



Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention
International Environment House 1
11-13, chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine – Geneva
Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 917 87 29
Facsimile: +41 22 917 80 98
E-mail: ssc@pops.int
www.pops.int

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Press Advisory

UN chemical body set to review three new chemicals for global action

Stockholm Convention POPs Review Committee will also consider risk management options for flame retardant HBCD

Geneva (Switzerland), 7 October 2011 – The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee, a scientific body to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, will meet next month to review three new chemicals proposed for listing under the global chemicals treaty. The Committee will have before it new proposals for listing *chlorinated naphthalenes*, *hexachlorobutadiene*, and *pentachlorophenol, its salts and esters* in Annexes A, B and/or C to the Stockholm Convention.

Chlorinated naphthalenes (CNs) were used for decades for wood preservation, as additive to paints and engine oils, and for cable insulation and in capacitors. Until the 1970s CNs were high volume chemicals. *Hexachlorobutadiene* was a widely used fumigant used to control pests. *Pentachlorophenol* (PCP) is an organochlorine compound used as a pesticide and a disinfectant. All three chemicals were proposed by the European Union for consideration for listing under the Convention.

The committee will also evaluate possible control measures for the chemical *hexabromocyclododecane* (HBCD), the last step on the road to considering whether to phase the chemical off the global marketplace. HBCD is a flame retardant used mainly in polystyrene. It is also used in textile coatings and in high impact polystyrene for electrical and electronic equipment. HBCD was proposed by Norway for listing under the Convention.

The committee will consider information requirements for the risk profile of *short-chained chlorinated paraffins* (SCCP). SCCP are a group of industrial chemicals used in metalworking, and the formulation and manufacturing of products such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics and metalworking fluids. They are of concern because they are persistent, have been found in remote areas such as the Arctic, and could accumulate to levels that are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms.

The seventh meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC7) will be held from 10 to 14 October 2011 at the Conference Centre Varembe in Geneva (Website: www.cicg.ch; Address: 9-11 Rue de Varembe, Geneva).

A provisional agenda of the meeting is set out in document UNEP/POPS/POPRC.7/1.

Note to Editors

The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) is composed of 31 members appointed by the Conference of the Parties– who are all highly placed scientists representing their regions around the globe. The meetings of the committee are also open to observers from the NGO community, industry, research organizations and governments. Its mandate is to review proposals to add new chemicals to the Stockholm Convention.

A chemical can be listed in the Stockholm Convention as a persistent organic pollutant when it shows that it persists in the environment, bioaccumulates in organisms (increases in concentration up the food chain), travels through the environment over long distances from the region of its release to other regions of the globe, and is toxic to the environment and human health.

Currently, there are twenty-two chemicals listed in the convention including DDT, lindane, PCBs and dioxins and furans and some brominated flame retardants. The objective of the convention, which has 175 Parties as of 19 September 2011, is to restrict and eliminate these chemicals from production and use in order to protect human health and the environment.

Since the beginning of its operations, the POPRC has recommended ten chemicals for listing and all ten were accepted by the Conference of the Parties of the Convention. Amendments incorporating the first nine of these chemicals into the annexes of the Convention entered into force on 26 August 2010. The tenth amendment, which will add endosulfan to Annex A, is pending entry into force in accordance with the procedure provided in Article 22 of the Convention.

Further information is available at www.pops.int and <http://chm.pops.int/tabid/221/Default.aspx> or by emailing ssc@pops.int.

Contact

Kei Ohno, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, Geneva, +41 (22) 917 8201, e-mail: kohno@pops.int

Michael Stanley-Jones, Press Focal Point/Public Information Officer, Joint Services of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, UNEP Geneva, + 41-22-917-8668; (m) + 41-79-730-4495, e-mail: msjones@pic.int or SafePlanet@unep.org