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**Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
Second meeting**

Geneva, 1–5 May 2006

Item 5 (j) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference
of the Parties: effectiveness evaluation**

**Report on informal consultations on the effectiveness evaluation of the
Stockholm Convention, held from 14 to 16 March 2006 in Bangkok,
Thailand****

Note by the Secretariat

Introduction

As referred to in paragraph 7 of document UNEP/POPS/COP.2/21 on effectiveness evaluation, the annex to the present note sets forth the report on informal consultations on the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention that took place from 14 to 16 March 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand. The consultations were organized by the Government of Canada, the Article Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The report was prepared by AMAP and UNEP and has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/POPS/COP.2/1.

** Stockholm Convention, Article 16; Report of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the work of its seventh session (UNEP/POPS/INC.7/28), annex I, decision INC-7/12, Report of the Conference of the Parties (UNEP/POPS/COP.1/31), annex I, decision SC-1/13.

Annex

Canada/AMAP/UNEP Chemicals Informal Consultation on Effectiveness Evaluation of the Stockholm Convention

Bangkok, Thailand, 14–16 March 2006

Meeting summary

UNEP Chemicals and the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, AMAP, and Canada, in collaboration with the Pollution Control Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, jointly organized an informal consultation in Bangkok, 14–16 March 2006 on approaches to the development of a global monitoring plan to provide information for effectiveness evaluation as required by Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on POPs. Twenty countries and four organizations participated in the consultation. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 1. The meeting programme is attached as Appendix 2.

Article 16 states that the COP shall periodically review the effectiveness of the Convention. Such evaluations are to be conducted on the basis of several types of information including information on the environmental presence of the chemicals listed in Annexes A, B, and C.

At the outset of the meeting, it was noted that the full scope of effectiveness evaluation under Article 16 of the Convention includes issues in addition to environmental monitoring, and that some Parties' abilities to implement arrangements that might be agreed by the COP would depend on their ability to access financial and technical support. However, Decision SC-1/13 from COP-1 specifically requested the Secretariat to focus at this stage on the environmental monitoring aspects. Therefore, the invitation to this meeting had reflected this focus.

Accordingly, the meeting concentrated on the Background Scoping Paper, prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with COP Decision SC-1/13, and which is to be provided to the COP-2 as an Annex to UNEP/POPs/COP.2/21. The meeting first reviewed the sections of this paper that provide an interim assessment of existing human and environmental data sets and that examine the applicability of existing monitoring programmes as platforms for a global monitoring plan. Participants drew attention to several activities not reflected in the Background Scoping Paper. However, this additional information did not significantly alter the basic conclusions that existing monitoring programmes dealing with all or most of the listed POPs are generally confined to Australia, Japan, New Zealand, North America, and Western Europe. Regional "data gaps" exist in other areas.

Participants reviewed the three options for arrangements presented in the Background Scoping Paper, noting that they were indicative of a range of possibilities rather than comprising prescriptive and discrete entities.

The meeting then broke into two sub-groups to conduct a more detailed review of possible arrangements to obtain and evaluate monitoring information.

One sub-group (Group 1) took the approach of considering the key strategic attributes of a possible long-term strategic plan for implementing monitoring arrangements which would provide a firm foundation for future evaluations but would still maximize immediate opportunities to provide some information for "data gap" areas in time for the 2008 evaluation. Such strategic attributes were considered to include:

- 1) The ability to build on a network of existing international and national programmes;

- 2) Strategic capacity building to expand the coverage of information;
- 3) Cost effectiveness and sustainability (according to priorities);
- 4) Ability to provide comparable information (international QA/QC);
- 5) Ability to follow a tiered approach involving two media (air and human milk/blood) under tier 1;
- 6) Ideally, comprising all twelve listed POPs;
- 7) Provision of information on regional and global transport.

As a short-term goal, the strategic plan would strive to provide some information from those regions for which information is presently not available (“data gap” areas). The report of Group 1 is attached as Appendix 3.

