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**United Nations
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**Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants**

Second meeting

Geneva, 1–5 May 2006

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Other matters

**Report on United Nations Environment Programme activities in
the areas of chemicals and administrative support**

Note by the Secretariat

Set forth in the annex to the present note is a report on United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) activities in the areas of chemicals and administrative support, prepared by the UNEP Division on Environmental Conventions. The report has not been formally edited by the Secretariat to the Stockholm Convention.

* UNEP/POPS/COP.2/1.

Annex

**Report on
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
activities in the areas of chemicals and administrative support**

Prepared by the UNEP Division on Environmental Conventions

I. Introduction

Purpose

1. This report has been prepared for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP2) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It reports on UNEP's activities in the areas of chemicals and administrative support during the period of January 2004 to December 2005. It also reports on ongoing and planned activities for the period January 2006 to December 2007.
2. In addition to this report, supplemental information will be presented in publications and documents that UNEP will make available at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Guidance from the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

3. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention adopted one decision specifically related to UNEP. In addition, the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade also provided guidance to UNEP of direct relevance to the Stockholm Convention. These decisions relate to a supplementary analysis of financial and administrative arrangements that would be needed to implement any changes proposed to enhance synergies and cooperation between the secretariats of the chemicals and waste conventions.

UNEP Activities on the Promotion of Synergies between the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions

4. The last part of this report provides an update on UNEP activities relevant to the promotion of synergies between the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions, in particular covering POPs, enforcement, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and capacity building.

II. Stockholm Convention COP1 decision and Rotterdam Convention COP2 decision (directly relevant to the Stockholm Convention) for UNEP action

5. This part of the report outlines UNEP's response to a decision adopted by Stockholm COP1 and a decision adopted by Rotterdam COP2 that is directly relevant to the Stockholm Convention, both of which make specific requests to UNEP. The activities described here cover those undertaken by UNEP during the 2004-2005 biennium as well as those planned for the present 2006-2007 biennium.
6. As requested in Decision RC-2/6 on "Enhancing synergies between the secretariats of the chemicals and waste conventions" and Decision SC-1/18 on "Enhancing synergies within the chemicals and wastes cluster", UNEP has undertaken, in consultation with the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and other relevant entities, a review of the administrative arrangements between UNEP¹ and

¹ During the reporting period, UNEP, as has been the practice in previous years, continued to provide support to the Stockholm Convention Secretariat. UNEP is strongly committed to further strengthening the quality and timeliness of its support and services to the UNEP administered MEAs, including the Stockholm Convention Secretariat. The UNEP Executive Director established with effect from 1 September 2005 a new unit within the Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC) entitled Administrative Support to Conventions Unit. This Unit is different from the Administrative Support Centre (ASC) office currently located in Geneva. The Unit will provide support to the UNEP administered MEAs as required and upon request with no additional costs to the MEAs.

the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Secretariats. This supplementary analysis of administrative arrangements is being made available for the consideration of the Conferences of the Parties to the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions (see document UNEP/POPS/COP.2/INF/18).

III. Report of UNEP activities on the promotion of synergies between the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions

Persistent Organic Pollutants

7. In 2004-2005, UNEP actively promoted the enhancement of synergies between the multilateral trade and environment systems, including by encouraging cooperation between the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the World Trade Organization and between their governing bodies, in accordance with World Summit recommendations. During this period, UNEP assessed the impact of chemicals, especially persistent toxics, on people and the environment globally. UNEP will undertake follow-up actions, including the activities on the global mercury assessment requested by UNEP Governing Council decision GC-21/5. UNEP also provided advisory information through a clearing-house service on persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals (including mercury and lead) and other chemicals. In addition, UNEP provided policy and technical advisory services to countries on implementing obligations under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, including identifying, managing and disposing of persistent organic pollutants, and, where appropriate, selecting alternatives to these pollutants.

