

Meeting of the Presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Geneva, Switzerland, 12 December 2012

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The Presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, H. E. Mr. Franz Perrez (Switzerland, Basel Convention), Ms. Magdalena Balicka (Poland, Rotterdam Convention), Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile, Stockholm Convention) met on Wednesday, 12 December 2012, at the International Environment House in Geneva. The Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Mr. Jim Willis, welcomed the Presidents and Mr. Clayton Campanhola, the new Director of the Plant Protection and Production Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention.

2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The provisional agenda was adopted without amendments and is included in the annex to the present report.

3. Walk through agenda for joint bureaux meeting, including the identification of any issues and options for addressing them

3. The objective of the meeting of the Presidents was to prepare for the upcoming joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, taking place on 13-14 December 2012, as well as the upcoming ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the three conventions. The Presidents discussed the items on the agenda of the joint bureaux meeting, as well as the running of the meeting. At their first joint meeting in March 2011, the bureaux had decided to rotate the chairmanship of joint bureaux meetings among the Presidents in alphabetical order, starting with the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. The upcoming joint bureaux meeting would thus be chaired by the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, Ms. Balicka.

4. The Secretariat noted that the decisions to be taken by the bureaux on the organization of work of the 2013 ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties, including on whether to hold a high-level segment, were a prerequisite for the Secretariat to finalize the dispatch of invitation letters and the preparation of certain pre-session documents. Given the importance of these decisions, the Presidents agreed to propose to the bureaux that their joint meeting take up agenda item 4 on organization of work before agenda item 3 on matters for consideration or action by the extraordinary meeting of the conferences of the parties at the upcoming joint bureaux meeting.

Organization of work of the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Schedule of work

5. The Secretariat introduced a document it had prepared containing two options for the tentative schedule of work: The first option suggested opening all the meetings at the beginning of the two-week period but holding the sessions of the extraordinary and ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties sequentially. The second option provided for parallel sessions of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties on certain cross-cutting topics, such as technical assistance or compliance. Mr. Perrez then introduced a third option prepared by him that, in addition to parallel ordinary sessions of the conferences of the parties, foresaw that the remaining ordinary sessions of the conferences of the parties would not be held sequentially, but rotate every half day among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions meetings.

6. The Presidents discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the various options and whether it would be desirable that all delegates attended the meetings for the full two-week duration. The Presidents concurred that the third option, while offering certain advantages, such as a higher degree of flexibility, might be considered too progressive and would not receive much support from the bureaux members for the 2013 meetings of the conferences of the parties. A variation of the second option,

providing for daily progress reports from the contact groups, could be a good compromise for the upcoming meetings. In addition, the Presidents concurred that the invitation letter should state clearly that the schedule of the meetings could change and that delegates might want to take this into consideration when making their travel arrangements.

7. The Presidents agreed, nevertheless, to circulate the third option to the bureaux members for discussion at the upcoming joint bureaux meeting.

8. The Presidents also deliberated on the opening of the meetings of the conferences of the parties and agreed that an opening ceremony would be held just before the official opening of the meetings. If the bureaux members agreed, there would be no opening statements, in order to make efficient use of the time available.

Potential contact groups

9. The Presidents discussed contact groups that might be established at the 2013 meetings of the conferences of the parties, as well as their potential timing and co-chairs. They agreed that not more than 2 contact groups established under the ordinary meetings should meet in parallel to plenary and a contact group on synergies established under the extraordinary meetings. They decided furthermore to continue trying to identify potential co-chairs, though consultation with the bureaux members, and to contact these delegates concerning their availability. Potential co-chairs could be invited to an upcoming training for chairs.

High-level segment

10. The Presidents noted that the replies to the high-level survey had in majority been in favour of holding a high-level event, but many different options for modalities and topics had been proposed. The Presidents discussed a number of potential topics – linked in general to the synergies process – and modalities of the high-level segment and agreed that ensuring that the topic and working arrangements were attractive to ministers was crucial to stimulate their participation.

11. Mr. Perrez proposed that the high-level segment be held in parallel to the last 2 days of the meetings to avoid adding a day to the duration of the meetings. On Thursday afternoon, 9 May 2013, ministerial round tables could be organized. On Friday morning, 10 May 2013, the ministers could either give speeches or participate in the plenary sessions, adopting decisions and solving any outstanding issues.

12. The Presidents agreed that this proposal could attract attention by ministers and to propose it to the bureaux at their upcoming joint meeting. The Presidents considered that given time constraints at the joint bureaux meeting, a sub-group of interested bureaux members could be tasked to develop the detailed arrangements of the high-level segment, with the support of the Secretariat.

Matters for consideration or action by the extraordinary meeting of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Review arrangements

13. The Executive Secretary informed the Presidents that the development of the report by the evaluation offices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was delayed and that the report would probably be made available to parties late. He also informed the Presidents that not many parties had answered the questionnaire that was a basis for the Secretariat's report.

14. The Presidents noted that evaluating the success of the synergies process was crucial to certain delegations and that discussion could take a substantial amount of time at the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties. They also noted that the 2011 synergies decisions had tasked the Secretariat to prepare a management response to the findings and recommendations of the UNEP and FAO report.

Proposal for the organization of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

15. The Presidents felt that if parties wanted to discuss the hosting of the interim secretariat for a future legally binding instrument on mercury, it could be dealt with under this agenda item following

the review of the current synergies arrangements. Even though the decision on hosting the interim secretariat would be taken by the conference of plenipotentiaries of a future mercury convention later in 2013, the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions could consider expressing their support towards entrusting the hosting of the interim secretariat to the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The Presidents requested the Executive Secretary to prepare an analysis of the legal and budgetary implications of doing this.

16. In addition, the Executive Secretary informed the Presidents about a document he had prepared for the 2013 meetings on sustainability of the Secretariat. The document included a proposal for the conferences of the parties to endorse the regular preparation of quarterly and other management reports by the Secretariat. Furthermore, Mr. Willis mentioned that he would reach obligatory retirement age before the 2015 meetings of the conferences of the parties. He would therefore suggest to the 2013 meetings to start the recruitment of his successor right after the 2013 meetings and that he could, if the new Executive Secretary wished so, remain for some time in the Secretariat in an advisory role to support a smooth transition.

Communication and consultation with regions

17. The Secretariat informed the Presidents that the bureaux could want to bring certain matters to the attention of their regions as a follow up to the joint bureaux meeting. The Secretariat would be available to prepare an information package and facilitate the send-out on behalf of the bureaux members.

18. The Presidents requested the Secretariat to develop an overview of all vacancies on bureaux and subsidiary bodies to be filled at the 2013 meetings of the conferences of the parties.

4. Other matters

19. The Presidents agreed to meet on the morning of 27 April 2013 to finalize arrangements for sharing the chairing of the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties and to discuss the Presidents' notes. The Secretariat would prepare the notes and send them to the Presidents one month before the meetings. The Presidents would then consider whether they wanted a separate meeting with the Secretariat to go through the President's notes of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties.

5. Closure of the meeting

20. The meeting was declared closed at 6 p.m.

Annex

Meeting of the Presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

12 December 2012

Geneva, Switzerland

10.00h – 16.00h

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Walk through agenda for joint bureaux meeting, including the identification of any issues and options for addressing them.
 4. Other matters.
 5. Closure of the meeting.
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