

RC-4/11: Enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision SC-2/15 adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants at its second meeting, decision RC-3/8 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade at its third meeting and decision VIII/8 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal at its eighth meeting, by which the conferences of the Parties established the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and mandated it to prepare joint recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three conventions at the administrative and programmatic levels,

Mindful of the legal autonomy of each of the three conventions,

Recognizing the broad scope of the Rotterdam Convention,

Welcoming the ongoing commitment of all Parties to ensuring the implementation of the full breadth of the Rotterdam Convention,

Looking forward to the follow-up on the development of managerial issues arising through closer cooperation between the three conventions,

Noting United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance, the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities and the 2005 World Summit Outcome calling for reduced fragmentation on environmental issues,

Recognizing that the overarching goal of the three conventions is the protection of human health and the environment for the promotion of sustainable development and that the objective of enhanced coordination and cooperation among the three conventions is to contribute to the achievement of that goal,

Convinced that actions taken to enhance coordination and cooperation should be aimed at strengthening implementation of the three conventions at the national, regional and global levels, promoting coherent policy guidance, enhancing efficiency in the provision of support to Parties with a view to reducing their administrative burden and maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources at all levels,

Noting that processes for enhancing cooperation and coordination are driven by Parties, should take into account global concerns and should respond to the specific needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition,

Believing that institutional structures should be defined by functions that are identified before such structures are established,

Welcoming the recommendation of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions,

1. *Takes note* of the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting to adopt the recommendation of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancement of coordination and cooperation among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions;

2. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention at its fourth meeting to consider adopting the recommendation of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing coordination and cooperation among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions,

3. *Adopts* the recommendation of the ad hoc joint working group and, subject to the recommendation being adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, thereby:

I. Organizational issues in the field

A. Coordination at the national level

1. *Invites* Parties to establish or strengthen, as necessary, national processes or mechanisms for coordinating:

(a) Activities to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and the Stockholm Conventions, in particular activities of the focal points and designated national authorities for the three conventions, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and other relevant policy frameworks, as appropriate;

(b) Preparation for convention meetings;

2. *Invites* Parties to provide, through the joint information service referred to in section II, paragraph 4, below, models of such coordination mechanisms as well as examples of good coordination practices from countries;

3. *Recommends* that Parties, when implementing the three conventions, including through capacity-building and technical assistance, ensure close cooperation and coordination among relevant sectors, ministries or programmes at the national level with respect to, among other things, the following:

(a) Protection of human health and the environment from the harmful impacts or adverse effects of hazardous chemicals and wastes;

(b) Prevention of accidents and emergency response in case of accidents;

(c) Combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes;

(d) Information generation and access;

(e) Technology transfer and transfer of know-how;

(f) Preparation of national positions for meetings of the Conferences of the Parties and other bodies of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions;

(g) Development cooperation;

4. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, in cooperation with relevant intergovernmental bodies such as the member organizations of the Intergovernmental Organization for the Sound Management of Chemicals and regional centres, to collaborate on the dissemination of good practices and, if necessary, the elaboration of guidance and training in the areas referred to in the preceding paragraph;

5. *Invites* United Nations Environment Programme/United Nations Industrial Development Organization cleaner production centres to contribute to the national implementation of the three conventions;

B. Programmatic cooperation in the field

6. *Invites* Parties to promote cooperative activities at the national and regional levels as far as possible;

7. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, working together with other bodies of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, multilateral environmental agreements, and other international bodies, to develop programmatic cooperation in the field that would support implementation of the three conventions in areas of common concern such as sustainable development, trade, customs (for example through the Green Customs Initiative), transport, public health, labour, environment, agriculture and industry;

8. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization to include such cooperation in their biennial work programmes;

9. *Recommends* that Parties incorporate in their national development plans and strategies measures to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in order to ensure coherence in their national priority setting and to facilitate the provision of aid by donors in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and in response to country and regional demand;

10. *Requests* the secretariats of the three conventions, in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and taking into account the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, to initiate joint collaboration to promote the effective implementation of the decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and their work programmes in the area of technology transfer and capacity-building;

11. *Encourages* Parties to strengthen capacity-building and technical support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for coordinated national implementation;

12. *Encourages* Parties to promote coordination between bilateral and multilateral donors to ensure consistent and non-duplicative assistance to Parties in their implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions;

13. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to promote programmatic cooperation on cross-cutting issues, including in the area of technology transfer and capacity-building, in the development of their respective work programmes and to report thereon to the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions;

C. Coordinated use of regional offices and centres

14. *Acknowledges* the role of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions in supporting Parties;

15. *Invites* Parties and other stakeholders to promote the full and coordinated use of regional centres to strengthen the regional delivery of technical assistance under all three conventions and to promote coherent chemicals and waste management, bearing in mind the existing and ongoing work of other multilateral environmental agreements and institutions. This work should promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycles and of hazardous wastes for sustainable development as well as for the protection of human health and the environment;

16. *Recommends* that a limited number of regional “focal centres”, with the responsibility to facilitate coordinated activities in the regions covering both chemicals and waste management, be selected from among the existing regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions. These focal centres will be designated following regional agreement and in accordance with the relevant procedural provisions of the respective conventions. These focal centres should:

(a) Ensure that the regional centres deliver their work in accordance with defined priorities and serve as an entry point for countries needing assistance or guidance on which centre in a region could provide assistance for a specific purpose;

(b) Strengthen regional centres to enable them to exercise a more synergistic approach as delivery mechanisms under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions;

(c) Play a special role in providing an overview of their activities and results to the conferences of the Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as examples of lessons learned on enhanced practical implementation of the conventions;

17. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to initiate pilot projects on the coordinated use of regional centres, such projects to be undertaken by the regional centres and build on lessons learned;

18. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the regional centres to exchange information about their capacities and work programmes;

19. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, other relevant international financial institutions and instruments, the regional centre host countries and others from the donor community to provide financial support necessary for the regional centres to carry out projects aimed at cooperation and coordination in support of implementation of the three conventions;

II. Technical issues

A. National reporting

1. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions to prepare, for consideration by their respective Conferences of the Parties, proposals:

(a) To synchronize the submission of Party reports under the two conventions in those years when the Parties to both conventions are to submit such reports;

(b) To develop joint capacity-building activities to assist Parties in coordinated data and information collection and management at the national level, including quality control, to enable them to fulfil their reporting obligations;

(c) To streamline their respective reporting formats and processes with a view to alleviating the burden of reporting, taking into account relevant activities by other bodies, including the United Nations Environment Programme;

B. Compliance/Non-compliance mechanisms

2. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, once compliance/non-compliance mechanisms are established under all three conventions, to prepare proposals for consideration by the Conferences of the Parties to the three conventions exploring the possibilities for enhancing coordination among the agreed mechanisms to facilitate compliance by, for example, provision of joint secretariat support for the committees, the attendance of the chairs of the three committees at each others' meetings or encouraging the appointment of members to the committees who have experience with other compliance mechanisms;

3. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to exchange information on progress made on the operation or establishment of the compliance/non-compliance mechanisms established or under negotiation under the three conventions;

C. Cooperation on technical and scientific issues

4. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to facilitate the exchange of relevant information between the technical and scientific bodies of the three conventions through the sharing of information with one another, with the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management and with other relevant intergovernmental bodies concerning the procedures developed and the chemicals being discussed under the three conventions;

5. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to maintain or establish cooperation on technical issues that relate to more than one of the three conventions, involving other bodies and institutions beyond the three conventions as appropriate;

III. Information management and public awareness issues

A. Joint outreach and public awareness

1. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to develop a common approach to awareness-raising and outreach activities among the three conventions;

2. *Also requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to make full use of and build on existing information and outreach mechanisms and tools;

B. Information exchange/clearing-house mechanism on health and environmental impacts

3. *Invites* Parties to consider establishing common websites and documentation centres at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels, containing available information on human health and environmental impacts relevant to the three conventions;

4. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to develop systems of information exchange on health and environmental impacts, including a clearing-house mechanism, with the aim of these systems serving all three conventions;

C. Joint input into other processes

5. *Requests* the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, whenever feasible, to act jointly in participating in other related processes and in providing information to other related bodies, organizations, institutions and processes;

IV. Administrative issues

1. *Recommends* that possible cost savings gained through these more efficient administrative arrangements be used to support implementation of the three conventions;

A. Joint managerial functions

2. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to establish joint management involving the Executive Secretaries of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions for joint services and joint activities through, for example, a system of rotating management or the assignment of individual joint services to a particular convention;

3. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to explore and assess the feasibility and cost implications of establishing joint coordination or a joint head of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions for consideration at the extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties referred to in section V, paragraph 3, below;