The other sub-group (Group 2) reviewed the three Background Scoping Paper options on the basis of a list of functional attributes, including accountability, inclusiveness of participation, sustainability, accessibility and comparability of information, availability of adequate technical, financial, and infrastructure to support implementation of the arrangements, and the degree of confidence that an option could assist the COP in its evaluation of effectiveness.

The sub-group felt strongly that arrangements should seek to provide the information necessary for the first evaluation in 2008, but that this should not prejudice the development of a firm foundation for the long term. The sub-group noted that, while the resources needed for Option 1 were potentially low, this option would not provide for information to become available for large parts of the world. It was noted that Option 3 would ultimately enable the collection and analysis of information from most regions with a high degree of inclusiveness by Parties in implementation; however, the financial and technical requirements would be large and this approach would afford little possibility of providing substantial information for the first assessment.

Option 2 was considered to contain the elements for a phased approach that could be quickly initiated on the basis of existing programmes but progressively elaborated over time to address regional data gaps. The concept of a tiered approach was considered useful, with tiers addressing both the degree of regional coverage and different levels of scientific complexity in the programme, such as the nature of sampling matrices.

There was another view expressed by one proponent that the Secretariat may place the advantages of different options before the COP to decide on the appropriate option which could be proceeded further. It was also suggested by that proponent that sight not be lost of the long-term perspective which revolved around Option 3, and that energies should be concentrated around this option now so as to build a firm foundation for effectiveness evaluation in future.

The report of Group 2 is attached as Appendix 4.

In plenary, the meeting considered the possibility of a phased and tiered approach which could initially focus on the matrices air and human milk as these would provide the COP with information on the environmental transport of POPs and on environmental and human exposure to these contaminants. In this context, the meeting was provided with information on existing and emerging programmes focusing on these two media and on programmes that illustrate the concept of a tiered approach.

The Consultation agreed that the COP needed to be provided with the advantages and disadvantages of various options for proceeding with effectiveness evaluation. It also agreed on the need for a long-term perspective in considering these options, even when addressing the 2008 evaluation. One participant reiterated his belief that the COP’s consideration should revolve around Option 3.

The Secretariat noted that the Background Scoping Paper will provide the COP with an analysis of the characteristics of the indicative options. The Secretariat also noted that the meeting review focusing on strategic attributes and that focusing on functional attributes independently indicated that an approach comprehending the elements of Option 2 of the Background Scoping Paper afforded opportunities for providing some information on POPs from all regions for the 2008 assessment. In addition, it could serve as a foundation for a phased elaboration of arrangements to increase the scientific scope and geographical coverage of information for use by the COP for future assessments.

In introducing Agenda Item 4, the Secretariat referred to the origins of the request by the COP to field test arrangements, and suggested that there is an opportunity to combine this with obtaining additional information for the 2008 assessment. The Chair invited participants to consider arrangements for implementing the COP-2 decision. The meeting agreed that the discussion should be framed around the structure contained in Appendix 5.

The meeting then split into two groups. The reports of the two groups are attached as Appendixes 6 and 7. Both groups considered that it would be possible to supplement existing information, even for the initial 2008 evaluation. However, they recognized that filling the data gaps would need to be done on a regional basis. Regions suggested as a priority in this context included Africa, Oceania, South America, and the Caribbean.

Both groups noted the practicality of a tiered and phased approach to implementation. This could focus initially on human tissue and air, and be based on indicative Option 1 with those elements of the other options that can be brought forward in the time frame.

Both groups recognized also the importance of Party ownership of the process for collecting information at the national and regional level and ownership of the data produced. An important criterion is the scientific credibility of the information.

There was concern expressed that although some of the existing programmes noted in the Background Scoping Paper suggested regional coverage, they were essentially scientific programmes of uncertain status relative to Parties. It was recognized also that the use or extension of existing government-endorsed programmes will require endorsement by the COP, and may require formal approval from the governing organization of the possible participating programmes: the timing implications were of concern.

