



**United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

Distr. General
1 August 2008

Original: English

**Rotterdam Convention on the Prior
Informed Consent Procedure for Certain
Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in
International Trade**

Conference of the Parties

Fourth meeting

Rome, 27–31 October 2008

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Organizational matters: organization of work

**Scenario note for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
to the Rotterdam Convention**

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Conference of the Parties, in the annex to the present note, information for its fourth meeting prepared in consultation with its President, Ms. Andrea Repetti (Argentina).

*

UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.4/1.

K0841423 200808

Annex

Scenario note for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

1. The Secretariat, in consultation with the President of the Conference, has prepared the present scenario note to assist delegates in preparing for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties by communicating expectations for the meeting and highlighting key issues. The scenario outlined below suggests one of various possible approaches to the conduct of the meeting. This scenario is provided without prejudice to any decision that the Conference may wish to take on how it will organize its work.

2. The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will take place from 27 to 31 October 2008 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. The meeting will include a high-level segment on 30 and 31 October. Documents for the meeting were distributed in July and August 2008 and posted on the Rotterdam Convention website (<http://www.pic.int>). The timely availability of those documents should provide delegates with sufficient time to review them, conduct consultations and make other preparations to help to ensure a productive meeting.

A. General objectives of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

3. The overall objective of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties includes providing a sound basis for full implementation of the Convention by all Parties, in part by building on synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, and promoting the sound management of chemicals. Two sets of issues are foreseen for the meeting, which might be categorized broadly as policy issues and operational or implementation issues. Within each of those two categories, the key items for which decisions will need to be taken by the Conference are set out below.

4. The key policy issues to be considered by the Conference include:

(a) The Conference will further discuss, with a view to adopting, the procedures and institutional mechanisms on non-compliance required under article 17 of the Rotterdam Convention based on the text developed at the third meeting of the Conference;

(b) The Conference may decide on the inclusion of three chemicals in Annex III of the Convention and the adoption of the relevant decision guidance documents forwarded by the Chemical Review Committee. In taking these decisions, Governments are invited to recall the objectives of the Convention, which include protecting human health and the environment while allowing informed trade in chemicals. The inclusion of chemicals in the prior informed consent procedure will enable Governments to take informed decisions about future imports of such chemicals;

(c) The Conference will have an opportunity to review progress in the implementation of the key obligations of the Convention, to consider lessons learned and to provide guidance to the Secretariat and Parties on possible future action. Of particular concern is the inability to reach consensus on listing in Annex III chemicals that have been recommended for inclusion by the Chemical Review Committee and the implications thereof for the Convention's continued effectiveness. The Conference may wish to initiate discussion on possible approaches to ensuring the Convention's continued effectiveness;

(d) The Conference will consider a report by the three co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, who will present the outcome of the Group's work. Its mandate was to prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination among the three conventions for submission to the conferences of the Parties to all three conventions. The Conference will have an opportunity to review the written summary report prepared by the co-chairs and consider, for possible adoption, the draft decision that includes the Group's recommendation. That recommendation was considered and a decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting, held in June 2008.

5. The key operational or implementation issues to be considered by the Conference include:

(a) The Conference will consider a report on the outcome of the technical assistance activities undertaken in 2007–2008 and decide on a programme of technical assistance for 2009–2010.

The proposed programme has been expanded to meet all the needs identified by Parties in the implementation of the Convention and includes a series of activities to be undertaken jointly with the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention. It is important that Parties consider carefully their priorities for technical assistance under the Rotterdam Convention to ensure that they contribute effectively to the implementation of the Convention and to their national development goals. For countries with the ability to make financial contributions to such work, this discussion will provide an opportunity to consider how they might do so;

(b) The Conference will review progress in the implementation of decision RC-3/5 on a financial mechanism, both on the part of the Secretariat and of Parties. Governments are encouraged to come to the meeting ready to report on the actions that they have taken in implementing this decision;

(c) The Conference will need to decide on the 17 Parties that will be eligible to nominate new experts to the Chemical Review Committee to replace those who were appointed for a four-year term under decision RC-1/6. In addition, the term of office for the current Bureau of the Conference will end with the closure of the current meeting, and the Conference will need to elect a new Bureau in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure to serve from the end of the current meeting until the end of the next meeting. Regional groups are thus encouraged to review during the course of the meeting their representation on the Chemical Review Committee and the Bureau;

(d) The Conference will need to approve a programme of work for 2009–2010, including the adoption of a budget for this period, together with a possible decision on ways to reduce budgetary exposure to currency fluctuations. It will also need to return to issues that at prior meetings it had scheduled for consideration at the current meeting. Details on these items may be found in the documents referred to in the annotated provisional agenda.