B. Resource mobilization

4. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, to establish, on an interim basis, through the Executive Secretaries of the three conventions, a joint resource mobilization service within the secretariats in Geneva. The service should support the implementation of the three conventions beyond that achievable through separate action by:

- (a) Strengthening mobilization of resources through the development of a joint resource mobilization strategy for the short, medium and long term;
- (b) Avoiding competitive and uncoordinated resource demands to donors;
- (c) Prioritizing coordinated efforts to explore new, innovative and adequate sources of funding, including for national implementation;
- (d) Promoting resource mobilization for a life-cycle approach to chemicals and waste management;
- (e) Mobilizing financial resources and technical assistance for programmes delivered through regional centres;
- (f) Developing joint strategy options on what countries can do at the national level to generate funds and better to gain access to international and bilateral financing;
- (g) Facilitating the exchange of experiences in mobilizing resources for national implementation;
- (h) Building on available methodologies, guidance and case studies that have been developed by other institutions;

5. *Decides* that the final decision regarding the above-named joint service shall be taken at the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties;

6. *Encourages* representatives of Parties to support the delivery of coherent and coordinated messages from the conferences of the Parties of each convention to the Global Environment

Facility and other relevant international financial institutions/ instruments on funding for the sound management of chemicals and wastes for the implementation of the conventions;

C. Financial management and audit functions

7. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, to establish, on an interim basis, through the Executive Secretaries of the three conventions, a joint financial and administrative support service, within the secretariats in Geneva, taking into account relevant support services provided by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, to prepare a proposal for joint audits of the accounts of the secretariats of the three conventions;

D. Joint services

9. *Welcomes* the support provided by both the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization to the work of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and encourages the continuation of such support;

10. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, in addition to the joint resource mobilization service and the joint financial and administrative support service referred to in section IV, paragraphs 4 and 7, above, respectively, to establish through the Executive Secretaries of the three Conventions, within the secretariats in Geneva and with the aim of improving the level and efficiency of delivery of services, on an interim basis:

- (a) A joint legal service;
- (b) A joint information technology service;
- (c) A joint information service;

11. *Decides* that a final decision regarding the joint services referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be taken at the extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions referred to in section V, paragraph 3, below;

12. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to provide further information on the costs and organizational implications of establishing the joint services identified in section IV, paragraph 10, above, to be presented prior to the extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions referred to in section V, paragraph 3, below;

V. Decision making

A. Coordinated meetings

1. *Decides* that the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions should be held in a coordinated manner and requests the Executive Secretaries of the three conventions to schedule such meetings in a way that facilitates such coordination;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries to schedule joint meetings of the bureaus of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as appropriate;

B. Extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties

3. *Decides* to convene simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to organize the meetings in coordination with the eleventh special session of

the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme. At these simultaneous meetings, which are aimed at giving high-level political support to the process of enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three conventions, the Conferences of the Parties would consider:

- (a) Decisions on joint activities;
- (b) Decisions on joint managerial functions;
- (c) Final decisions on joint services established on an interim basis;
- (d) Decisions on synchronization of the budget cycles of the three conventions;
- (e) Decisions on joint audits of the accounts of the secretariats of the three conventions;
- (f) Decisions on a review mechanism and follow up of the work on enhancing coordination and cooperation processes between the three conventions;
- (g) Reports or information received from the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariats of the three conventions on any other activity or proposed joint institution resulting from the present decision;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, to prepare proposals for the extraordinary meetings referred to in the preceding paragraph on:

- (a) A common arrangement for staffing and financing joint services of the three conventions, including financing shared posts;
- (b) Synchronizing the budget cycles of the three conventions as soon as possible to facilitate coordinated activities and joint services, bearing in mind the implications for the timing of future meetings of the Conferences of the Parties of the three conventions and for facilitating auditing;

5. *Invites* Parties and others in a position to do so to provide financing to support the extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions referred to in section V, paragraph 3, above;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to prepare proposals for financing the extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties referred to in section V, paragraph 3, above with a view to decisions being taken by the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting, by Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention at its fourth meeting and by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention at its fourth meeting;

C. Review arrangement

7. *Decides* that a mechanism and timetable for reviewing the arrangements adopted pursuant to the present decision shall be determined by the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions at the extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties referred to in section V, paragraph 3, above;

8. *Requests* Parties and secretariats and other bodies, as appropriate and within available resources, to take such actions as are necessary to implement the present decision.