

# **Report of the joint meeting of the Presidents of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Geneva (online), 26 January 2021**

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

1. The Presidents of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez-Pérez (Chile, Basel Convention), Mr. Serge Molly Allo'o Allo'o (Gabon, Rotterdam Convention), Ms. Silvija Nora Kalnins (Latvia, Stockholm Convention), met online on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 at 10 a.m. Geneva time (UTC+1).

## **2. Chairing of the joint meeting of the Presidents and the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27-29 January 2021**

2. The Presidents discussed the chairmanship of the joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, taking place from 27 to 29 January 2021. The Secretariat reminded the Presidents that, at their first joint meeting in March 2011, the bureaux had decided to rotate the chairmanship of joint meetings of the bureaux among the Presidents in alphabetical order of the names of the conventions, starting with the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. Thus, the Presidents agreed that Ms. Kalnins would chair the forthcoming joint meeting of the bureaux and the present joint Presidents' meeting.

## **3. Adoption of the agenda**

3. The agenda, as adopted by the Presidents, is contained in the annex to the present report.

## **4. Walk-through of the provisional agenda of the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27-29 January 2021, including the identification of any issues and options for addressing them**

4. The objective of the meeting of the Presidents was to prepare for the joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions from 27 to 29 January 2021, which was expected to discuss the organization of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions, building on the individual Bureau meetings held in June 2020 and taking into account the possible implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the organization of the meetings. A final decision on the format and timing of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties would need to be taken at the latest by the end of February 2021.

5. The Secretariat introduced the item, suggesting that the items of the provisional agenda of the joint bureaux meeting be taken up in the order in which they had been listed therein. The Presidents concurred with this approach and requested the Secretariat, when introducing each sub-item under agenda item 3 on organization of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, to highlight what could be tentatively agreed on and what would be deferred to discussions agenda item 4 (a) on other arrangements, including the possible impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the meetings, and to lay out how each sub-item would be impacted by the different alternative options for the organization of the meetings.

### Organization of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

#### *Organization of the high-level segment*

6. For this sub-item, the Secretariat introduced the document on the revised draft proposal for the organization of the high-level segment of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2021 (document 2), summarizing the discussions on this issue at the individual Bureau meetings. Three different scenarios were anticipated for the scheduling of the high-level segment to take place either at the beginning of the meetings, at the end of the meetings, or combined with other high-level

events scheduled for 2021, such as those of the fifth session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) and the fifth meeting of the International Conference for Chemicals Management (ICCM).

7. The Presidents raised concern that the organization of the high-level segment would be impacted under some of the alternative options for the organization of the conferences of the Parties (see document 5), especially those suggesting holding meetings or segments of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties online. The Secretariat clarified that it would be ready to provide explanations on how the high-level segment would be impacted under the different options.

#### *Organization of work*

##### *Briefing by the Secretariat on the intersessional work under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including a summary of the outcomes of the subsidiary bodies' meetings*

8. The Secretariat introduced this sub-item indicating that a full briefing on the intersessional work under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including a summary of the outcomes of the subsidiary bodies' meetings as well as proposals received to amend the conventions and their implications on the tentative schedule of work of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties would be provided to the joint meeting of the bureaux. These presentations would inform the bureaux members of the progress that had been made during the intersessional period and of the final products that would be for consideration by the meetings of the conferences of the Parties.

9. The Presidents reflected on the possible impacts of the proposed alternative options for the organization of the conferences of the Parties on the continuity of the intersessional work, especially relating to budget issues. They agreed to defer the discussions on this point until considering the details of the options laid out in document 5 on the possible implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

##### *Tentative schedule of work and draft schedule of possible contact and other groups*

10. The Secretariat introduced the document on a revised draft tentative schedule of work of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2021 prepared for the joint meeting of the bureaux (document 3). As suggested by the bureaux at their individual meetings in June 2020, the revised version included a few adjustments and additional information relating, among others, to the timing of some convention-specific sessions and the scheduling of contact groups, as outlined in document 3.