Enforcement

8. The Green Customs Initiative aims at strengthening compliance with and enforcement of MEAs. Its objective is to facilitate the monitoring of legal trade in environmentally-sensitive items while combating illegal trade. Green Customs promotes awareness of MEA enforcement and compliance issues and offers an integrated strategy for awareness raising and introductory training on MEAs. In this way it seeks to strengthen the role of Customs Officers in the "enforcement chain".

9. Illegal trade in 'environmentally-sensitive' commodities such as ozone-depleting substances (ODS), toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and endangered species is an international problem with serious consequences. The Secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, together with UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices, Interpol and the World Customs Organization (WCO), are partners in this cross-cutting initiative. The role of this project is to operationalize this concept through integrated capacity building for customs officers within the MEA enforcement chain. It is coordinated by UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) through its OzonAction Branch. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is also contributing to the workshops, as is UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions.

10. UNEP will develop distance- and Internet-learning techniques for integrated training in order to reach as many customs officials as possible and ensure that the highest possible level of training is maintained. This effort will draw on the experiences of the World Customs Organization and CITES. UNEP is also developing a compliance and enforcement manual that it plans to use for training enforcement personnel, including Customs officials. The endorsement of the governing bodies of partner organizations and the provision of adequate funding will be critical to the long-term success of this integrated training programme.

11. The Green Customs web site (www.greencustoms.org) provides regular updates on ongoing activities as well as links to available support documents. The plan for the second phase of the Green Customs Initiative will be approved at a Partners Meeting in the first half of 2006. It will aim to replicate activities in sub-regions not covered by the first phase. Among the main themes that emerged in the first phase of the workshops are health and safety issues for customs officers handling environmentally-sensitive items; Free Trade Zones, transit and transshipment; the need to strengthen the whole chain of enforcement for MEAs, including capacity-building for prosecutors and/or judges; linkages with other crime and security issues; presentation of the harmonized code's modifications as

they relate to MEAs; and opportunities for Green Customs training at the national level and for e-learning modules for customs officers. These themes will be taken into account when activities for the second phase are approved. Please also refer to paragraph 21 below.

12. The governing bodies of Green Customs partner organizations have encouraged Parties to participate in this initiative. For example, Decision XVII/16, Paragraph 7, of the 17th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol refers to the need “To encourage further work on the Green Customs initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme in combating illegal trade in controlled ozone-depleting substances as well as further networking and twinning activities in the framework of regional networks aimed at the exchange of information and experience on both licit and illicit trade in controlled ozone-depleting substances between the Parties, including enforcement agencies.”

13. During 2006-2007, UNEP intends to provide advisory and information (clearing house) services on persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and other chemicals. It also plans to provide policy and technical advisory services to assist countries with implementing their obligations under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions. These services will address how to identify, manage and dispose of persistent organic pollutants and, where appropriate, how to select non-persistent organic pollutant practices to replace them.

SAICM

14. At its seventh Special Session in February 2002 the UNEP Governing Council adopted Decision SS.VII/3 on a “Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management” (SAICM). The Governing Council decided that there was a need to further develop a strategic approach. It endorsed as a foundation for such an approach the International Forum for Chemical Safety’s (IFCS) Bahia Declaration and Priorities for Action Beyond 2000. The initiative was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002 and by the World Summit in New York in September 2005. In February 2003, UNEP’s Governing Council considered a progress report and adopted decision GC-22/4 IV endorsing the concept of an international conference to be held around the end of 2005.

15. A first preparatory meeting, “SAICM PrepCom1”, was held in Bangkok from 9 to 13 November 2003 immediately after the IFCS Forum IV meeting. SAICM PrepCom2 was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 8 October 2004. SAICM PrepCom3 took place in Vienna, Austria, from 19 to 24 September 2005.