One group pointed out that there is a need to decide the period for which data should be reported for the 2008 assessment.

In closing the meeting, the Chair referred to the support of the Government of Canada and AMAP for the consultation, and thanked the local hosts Ms. Pornpimon Chareonsong and her colleagues from the Pollution Control Department for their outstanding support. He also thanked the participants for setting aside time in their busy schedules and for their insights and advice on the issues. He requested that they give further thought to the issues prior to the COP, and to brief their national delegations on the consultation and its outcome.

**Canada/AMAP/UNEP Chemicals Informal Consultation on Effectiveness Evaluation of the
Stockholm Convention, Bangkok, Thailand, 14-16 March 2006**

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(**Note:** Mr. Curtis is departing WWF as of March 21, 2006, to join The Varda Group (www.vardagroup.org) and his email contact will be: Clifton@vardagroup.org)

Canada/AMAP/UNEP Chemicals Consultation on Effectiveness Evaluation of the Stockholm Convention. 14-16 March 2006, Bangkok, Thailand.

Appendix 2: Meeting Programme

1. Opening and welcoming statements

- 1.1 Opening of the consultation session (John Whitelaw, UNEP)
- 1.2 Welcome from the host country (Apichai Chvajarenpun, Director General, Pollution Control Department, Thailand)
- 1.3 Welcome from the consultation organizers (Russel Shearer, Canada and Lars-Otto Reiersen, AMAP)
- 1.4 Participant round table
- 1.5 Election of chair and rapporteur
- 1.6 Meeting logistics (Pornpimon Chareonsong)

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Meeting organization and flow (John Whitelaw, UNEP)
- 2.2 Outline of the meeting objectives and outputs (John Whitelaw, UNEP)
- 2.3 Introduction to the agenda (Meeting co-chair)
- 2.4 Approval of the agenda

3 The Background Scoping Paper

- 3.1 Presentation of the consultation background and objectives relating to the Background Scoping Paper. (David Stone UNEP consultant)
- 3.2 General discussion
- 3.3 Specific discussion (in 2 separate discussion groups)
 - Instruction for breakout groups (J. Whitelaw, D. Stone UNEP)
- 3.4 Presentation of discussion groups report in plenary, conclusions

4. Field testing of monitoring arrangements.

4.1 General introduction

4.2 Information on what monitoring is available or is being planned

- WHO breast milk project
- East Asia air monitoring programme
- Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling Survey (GAPS)

4.3 Concept of a tiered approach

- Tier 1—Core
- Tier 2—AMAP as an example

4.4 Breakout session to gain the participants ideas and views on the possibility of being able to combine the need for basic data for the 2008 effectiveness evaluation with the COP's request for field testing of arrangements.

- Instruction for breakout groups (J. Whitelaw, D. Stone UNEP)

4.5 Plenary presentation of break-out groups reports

5. Meeting wrap-up

Appendix 3: Summary Report of Group 1 – Agenda Item 3

Chair: Helgi Jensson, Iceland
Rapporteur: Tom Harner, Canada

Summary

The group recognized that a strategy for implementing monitoring arrangements is needed and must provide a firm foundation for future assessments and, as much as possible, the upcoming 2008 assessment (filling data gaps, etc.; see goal statement below).

It was agreed that the strategic plan will:

- build on network of existing international and national programmes;
- include strategic, incremental capacity building to improve coverage of information;
- be cost-effective and sustainable (and according to priorities);
- provide comparable information (international QA/QC);
- involve two media (air and human milk/blood) under tier 1;
- all twelve POPs ideally; information on regional and global transport.

The group agreed that Option 2 most reflected these characteristics and allowed flexibility. For instance, it includes costing (based on extent or international participation/collaboration) and new capacity (will evolve with national efforts).

The group agreed on the following “goal” statement: as a first step, we should strive to obtain some information for those regions for which we have no information.

Concerns: The following concerns were raised by the group:

- Many countries are just now assessing their capacity through NIPS and may not be in the best position to comment on a global programme;
- There is a need to present a simple message to COP-2 in clear terms to facilitate their decision.

