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**Rotterdam Convention on the Prior
Informed Consent Procedure for Certain
Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in
International Trade
Conference of the Parties
Third meeting**

Geneva, 9–13 October 2006

Item 6 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Issues arising out of previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties:
national and regional delivery of technical assistance**

Technical assistance under the Rotterdam Convention

Note by the secretariat

1. In its decision RC-2/4 on regional and national delivery of technical assistance, the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare a detailed costed programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2007–2008 for consideration by the Conference at its third meeting.
2. Annexed to the present note is a detailed costed programme of technical assistance activities for the biennium 2007–2008.
3. The Conference of the Parties may wish:
 - (a) To review and approve the proposed programme of work and associated budget for 2007–2008;
 - (b) To establish priorities for the programme of work, giving due consideration to possible budgetary limitations, and consider a possible role for the Bureau in providing guidance to the secretariat at the midpoint of the biennium;
 - (c) To encourage Parties to contribute to the voluntary trust fund thereby allowing for the implementation of the planned activities;
 - (d) To consider the draft decision contained in appendix II of the paper attached to the present note.

* UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.3/1.

Annex

Proposed programme of work for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2007–2008

Background

1. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade considered a proposal for the regional delivery of technical assistance which had been developed by the secretariat.¹ In addition, it adopted decision RC-1/14 on the regional delivery of technical assistance, in which it requested the secretariat to take the initial steps to operationalize a programme of technical assistance set out in paragraph (c) of that decision. The report by the secretariat on the experience gained in implementing the regional delivery of technical assistance² was considered by the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting and was the basis for decision RC-2/4 on regional and national delivery of technical assistance. In that decision, the Conference requested the secretariat to prepare a detailed costed programme of work for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2007–2008 for consideration by the Conference at its third meeting. The present proposal is in line with the overall strategy for the regional delivery of technical assistance considered at the first meeting of the Conference.

Introduction

2. The proposed programme of work has been developed in response to needs identified by Parties and builds on previously-undertaken technical assistance activities, in particular the development of national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention developed over the 2005–2006 biennium and the needs and priorities identified therein. The goal is to develop activities that are tailored to the specific needs of individual countries or small groups of countries with a focus on those actions which are deemed necessary for Parties to implement fully the Convention.

3. The approach taken in the present paper is to describe the range of technical assistance activities that are available; to identify the Parties which might be expected to benefit most from such activities and the partners that might work with the secretariat in delivering the activities; and to outline the anticipated level of resources required for 2007–2008. This approach marks a move away from regionally-based training to activities targeted at individual countries or small groups of countries relating to specific aspects of the Convention. It places a greater responsibility on Governments to define their technical assistance needs and to be proactive in seeking assistance to meet those needs.

4. This approach is in line with the discussions and decisions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Conference of the Parties, in particular decision INC-10/7 on a strategic approach to technical assistance, in which the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee invited countries to inform the secretariat of their specific problems in implementing the interim PIC procedure and of their related technical assistance needs and requested the secretariat to circulate those to potential donors, and decision RC-1/14 on the regional delivery of technical assistance in which the Conference of the Parties agreed that interested countries should contact the secretariat to request action.

5. The present paper is divided into four chapters: the first briefly describes the types of assistance that might be undertaken in the period 2007–2008 in response to the technical assistance needs of Parties; the second reviews possible partners that might work with the secretariat in the delivery of such assistance; the third proposes the elements of a programme of work for 2007–2008 including an initial estimate of possible costs; and the fourth sets out issues to be considered and next steps in operationalizing the proposed programme of work.

¹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/28.

² UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.2/12.

I. Responding to the technical assistance needs of Parties

6. The first stage in assisting Parties in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention is helping them define their specific needs. The present chapter outlines the role of the resource kit in assisting Parties in the implementation of the Convention and briefly reviews how the development of national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention provides an opportunity for Parties to identify their needs regarding the implementation of the Convention and priorities for action. It also briefly describes some of the types of meetings that might be considered to help Parties address those needs, recognizing that some issues might not be effectively addressed by a meeting but will require more targeted or sustained forms of assistance.

A. Resource kit

7. An important contribution to facilitating work with partners has been the development of the Rotterdam Convention resource kit. The resource kit is a comprehensive source of information on the Convention which has been developed with a range of end-users in mind, including the general public, designated national authorities and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Convention. It includes elements to assist in awareness-raising activities and detailed technical information and training materials aimed at facilitating implementation of the Convention. Copies of the resource kit and its various elements have been circulated widely.

