariat to prepare a report on the activities of the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting;

5. *Takes note* of the notification by the Government of El Salvador of the termination the framework agreement on the hosting of the Basel Convention Regional Centre

<sup>10</sup> UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/INF/9.

<sup>11</sup> At its meeting held on 11 and 12 July 2016, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention agreed that for agenda item 4 (d), pertaining to technical assistance, the outcome of the discussion of the three related agenda sub-items would be presented as one omnibus decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on technical assistance. To that end, the Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt the draft decision set out in the present note as part II of the omnibus decision on technical assistance, and the draft decisions set out in documents UNEP/CHW.13/17-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/17-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/17, on technical assistance, and UNEP/CHW.13/12, on the implementation of decision V/32 on the enlargement of the scope of the Trust Fund to Assist Developing and Other Countries in Need of Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Basel Convention, as part I and part III, respectively, of the omnibus decision on technical assistance.

<sup>12</sup> Available at <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/BusinessPlans/tabid/2336/Default.aspx>.

<sup>13</sup> Available at <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/ActivityReports/tabid/2992/Default.aspx>.

<sup>14</sup> see: UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/TheCentres/BCRCArgentina/tabid/4838/Default.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/TheCentres/SCRCIran/tabid/4846/Default.aspx>.

for Training and Technology Transfer for the Central American Subregion, including Mexico, which will become effective on 4 May 2017;<sup>17</sup>

6. *Invites* Parties, observers and other financial institutions in a position to do so to provide financial support to enable Basel Convention regional and subregional centres to implement their workplans with the aim of supporting Parties in their efforts to meet their obligations under the Convention.

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<sup>17</sup> See UNEP/CHW.13/11.