Appendix 4: Summary Report of Group 2 – Agenda Item 3

Chair: Henk Bouwman, South Africa

Rapporteur: Janet Pawlak, AMAP

Review of existing programmes

The Group was informed about a regional POPs sampling programme that had not been identified in the Background Scoping Paper, namely, the European MONARPOP programme. This programme includes the sampling of air, soil, and spruce needles in the European Alpine region, with the participation of countries with territory in the Alps; analyses are for many of the Stockholm Convention POPs as well as other POPs;

In addition, further information was provided on a Japanese-initiated trial study for air monitoring using active samplers with the participation of four countries in Southeast Asia; this is under consideration as a regional programme to review the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention in this area.

Several other regional short-term studies were also mentioned, the results of which could be used in the compilation of background data on POPs in environmental media or human tissues in various regional areas.

The Group noted these studies with interest but agreed that they did not change the key findings of the Background Scoping Paper.

The Group then reviewed two emerging global programmes that could serve as potential platforms for a global programme for effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention:

- The Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling (GAPS) study, which is a pilot study to investigate concentrations of POPs in the global atmosphere using cost-effective passive air samplers; this study will complement data obtained by active air samplers and will include analyses of legacy POPs in the Stockholm Convention for the determination of spatial and temporal trends;
- The WHO breast milk studies, which originally focused mainly on European countries and recently has included eight non-European countries, provides for analyses of all Stockholm Convention POPs; this is a cost-effective study providing regionally representative results and temporal trends, as well as some capacity building;

No other global programmes for monitoring POPs were identified as potential platforms.

The UNEP consultant provided descriptions of the three options for programmes to collect environmental data and data on POPs in humans for the effectiveness evaluation, as presented in the Background Scoping Paper. The group decided to review these options based on nine criteria or questions to examine the options as potential vehicles for effectiveness evaluation. These criteria were expanded to include the time frame for their implementation to be able to provide an evaluation by COP3 in 2008. In addition, several other issues were raised that should be considered in the review of each option.

The Group decided to review all three options together in relation to each of the nine questions, according to a matrix table. The outcome of this review is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Review of the three options based on the questions listed below.

Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
1 a b	No No	Yes? Degree of inclusiveness not clear	Yes
2 a b	No No	Yes, limited Yes, limited/uneven	Yes Yes, uneven
3 a b	Low Yes, but regional data gaps	Medium Yes, phased approach*, but regional data gaps (though fewer than Option 1)	Considerable No
4	Minimal	Medium	Considerable
5	Yes	Yes, assuming modest support to strategically advancing the needs	No
6	Very limited, but possibility to foster new programmes	Achievable, but uneven (?)	Yes
7	Yes, depending on access agreements	Yes, depending on access agreements	Yes, easier but still depending on access agreements
8	Not necessarily, depends on whether accountability mechanisms are developed and in place	Not necessarily, depends on whether accountability mechanisms are developed and in place	Not necessarily, depends on whether accountability mechanisms are developed and in place
9	Low (due to limited geographical scope)	Medium (LRT element would be significantly enhanced by taking on board programmes from Option 3)	High (but too much time and too many resources required to meet Art. 16 time constraints)
10	Yes (but limited to the countries/regions within Option 1)	Yes (but limited to the wider participation by countries/regions within Option 2)	Yes (covering all countries/regions)

*The first evaluation should note where there are gaps in the data and identify the regions that need support for capacity building to be able to provide information.

Questions

1. a) Is the option regionally inclusive? b) If not, is the degree of inclusiveness adequate?
2. a) Does the option provide and require opportunities for capacity building*? b) at a national level?