B. National and subregional meetings

1. Developing national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention

8. The secretariat has developed a curriculum for meetings at the national and subregional levels to assist Parties in developing national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention. These plans and strategies define what needs to be done, by whom and when. They also serve to identify priorities for action and are a basis on which countries can develop requests for specific technical assistance activities.

9. The Parties eligible to participate in such national and subregional meetings are developing country Parties³ that have yet to develop a national plan or strategy. As of May 2006, there were in the order of 47 such Parties.

10. A related activity is the convening of national seminars of one or two days in follow-up to subregional meetings. These seminars provide an opportunity to seek broader support for the national plans or strategies, to review their status of implementation and to give further consideration to country needs and priorities for action, in recognition of the fact that only a limited number of national representatives participate in the subregional meetings.

11. The countries eligible to participate in such seminars are those which participated in subregional meetings and which have requested such a national seminar. These seminars are organized by the designated national authority working with the representative of the regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with limited financial support from the secretariat. By the end of 2006, it is likely that approximately 20 Parties will be eligible to participate in such seminars.

2. Thematic meetings on specific issues

12. The range of issues for which specific assistance may be requested will vary widely within and across regions. Based on experience to date, issues might include: assistance with the legislative or administrative infrastructure for the implementation of the Convention; import decision-making; implementing export obligations; working with customs authorities on the enforcement of national import decisions and respecting the import decisions of others; and procedures for the identification of severely hazardous pesticide formulations. The specific issues would be most effectively identified through a review of the priorities for action identified in the national plans or strategies on the implementation of the Convention within the region.

³ Reference to developing country Parties is intended also to include Parties which are countries with economies in transition.

13. The way in which these issues might be addressed depends on the issue itself and the countries involved. In some cases, it may be that the issue can be effectively addressed by convening a national meeting involving a broader range of stakeholders. For others, where the issue has been identified by a number of countries in a subregion, a thematic meeting involving two to four countries might be convened to share experience and propose options to address the particular issue. As a first step, it is proposed that a limited number of national or subregional meetings should be held in the biennium 2007–2008 on specific themes based on the priorities for action identified by countries within a subregion, following a systematic review of the available national plans or strategies developed in 2006.

14. It is proposed that the work on severely hazardous pesticide formulations which was started in 2006 should be continued. A further topic of concern which has emerged is the need to increase understanding of the challenges associated with the trade aspects of the Convention, in particular the role of exporting countries in implementing the Convention and the relationship between some of the major exporting Parties and their principal importing Parties.

3. Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities

15. In order to foster cooperation among designated national authorities in a given region, biennial meetings might be convened on specific themes relevant to the implementation of the Convention, such as: notifications of final regulatory action; import decision-making; how to make use of information available under the Convention; and the PIC Circular. These meetings would provide an opportunity for designated national authorities to meet on a regular basis to review progress in the implementation of the Convention, identify common problems and share experience in finding solutions. The number of participants at these meetings would be limited in order to facilitate focused discussion. The specific issues for consideration at meetings in the different regions would vary.

16. While the review of national plans or strategies may serve to identify issues of common interest at the subregional or regional levels, it might also be useful at these meetings to focus on basic implementation of the Convention, such as the provision of import responses. Consistent with the Party to Party assistance envisaged in the Convention, each meeting of designated national authorities should include some Parties who are successfully meeting their Convention obligations and others who are less successful. Bringing together designated national authorities in this way may serve to strengthen regional cooperation and support among Parties in the implementation of the Convention.

17. These meetings could be convened in cooperation with the regional centres established under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and in collaboration with the regional offices of FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a means to strengthen the role of these offices in the regional work of the Convention. This strengthened cooperation would help define country needs, identify opportunities for collaboration with other related activities at the national and subregional levels and facilitate follow-up with countries.

C. Working directly with individual countries on specific issues

18. As noted under section B above, the range of issues for which assistance may be requested will vary widely and the way in which these different issues might be addressed depends on the issue itself and the countries involved. In some instances, a national or subregional meeting may not be an effective way to respond to an identified need. In such cases, a more efficient means of assistance might include having a regional expert or international consultant work directly with the designated national authority in a country; alternatively, it may be possible to address the issue through integration with activities under way in the country or at the regional level through bilateral aid projects, work on related multilateral environmental agreements such as the Basel Convention or the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants or the work of other regional or subregional organizations.