#### *Credentials*

11. With respect to the approach on credentials, the Secretariat reported that, for the past three meetings of the conferences of the Parties, the bureaux had agreed that when examining credentials received, they would accept original credentials in good order as well as copies of credentials in good order with the understanding that the original would be submitted as soon as possible.

12. The Secretariat clarified that the approach for examining credentials would not be impacted under the different options laid out in document 5. However, the scheduling for the consideration on the reports on credentials would differ depending on the schedule of work of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties.

#### *Elections*

13. The Secretariat introduced the document on information on the election of officers and subsidiary body members to take place during the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2021 (Document 4) prepared for the joint meeting of the bureaux. On 19 November 2020, the Secretariat reported that it had sent a letter to Parties to facilitate those elections. Document 4 furthermore provided information on arrears in assessed contributions to the general trust funds of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, as at 31 October 2020, given their impacts on eligibility requirements.

The Secretariat further provided details on elections in case a face-to-face segment of the COPs taking place in 2022, recalling that some elections may need to take place prior to the holding of that segment.

Other matters related to the organization of the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

*Other arrangements, including the possible impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the meetings*

14. The Secretariat introduced the document on possible implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19) for the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (document 5). The Presidents agreed to propose to conduct the discussions in two steps, with a first step to hear an update from the Secretariat on the current COVID-19 situation and discuss the possible implications for the organization of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions, and a second step to review and discuss the alternative options for organizing those meetings. The Presidents concurred that no particular outcome was expected regarding the first part of the discussion, although this information was important to allow bureaux members to raise questions and a discussion to take place. The discussions under the second part could result in an agreement on a preferred option for the organization of the meetings.

*Regional preparatory meetings*

15. The Secretariat provided an update on the current status of organization of the regional preparatory meetings, including the generous financial contribution provided by the European Union and the Governments of Norway and Switzerland. The Secretariat also provided background information on the possible implications of the various alternatives laid out in document 5 on the regional preparatory meetings, including the possibility of conducting online regional preparatory meetings and other possible preparatory work, following the examples of other fora such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

16. The Presidents reflected on possible additional preparatory work that may be needed under the alternative options beyond the regional preparatory meetings, including webinars and technical briefings.

*Fund-raising*

17. The Secretariat provided information on the funding situation on participants' travel to the 2021 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Significant funding had already been received for the meetings and fundraising efforts were still ongoing with the hope to cover the existing funding gap, including possibly through a letter that could be sent by the Secretariat and signed by all three Presidents to urge the countries to move forward in this regard, as per past practice. The Secretariat also provided general information on the implications for the funding raised of the alternative options for the organization of the conferences of the Parties, explaining that more detailed information would be provided during the joint meeting of the bureaux.

Other matters

*Update on calls to enhance cooperation between the United Nations Environment Assembly and the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements*

18. The Secretariat provided updated information on the latest developments with regards to the recent calls to enhance cooperation between the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements for which UNEP provided the Secretariat, in particular pursuant to the resolution 73/333 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and in the context of the review process in furtherance to UNEA decision 4/2. Those topics would be considered during the resumed fifth session of the UNEA in February 2022 and a working document would be prepared for the conferences of the Parties at their next meetings on possible actions to be taken pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution 73/333.

**5. Other matters**

19. No other matters were raised.

**6. Closure of the meeting**

20. The meeting was declared closed at 12:16 p.m. (Geneva time, UTC +1).

## **Annex**

### **Meeting of the Presidents of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions**

**Geneva (online)**

**26 January 2021**

(from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. (Geneva time, UTC+1))

#### **Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting.
  2. Chairing of the joint meeting of the Presidents and the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27-29 January 2021.
  3. Adoption of the agenda.
  4. Walk-through of the provisional agenda of the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27-29 January 2021, including the identification of any issues and options for addressing them.
  5. Other matters.
  6. Closure of the meeting.
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