3. a) What are the financial and logistic implications? b) Will there be sufficient time to commence the evaluation by May 2007 to be able to provide a report by May 2008?
4. How would you describe the challenges posed by the financial and logistic needs of the options?
5. Are the prospects good that the arrangements will be sustainable** over time? Two indicators of sustainability are: modes additional technical and financial needs; and modest management and infrastructure needs.
6. Would the arrangement allow for a tiered approach to preserve simplicity while allowing it to vary intensity of effort according to opportunity over time?
7. Would there be unencumbered*** access to data for assessment?
8. Would there be clear accountabilities for those involved in the assessment (within and outside the Convention)?
9. What is the degree of confidence that the option may provide a product that would assist the COP in its evaluation of effectiveness?
10. Does this option encourage monitoring efforts at the national level?

Notes:

*WHO breast milk study includes capacity building, comprising technical support by the reference laboratory to assist in building technical capacity in laboratories in participating countries.

** “Sustainable” here is used under the narrow definition of the word in relation to technical, financial, management, and infrastructure needs as defined in the Background Scoping Paper.

*** “Unencumbered” within the scope of Article 9 of the Convention.

Points raised in the discussion on these questions

With respect to Option 2, it was pointed out that this option comprises a combination of the existing international and national programmes from Option 1 with new programmes just being established, thus implying potential differences in the technical aspects of achieving comparability in results from the new programmes in comparison with those from established programmes.

Regarding question 1, it was noted that the word “inclusiveness” could also include technical issues in relation to this question, such as the inclusion of all twelve POPs in monitoring programmes. This aspect was not able to be covered in this evaluation.

In terms of question 3b, concerning the availability of data for the first evaluation of effectiveness for COP3 in 2008, it was noted that developing countries would not be able to provide much data for this first evaluation. Thus, the first evaluation could concentrate on Option 1 while capacity is being developed in regions currently lacking programmes to obtain the relevant data. Option 2 would provide a phased approach for this development.

It was pointed out that questions 3 and 4 are essentially the same. The implications and challenges of the three options in terms of their financial, institutional, technical, capacity, and sustainability aspects have been elaborated in the descriptions of these options in the Background Scoping Paper.

In discussing question 5, it was noted that the word “sustainable” could have a broader meaning, including also whether an option was sustainable in that it would provide information on a broad geographical basis.

In question 6, a tiered approach could also be interpreted to mean an approach with different complexities of sampling and analysis schemes, from screening to full analyses of contaminants. The tiered approach could also cover different levels of capability, different sampling media, or different intensities of effort. The WHO breast milk programme contains a tiered approach in terms of the number of substances covered and levels of activity in response to results.

Regarding question 8 on the unencumbered access to data from monitoring programmes, it was noted that Article 9 of the Convention recognizes some confidentiality rights to data. In terms of the three options, it was noted that access to data could be expected to become progressively easier from Option 1 to Option 3. However, access agreements will be important under all options.

A tenth question concerning whether the options encourage national monitoring efforts was proposed and has been included in Table 1.

Appendix 5: Structure for the Discussion of Agenda Item 4 – Field Testing

The outcome of the discussion is guidance to the Secretariat in preparing advice to COP.

The aim is to provide a basis for the 2008 Evaluation.

- Assume that the “status quo” is not acceptable to the COP
 - E.g., Regional gaps
- Regardless of longer-term arrangements, the 2008 evaluation will be based on:
 - Existing information and arrangements
 - Some supplementation
 - ⇒ Regional
- Supplementation
 - Regions
 - Matrices
 - Modalities
- How?
 - New arrangements/facilities
 - Existing – bring into the evaluation process
 - Enhancing existing processes and arrangements
- Practical steps (after the COP)
 - What to do?
 - How?
 - Who?

Appendix 6: Summary Report of Group 1 – Agenda Item 4 field testing arrangements

Chair: Gillian Guthrie, Jamaica

Rapporteur: Timo Seppälä, Finland

The group recognized Article 16 as a priority under the Convention and that it should be treated as such.