19. The secretariat could facilitate contact between Parties requesting assistance and the bilateral or multilateral aid programmes or organizations which might be able to provide such assistance.

II. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance

20. With the entry into force of the Convention, the obligations contained therein became legally binding on Parties and it is to be expected that there will be an increase in requests to the secretariat for assistance in accordance with such provisions of the Convention as article 10, paragraph 4 (b). A key result of the development of national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention will

be requests for technical assistance based on the priority actions identified. Approximately 27 developing country Parties will have developed national plans or strategies by the end of 2006; these countries can be expected to seek assistance beginning in 2007. Presuming that additional Parties develop national plans or strategies in 2007, the number of requests is expected to increase through 2008.

21. In order to meet this increased demand for assistance, make the best use of existing resources and benefit from available expertise, the secretariat will need to work with a range of partners and seek opportunities to strengthen and expand the range of partners in the delivery of the technical assistance in support of the Convention. The present chapter briefly outlines some of the key partners that may work with the secretariat in the regional delivery of technical assistance in 2007–2008.

22. The nature of the technical assistance activity to be undertaken will influence the choice of partners. For example, cooperation with the World Customs Organization and the Green Customs initiative of UNEP will continue. Similarly, in working on the issue of severely hazardous pesticide formulations, opportunities to work with relevant partners such as the World Health Organization and the Pesticide Action Network will be explored.

23. The region where the work is to be undertaken will also influence the choice of partners. It is proposed that efforts are made to continue to work closely with the regional offices of FAO and UNEP in developing and delivering the work on technical assistance and, as appropriate, with FAO representatives in individual countries. Continued cooperation with the Basel Convention regional centres in the delivery of specific meetings is envisaged, as is work with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in finalizing the guidance on the preparation of national plans for the implementation of the Convention.

24. The regional group of experts established in December 2005 has assisted the secretariat in the delivery of national and subregional meetings on the implementation of the Convention and is in a position to provide follow-up with individual countries on specific issues associated with the implementation of the Convention. The further development of this group is seen as an opportunity to promote South-South cooperation and develop regional solutions to regional problems.

25. The secretariat will continue to cooperate with the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions to coordinate proposed activities among the three conventions and avoid overlaps. Such activities might include the provision of training which is relevant to customs authorities, information management and decision-making. In addition, continued efforts are being made to include information relating to the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the national implementation plans under development for the Stockholm Convention. Where feasible, activities relating to the legislative or administrative infrastructure for chemicals management will be coordinated with the secretariats of the Stockholm and Basel conventions in order to promote an integrated approach to the implementation of the three conventions at the national level.

26. The secretariat has also worked to establish partnerships with regional entities that are engaged in working with countries on matters relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Work has been initiated with the Sahelian Pesticides Committee (CSP) which was established under the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and which has nine member countries, and with the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), which has 24 member countries. The interaction with countries at the national and subregional meetings and with the regional offices of FAO and UNEP is expected to lead to the identification of further regional partners.

27. The Parties providing bilateral assistance in accordance with article 16 of the Convention could be another set of partners. Countries willing to provide technical assistance in specific areas could be invited to inform the secretariat of their expertise and ability to assist. As proposed in section C of chapter I above, when requests for assistance are received, the secretariat could, as a first step, determine whether a national Government has expressed interest in working on the subject and facilitate contact between the Government requesting assistance and the relevant bilateral or multilateral aid organization or programme.

III. Elements of a programme of work for 2007–2008 on the regional delivery of technical assistance

28. The present chapter contains a proposed programme of work for 2007–2008 for the regional delivery of technical assistance based on the experience gained. It sets out specific activities to be undertaken in responding to the needs of countries and the partners that would be involved in delivering these activities. In addition, it notes the importance of the need to develop measures of success or indicators of progress in order to have an understanding of the effectiveness of these activities. Appendix I to the present paper contains a tabular summary of the estimated costs associated with the implementation of this programme of work.