16. SAICM was finalized and adopted at the “International Conference on Chemicals Management” (ICCM), which was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006, immediately before the 9th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

17. SAICM is a voluntary policy framework that will guide efforts to achieve the goal set out by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goal that chemicals are used and produced by the year 2020 in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. SAICM comprises three documents. The “Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management” expresses political commitment to SAICM’s implementation. The “Overarching Policy Strategy” setting out the scope and needs addressed by SAICM; its objectives in the areas of risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and illegal traffic; as well as the principles and approaches underpinning SAICM and the financial and implementation arrangements. The “Global Plan of Action” lists work areas and over 270 potential activities with timeframes and progress indicators to be undertaken, as appropriate, by stakeholders.

18. In their adoption of SAICM, governments also gave support to a ‘Quick Start Programme’, including a trust fund and bilateral, multilateral and other forms of cooperation. The Programme seeks to support initial SAICM implementation activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Capacity Building

19. In 2004-2005, UNEP undertook capacity-building activities to assist countries in promoting the sound management of chemicals, in particular by implementing their obligations under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions. It has also provided support for efforts by Governments regarding coherent chemicals policy development and implementation.

20. UNEP has also assisted in the development of harmonized national legislation for the implementation of chemicals- and wastes-related MEAs for Tonga. A review report was prepared together with draft legislation. The Basel Convention Secretariat has contributed to this process by, for example, reviewing the draft legislation.

21. Under the Green Customs Initiative, UNEP also supported six regional training workshops for customs officials on implementing trade-related MEAs, including the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions as well as CITES, the Montreal Protocol and related regional MEAs. These workshops were held for South Asia, the Caribbean, East Africa, the Caucasus, West Asia and Central Asia. The first national workshop for customs officials was held in February 2006 in Mauritius; additional workshops in other countries will be organized in 2006. A Training Guide for customs officials on implementing MEAs has been developed, tested and reviewed in these workshops. This Guide includes a specific session on implementing the Basel Convention, which was led by the Basel Convention Secretariat.

22. In collaboration with the secretariats of the chemicals and wastes-related MEAs, UNEP prepared a "Manual on Guidelines for the Compliance with and Enforcement of MEAs". UNEP also worked with these MEA Secretariats in eight regional capacity-building workshops to review and test the draft Manual.

23. With the financial support of the Government of Switzerland, UNEP has organized a series of regional and sub-regional workshops on how to exploit synergies amongst the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions at the national and regional levels. Working in close collaboration with the three convention secretariats, UNEP organized three such workshops in 2004: in Montevideo, Uruguay; Riga, Latvia; and Damascus, Syria. The participants consisted mostly of the national focal points of the three conventions. Each workshop produced a set of regional recommendations, which were summarized together in a brief booklet produced by UNEP entitled "A Guide to Cooperation on the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions".

24. UNEP will also provide assistance to the secretariats of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and to participating countries on the coordinated implementation of MEAs, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Basel Convention, in the context of the regional seas conventions and activities. UNEP is also assisting the Regional Seas Programme with the joint development and coordinated implementation of capacity-building programmes, projects and activities with the global conventions.

25. As agreed with the Basel Convention Secretariat, and in cooperation with the Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention secretariats, UNEP also intends to develop and facilitate a joint outreach campaign. A project team consisting of staff from UNEP and the secretariats will develop an agreed common strategy for 2006 - 2007. A joint outreach toolkit, containing fact sheets and other appropriate materials, will be developed and published in various languages. A regional workshop will be organized to explore the benefits of an integrated approach to chemicals and wastes outreach at the national and regional levels. Based on the results of this first phase, UNEP will work with the secretariats to develop a longer term strategy.

26. UNEP Governing Council Decision GC/SS/VII/1 of February 2002 concerning the strengthening of international environmental governance contains, among other components, a particular focus on the urgent need to develop a strategic plan for providing technology support and capacity building to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Pursuant to this, the UNEP Governing Council adopted the Bali Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building in Decision GC-23/1-I. The management of chemicals and wastes forms one of the thematic areas of intervention. UNEP has put into place an implementation plan for realizing the objectives of the Bali Strategic Plan, including setting up a database of its capacity building and technology support activities in various regions and countries.