Summary of proposal for the Global Monitoring Programme (GMP)

- A strategic approach should be employed in the development of the GMP.
- The GMP would be developed on a phased basis:
 - Phase I: utilizing data from existing regional and international arrangements (limitation due to 2008 assessment time frame; acknowledgement that the 2008 information is not comprehensive as it does not cover several regions);
 - Phase II: utilization of existing regional and international arrangements supplemented with increased analytical capacities in under-reported regions; emphasis would be placed on the latter.
- Minimum requirements for the GMP would include the analyses of all twelve POPs in air and human milk/human maternal blood.

Phase I considerations

First tier data analysis for 2008 assessment and possible augmentation

The group identified existing arrangements that could provide data for the 2008 assessment (reference document is COP2/INF 21), namely:

- AMAP
- EMEP
- GAPS
- WHO Global Human Milk Survey
- Japan Air Trial Monitoring Programme
- GEMS
- OSPAR

It was noted that some of these arrangements might need to be augmented to fulfill the needs of the assessment.

Human milk data: more data on some large populations in under-reported regions are required.

Air sampling: Africa was considered a priority; the need for an oceanic sites was also noted:

- Possible cooperation among some states;
- Expanding existing programmes to this region.

NIPs could contribute to the GMP, and they should be used.

Acquiring the data for the assessment

Some problems might be expected in the acquisition of the available first tier data. Governance issues need to be settled.

Pulling together information

There should be a scientific regional-level synthesis of data and assessment, and a global-level compilation and analysis of regional reports. The political and national ownership of the reporting was considered a challenge.

Phase 2 considerations

Matrices

The second tier data would cover any other POPs data, in addition to tier 1 data, that are in accordance with international QA/QC.

The third tier data would be related to the effects of POPs.

General Considerations related to GMP

Assessment starting point

Two possibilities were identified: using only data starting from the year the Convention came into force OR using also older quality-assured data. It was noted that this decision is a political decision.

Appendix 7: Summary Report of Group 2 – Agenda Item 4 field testing arrangements

Chair: Henk Bouwman, South Africa

Rapporteur: Alfonso Flores, Mexico

Objectives for the discussion

- Select a practical and achievable approach for the 2008 evaluation;
- Regional scope to obtain useful data to cover gaps for the effectiveness evaluation.

Participant roundtable

- Identify gaps and media, owing to the time constriction (COP-3);
- Selection of a regional scope;
- Approach to increase capacity building for monitoring;
- Data and results for effectiveness evaluation;
- Approach based on elements of Option 2, not compromising any further developments.

Field test proposal and supplementation

- Option 1 is not acceptable to the COP; Option 2 is more suitable for the evaluation considering time constraints, but elements of Option 3 can be taken on board as an additional tier for that region if possible.
- Identification of the region or regions (consider Antarctica, Oceania, South America, Africa).
- Matrices according to the tiered approach as described in the Background Scoping Paper (air and human tissue monitoring).
- Consider the expansion of the GAPS Monitoring network, and Asian Network into regions with data gaps.
- Work-sharing with the WHO approach (4th. Round for human milk monitoring).
- Time constraints were identified as an important consideration.
- Improve the existing arrangements and new evaluations or programmes considered.
- Necessity for establishing a real and objective baseline for the evaluation.
- Use the existing reference laboratories (Germany, Canada), and participation of regional laboratories as identified.
- Identification of institutions, laboratories, and responsible authorities for sampling, analyses, and reporting of results (as soon as possible).
- Necessity that the country or countries selected consider providing additional funding in domestic budgets.
- Opportunity for capacity building.
- Approach and arrangements based on technical and analytical capacity of the country selected.
- Closing of data gaps for developing countries should not be compromised with the initial activities leading up to 2008, but opportunities should be explored to expand and incorporate elements of Option 3.

Practical Steps after the COP

- Regional approach to improve the arrangements for the 2008 evaluation.
 - Identify the necessary elements for the arrangements to be considered by the regions.
 - Secretariat should consider different options for the work of a possible consultant or expert group (terms of reference, responsibilities, activities).
 - No time for further consideration of assessment and reporting (regarding Parties, regions, global).
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