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11 January 2008

INFORMATION NOTE

The third meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-3) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) took place from 19-23 November 2007, in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 100 participants attended the meeting, including all 31 Committee members, 39 government and party observers and representatives from 24 non-governmental organizations.

At its adoption in 2001, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) included provisions for international action on twelve POPs while allowing parties to nominate additional chemicals according to a three-step review process that determines whether a nominated substance has POP characteristics, whether global action is warranted and how to list the substance under the Convention. The outcome of the review undertaken by the 31-member POPs Review Committee is a recommendation to the Conference of the Parties (COP) on listing of the chemical under Annex A (Elimination), Annex B (Restriction) and/or Annex C (Unintentional production) of the Convention.

At the third meeting of the Committee, five chemicals were considered for the third and final step of the review process, another five entered the second phase, and one new chemical was nominated.

After a weeklong debate, the Committee approved the risk management evaluation for five chemicals, and recommended that COP-4 consider listing them under Annex A: **lindane; chlordecone; hexabromobiphenyl (HBB); pentabromodiphenyl ether (pentaBDE);** and under Annex A or B: **perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), its salts and PFOS fluoride (PFOF)**. This would lead to elimination (Annex A) or restriction (Annex B) of the production, use, export and import of the chemicals.

Lindane is used as an insecticide in agriculture and in pharmaceutical products for the treatment of headlice and scabies; Chlordecone also known as kepon, is used as a pesticide in agriculture; Hexabromobiphenyl is used as a flame retardant mainly in plastics and coated cables; Pentabromodiphenyl ether is used in the manufacture of flexible polyurethane foam for furniture, upholstery, and packaging, and non-foamed polyurethane in casings and electronic equipment; Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) is both an intentionally produced substance and an un-intentional degradation product of other related anthropogenic chemicals. PFOS-related substances are used as surface-active agents in different applications including fire fighting foams, textiles, paper and packaging, coatings, cleaning products, pesticides, photographic industry, semiconductor, hydraulic fluids, metal plating.

LOOKING AHEAD

POPRC-4, scheduled to meet on 13-17 October 2008 in Geneva, will have four more chemicals to review at the risk management evaluation phase (commercial octabromodiphenyl ether, pentachlorobenzene, and alpha and beta hexachlorocyclohexane), one at the risk profile phase (short chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs)), and any number of new chemical that might be proposed in addition to EU's resubmitted endosulfan proposal. As parties gear up for COP-4, scheduled for May 2009, they will have to prepare to examine the implications of listing as many as nine new chemicals.

In the intersessional period between the third and the fourth meetings of the POPRC, fourteen of the 31 members will see their term end and replaced by new designated members in May 2008.

For more information, please visit the Stockholm Convention web at <http://www.pops.int> or send an e-mail to ssc@pops.int.