A. Resource kit

29. The resource kit will be updated to reflect experience gained in its use, especially regarding the development of new documents and the revising and reprinting of existing materials. As practical tools to assist countries, further case studies based on the experience of selected countries in the implementation of specific aspects of the Convention, for example the development of legal or administrative infrastructure and integration with work on the implementation of the Stockholm Convention, will be developed. Continued efforts will be made to ensure that as many of the documents as possible are available in six languages.

30. The training materials set out in section D of the resource kit will be evaluated, in particular the prototype of the interactive compact disk to facilitate continuous and self-directed training at the national level, in order to meet the challenges that arise from frequent changes in designated national authority in some countries.

31. Section E of the resource kit, on cross-cutting issues, is designed to provide guidance on how the work of the Convention might be integrated with the activities carried out under other international agreements or programmes. It includes references to selected sources of general information on chemicals that may be of interest or use to countries in implementing the Convention. It is proposed that this section of the resource kit should continue to be refined and expanded to reflect new information as it becomes available.

B. National and subregional meetings

1. Developing national plans or strategies on the implementation of the Convention

32. As a key first step in defining country needs, the national and subregional meetings for the preparation of national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention will be continued. The methodology and approach will be modified as necessary to reflect experience gained. Measures of the success of this programme will include the ability of countries to meet their obligations under the Convention, in particular with regard to the submission of notifications of final regulatory actions and import responses. A further measure of success will be the number of requests for technical assistance submitted by Parties, based on the priority actions identified in their national plans or strategies.

33. As of May 2006, there are in the order of 47 developing country Parties which have yet to develop national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention. Work should be undertaken with these countries in 2007–2008, building on the national implementation plans developed under the Stockholm Convention, and in cooperation with partners such as UNITAR and the regional offices of FAO and UNEP. It is proposed to convene three national and five subregional meetings, for a maximum of four countries, each year.

34. In cooperation with the regional offices of FAO, it is proposed that national seminars be convened for the Parties that participated in the subregional consultations held in 2006 and for the 40 or so Parties which will participate in subregional meetings in the 2007–2008 biennium. This is particularly important given the relatively small number of participants per country in the subregional meetings. The national seminars provide an opportunity to seek broader support for the plans, to review the status of implementation of the plan and to give further consideration to country needs and priorities for action.

2. Thematic meetings: national and subregional meetings on specific issues

35. The demand for national and subregional meetings on specific issues is country driven. It is proposed that those Parties which have developed a national plan or strategy for the implementation of the Convention will be given priority for participation in these meetings.

36. It is clear that, as national plans or strategies are developed by a broader range of countries, opportunities for developing meetings on different issues will arise in the course of 2007–2008. It is proposed that these issues should be identified through a systematic review by the secretariat of the priorities for action at the regional level, as identified in the national plans or strategies developed by Parties. In order to respond to the issues, it is proposed that, subject to the availability of funds, three national and three subregional meetings, involving a limited number of Parties, should be considered on specific issues over the biennium. The issues, location and countries to be involved will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis following a review of the priorities for action identified in the national plans or strategies completed in 2006 and 2007. The estimated costs of convening these meetings are presented in appendix I to the present paper.

37. In the meantime, it is proposed that two series of workshops be developed focusing on the trade aspects of the Convention: one for exporting countries and a second for exporting countries and their principal trade partners (for example, for five importing countries within the exporting country's region or in different regions). These meetings could focus on those developing country Parties which are major manufacturers and exporters of chemicals such as Brazil, China and India. A further variation could involve a joint project with one or more of the member States of the European Union and a limited number of their principal trading partners in developing countries. The specifics of the location of the meetings and the countries that might be involved remain to be determined. The estimated costs of convening such meetings with major exporters and between exporters and their principal trading partners are presented in appendix I to the present paper.

38. Severely hazardous pesticide formulations continue to cause problems under the conditions of use in many countries. The European Union is funding a three year project (2005–2008) with the Pesticide Action Network to strengthen community health monitoring capabilities relevant to pesticide poisonings in five African countries. It is proposed that the collaboration with this project, which was initiated in 2006, should be continued with a view to establishing appropriate links between designated national authorities and community health monitoring activities in the five pilot countries and a process for the preparation and submission of proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations under article 6 of the Convention. The estimated costs of this continued collaboration are presented in appendix I to the present paper.

3. Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities in a given region

39. As noted elsewhere, one of the outcomes of the work with the regional offices of FAO and UNEP has been the development of regional strategies for the implementation of the Convention. These strategies have been loosely based on the prior informed consent (PIC) regions. It is thought that clustering countries in these regions may encourage cooperation among designated national authorities and facilitate follow-up by the regional and subregional offices of FAO.

40. It is proposed that a regional or subregional meeting of designated national authorities should be convened in each of the seven PIC regions in 2007 and 2008 with a view to addressing specific issues of concern to Parties. To facilitate constructive discussion, it is proposed that participation should be limited to around 30 participants. In order to accommodate the size of some of the regions and the various language profiles of the regions, some 10 meetings are envisaged through 2007–2008. It is proposed that the issues, location and countries to be involved will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

C. Working directly with individual countries on specific issues

41. The way in which the specific needs of individual Parties might be addressed depends on the issue of concern and the Parties involved. In some instances, a national or subregional meeting may not be an effective way of responding to the identified need. In such cases, a more efficient means of assistance might include having a regional expert or international consultant work directly with the designated national authority in a country; alternatively, it may be possible to address the issue through integration with activities under way in the country or at the regional level through bilateral aid projects, work on related multilateral environmental agreements such as the Stockholm or Basel conventions, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) or the work of other regional or subregional organizations.

42. In some instances, depending on available resources, the secretariat might arrange for the designated national authority to work with a regional expert; in others, the secretariat might facilitate contact between Parties requesting assistance and those programmes which might be able to provide such assistance.

D. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance

43. The secretariat will continue to look for opportunities to initiate and strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations involved in chemicals management activities. A number of organizations are active regionally or within certain groups of countries. Some of these, such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the Alliance of Small Island States, have been involved to a greater or lesser extent in chemical safety issues. The secretariat will continue to explore opportunities to encourage such organizations to integrate Rotterdam Convention issues into their work. Similarly, regional and subregional organizations and networks that are directly involved in chemicals management will continue to be informed of the activities relevant to the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention and, as appropriate, invited to participate in regional and subregional activities. Cooperation with the Basel Convention regional centres will also continue. Some of the specific regional partners with whom cooperation is foreseen in 2007 and 2008 include the following.

1. Regional offices of FAO and UNEP

44. Annual meetings with representatives of the FAO and UNEP regional offices are proposed as is continuation of the informal newsletter on regional activities circulated within the secretariat and among the regional offices. A meeting with representatives of FAO and UNEP regional offices at the end of 2006 will provide an opportunity to obtain feedback on experience with the delivery of technical assistance activities in the regions in 2006 and valuable input to developing a programme of activities for 2007 in the light of the outcome of this meeting. It would also provide an opportunity for the regional offices to develop further the regional strategies on the implementation of the Convention initiated at the meeting with representatives of FAO and UNEP regional offices held in November 2005. A similar meeting is proposed for the end of 2007 to review progress in 2006 and assist in the preparation of planning activities for 2008 and in developing further ideas for meeting the technical assistance needs of countries in preparation for fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in 2008.

2. Group of regional experts

45. Representatives of the group of regional experts created in 2005 have worked with the secretariat in the delivery of the national and subregional meetings on the implementation of the Convention. In addition, the group is seen as a means of promoting cooperation among Parties within and between subregions. Annual meetings of this group are proposed in order to follow up on the experience gained in 2006 and 2007, to provide an opportunity to include new experts in the group and perhaps to expand the range of expertise available within the group.

3. Sahelian Pesticides Committee (CSP)

46. In order to strengthen the link between the work of CSP and the designated national authorities in the member countries of CSP, it is proposed that the participation of those authorities in the two scheduled meetings of CSP in 2007 and 2008 should be sponsored. The goal of this activity is to explore further how the work of CSP might assist member countries in meeting their obligations under the Rotterdam Convention. It is also proposed that, over the period 2007–2008, there should be individual visits to the designated national authorities in the member countries of CSP that are Parties to the Convention in order to assist in follow-up, in particular with regard to submitting notifications of final regulatory action and decisions of future imports of chemicals listed in Annex III to the Convention.

4. Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)

47. The next session of APPPC is scheduled for September 2007. In follow-up to the work initiated at the meeting in September 2005, the secretariat proposes that the participation in the meeting of regional experts or a limited number of designated national authorities from representative member countries should be sponsored in order to promote the inclusion of the Rotterdam Convention in the APPPC work programme.