B. Agenda and organization of the meeting

6. The annotated provisional agenda for the meeting (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.4/1/Add.1) identifies issues for discussion and the documents that pertain to each agenda item. Most of the documents prepared for the current meeting identify the provisions of the Convention or decisions of the Conference of the Parties that provide mandates for the activities discussed therein. Meeting documents also identify possible actions to be taken by the Conference.

7. The meeting will comprise five days of sessions from 27 to 31 October (Monday to Friday). The proposed daily schedule for plenary will be two three-hour sessions per day (10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3 p.m.–6 p.m.).

8. The meeting will be opened on Monday, 27 October at 10 a.m. It is proposed that the meeting be conducted in plenary and that contact and drafting groups be established as needed.

9. After the opening formalities on Monday morning, the Conference will proceed to organizational matters (item 2 of the provisional agenda). The Conference will adopt the agenda for the meeting, amended as appropriate, and agree on the organization of work.

10. The Conference will consider its rules of procedure (item 3 of the provisional agenda). The rules of procedure were adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, except for the text in square brackets in paragraph 1 of rule 45. The Conference may wish to discuss the text with the aim of resolving its status.

11. The Conference will consider the credentials of representatives (item 4 of the provisional agenda). The Secretariat will introduce the matter to the Conference of the Parties and, in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the Bureau will examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference of the Parties later in the week.

12. Before turning to discussion of the implementation of the Convention and issues arising out of the previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties (items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda), the Conference may wish to take up the items on the report on activities of the Secretariat and on the programme of work and consideration of the proposed budget for the biennium 2009–2010 (items 7 and 8 of the provisional agenda). By so doing, it would provide an opportunity for the Secretariat to make an initial presentation and for a budget contact group to be established to prepare a draft decision on financing and budget for the biennium 2009–2010 for consideration and adoption by the Conference in plenary later in the week. The Conference may wish to mandate the budget group to commence its work following initial discussions in plenary of issues with budgetary implications (e.g., technical assistance and enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions).

13. The Conference may then consider the implementation of the Convention and issues arising out of previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Discussion of those items is expected to begin on Monday afternoon and continue through Wednesday.

14. A high-level segment is planned for the Thursday and Friday (item 11 of the provisional agenda), based on the theme of "Sound chemicals management: relieving the burden on public health." This high-level segment is particularly significant for the current meeting as there are a number of important policy and operational issues on which decisions will need to be taken. Given that political will is a key requisite for the successful implementation of the Convention, the high-level segment will provide an opportunity to help to ensure that the activities of the Convention are brought to the attention of those at the highest levels in Governments. Participants in the high-level segment are invited to consider the above-mentioned theme in preparing their addresses to the Conference.

15. By Thursday afternoon, the Conference may wish to elect officers for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (item 10 of the provisional agenda). This would allow for a joint meeting of the Bureau of the fourth meeting and the newly elected Bureau that will take office immediately following the close of the current meeting to facilitate the transition.

16. On Friday, the Conference will have the opportunity to take decisions on the basis of draft decisions submitted by contact or drafting groups or by the Secretariat at the request of the Conference. The Conference may wish to decide on the date and venue of its fifth meeting (item 9 of the provisional agenda) and consider any other matters raised during the meeting (item 12 of the provisional agenda).

17. It is expected that the report of the meeting will be considered on Friday afternoon (item 13 of the provisional agenda). The report of the meeting, up until the end of the day on Thursday, will be approved with any amendments by the Conference. Consistent with the practice followed at the previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties and at those of other multilateral environmental agreements, the Parties may agree that the section of the report pertaining to the outcomes of the plenary sessions held on Friday will be prepared by the Rapporteur, in cooperation with the Secretariat, and incorporated into the meeting report under the authority of the President.

C. Possible outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

18. The following is a list of expectations for the possible outcomes of the meeting:

- (a) Agreement on a programme of work for technical assistance for 2009–2010;
- (b) Agreement on the procedures and institutional mechanisms on non-compliance required under article 17 of the Convention;
- (c) Guidance to Parties and the Secretariat on possible actions to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Convention;
- (d) Decisions on the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos, tributyltin compounds and endosulfan in Annex III of the Convention and adoption of the associated decision guidance documents;
- (e) Adoption of the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions;
- (f) Confirmation of the membership of the Chemical Review Committee, agreement on a process and schedule for nominating new members and, as appropriate, to note the outcome of the third and fourth meetings of the Committee;
- (g) Election of the Bureau for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure;
- (h) Commitment to continue to fund the operation of the Rotterdam Convention, a decision on ways to reduce the exposure of the budget of the Rotterdam Convention to currency fluctuations and adoption of the programme of work and the budget for 2009–2010.