5. Other partners

48. The nature of the technical assistance activity will, in many instances, determine the choice of partners by the secretariat.

49. Cooperation with the World Customs Organization will be strengthened in part as a result of the entry into force in 2007 of the Harmonized System custom codes for the first group of chemicals in

Annex III to the Convention. This will facilitate enforcement of national import decisions by Parties and provide an opportunity to work with the World Customs Organization to highlight the importance of communication between designated national authorities and customs officials. In addition, cooperative or collaborative activities with customs officials through the Green Customs Initiative of UNEP, the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant organizations will continue through 2007–2008.

50. Integration with activities under the Basel and Stockholm conventions will be further explored. Based on the outcome of the review of the completed national implementation plans for the Stockholm Convention and feedback from national and subregional meetings, consideration will be given to the need to revise the relevant guidance documents in order to strengthen the links between national implementation plans and associated action plans under the Stockholm Convention and the obligations of countries under the Rotterdam Convention. Any revisions of the guidance will be developed in cooperation with the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention. In addition, national focal points for the Basel and Stockholm conventions as well as SAICM will continue to be invited to participate in the national and subregional meetings on developing national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. Their participation in developing these plans is seen as a key step in promoting an integrated approach to the implementation of these conventions and related chemicals management activities at the national level.

E. Measuring progress - indicators of success

51. The work with the regional offices of FAO and UNEP provides an opportunity for the secretariat to benefit from lessons learned in the delivery of technical assistance. This experience is in turn used to further develop and refine a programme of work that meets the technical assistance needs of Parties. There are a range of fairly straightforward quantitative indicators that are also being used to measure the impact of the technical assistance activities in support of the Rotterdam Convention. These include the number of notifications of final regulatory action and import responses submitted to the secretariat as well as requests for assistance in the implementation of the Convention. It may be of interest to explore the feasibility of developing longer-term indicators that would assist in determining whether the Convention itself is meeting its overall objective of protecting human health and the environment.

IV. Issues to consider

A. Participation and attendance

52. In working with countries in recent years, the experience of the secretariat has been that the response to invitations to nominate participants to subregional and regional workshops is generally low. At the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat provided a list of eligible countries for participation in the workshops to be convened by UNITAR, which produced much greater results. It is therefore proposed that the secretariat should compile lists of Parties who have not yet had an opportunity to develop a national plan or strategy on the implementation of the Convention. This list will be posted on the Convention website, highlighted in the PIC Circular and circulated to official contact points and designated national authorities with a request for Parties to indicate within a specified timeframe, for example two months, their interest in participating at meetings and to designate a contact point. Based on the responses received and the resources available to the secretariat, meetings will be scheduled over the 2007–2008 biennium.

53. A similar approach is proposed for identifying countries to participate in the subregional meetings on specific issues and those meetings aimed at fostering cooperation among designated national authorities.

B. Planning: funding and priorities

54. The ability to deliver this programme of technical assistance is based on the availability of funds in the voluntary trust fund over the course of 2007–2008. It is unlikely that sufficient funds will have been received to fund the full programme by the time of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Furthermore, it is recognized that certain donors may decide to earmark funds for one or more of the proposed activities.

55. In order to make the best use of the available resources to assist Parties in the implementation of the Convention, developing a national plan or strategy for the implementation of the Convention and a set of priorities for action is considered an essential first step. Once these plans and priorities are

identified, Parties can seek assistance from a range of sources, not only the secretariat. Similarly, experience has demonstrated that regional partners are key to the effective delivery of technical assistance. For these reasons, the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the following order of priority when reviewing available funding for the programme of work for 2007–2008:

- (a) National and subregional meetings on developing national plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention and the associated national seminars (paragraphs 32–34 above);
- (b) Meetings with representatives of the regional offices of FAO and UNEP and the regional experts, together with the updating and revision of the resource kit (paragraphs 29–31 and 44–45 above)
- (c) Activities with other partners including CILSS, APPPC, WCO and Stockholm Convention (paragraphs 46–47 and 49–50 above);
- (d) Thematic meetings on specific issues, in particular those related to trade and severely hazardous pesticide formulations (paragraphs 35–38 above);
- (e) Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities (paragraphs 39–40 above).

56. It is recognized that a review of these priorities and further guidance to the secretariat at the midpoint of the biennium on the implementation of these activities would be beneficial. It is proposed that the Bureau should be invited to assume this role.

57. In addition, the secretariat will need to develop a report on technical assistance activities for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting and a programme of activities for the next biennium (2009–2010).

Appendix I

Summary of the costs of individual elements of the proposed programme of work for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2007–2008

	Unit cost (US\$)	2007 (US\$)	2008 (US\$)	Total (US\$)
A. Resource kit (paragraphs 29–30)				
• New documents, case studies and legal guide		50,000		50,000
• New documents, case studies and integration with national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention			50,000	50,000
• Electronic learning tool		30,000		30,000
Subtotal		80,000	50,000	130,000
B. National and subregional meetings				
<i>i) Developing national plans or strategies (paragraphs 32–34)</i>				
• 3 national meetings	20,000	60,000	60,000	120,000
• 5 subregional meetings (max. 4 countries)	35,000	175,000	175,000	350,000
• 20 national seminars	4,000	80,000	80,000	160,000
Subtotal		315,000	315,000	630,000
<i>ii) Thematic meetings – specific issues</i>				
• 3 national meetings (paragraphs 35–36)	40,000	120,000		120,000
• 3 meetings involving 4 trade partners (paragraph 37)	80,000		240,000	240,000
• 2 meetings on severely hazardous pesticide formulations (one in French and one in English) (paragraph 38)	10,000	20,000		20,000
Subtotal		140,000	240,000	380,000
<i>iii) Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities (paragraphs 39–40)</i>				
• 5 subregional meetings each year	30,000–60,000	150,000–300,000	150,000–300,000	300,000–600,000
Subtotal		150,000–300,000	150,000–300,000	300,000–600,000
C. Working directly with countries on specific issues (paragraphs 41–42)		50,000	50,000	100,000
Subtotal		50,000	50,000	100,000
D. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance				
<i>i) Regional offices of FAO and UNEP (paragraph 44)</i>	70,000	70,000	70,000	140,000
<i>ii) Group of regional experts (paragraph 45)</i>	50,000	50,000	50,000	100,000
Subtotal		120,000	120,000	240,000
<i>iii) CSP (paragraph 46)</i>				
• Meeting of designated national authority and CSP each year	20,000	20,000	20,000	40,000
• One visit to each of 8 Parties	6,000	24,000	24,000	42,000
<i>iv) APPPC (paragraph 47)</i>	15,000	15,000		15,000
Subtotal		59,000	44,000	97,000
E. Measuring success				
• Work on indicators (paragraph 51)		20,000		20,000
Total		934,000–1,084,000	969,000–1,119,000	1,903,000–2,203,000

Appendix II

Draft decision of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties on regional and national delivery of technical assistance

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the comprehensive proposal for the regional delivery of technical assistance considered at the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties,¹ and reflected in decisions RC-1/14 and RC-2/4 on technical assistance adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its first and second meetings respectively,

Also recalling the provisions of the Rotterdam Convention on technical assistance, especially its article 16,

Noting that the hazardous chemicals and pesticides covered by the Convention contribute to poverty through their adverse effects on human health and environmental resources,

Stressing the importance of technical assistance in enabling Parties, especially developing countries, and in particular the least developed among them, and countries with economies in transition, to implement the Convention,

Emphasizing the need to promote coordination and cooperation among international organizations, conventions and programmes, in particular the Basel and Stockholm conventions, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as well as among Parties, designated national authorities, customs services and other relevant organizations in the provision of technical assistance,

Recalling the role of the secretariat of the Convention as laid down in its article 19,

Emphasizing the need to achieve effective and coordinated delivery of technical assistance,

Noting with appreciation the work of the secretariat in the implementation of decisions RC-1/14 and RC-2/4 on technical assistance,²

1. *Requests* Parties that are in a position to do so to contribute to the voluntary trust fund in support of technical assistance activities;
2. *Adopts* the programme of work for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for 2007–2008 and the proposed priorities as set forth in chapters III and IV of document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.3/15;
3. *Requests* the Bureau working with the secretariat to review progress and priorities with respect to specific technical assistance activities at the midpoint of the biennium;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session on the experience gained in the regional and national delivery of technical assistance;
5. *Also requests* the secretariat to prepare a detailed costed programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2008–2009 for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting.

¹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/28.

² UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.3/14.