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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

Fourth meeting

Rome, 27–31 October 2008

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-3/6 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 2009–2010 for consideration by the Conference at its fourth meeting.
2. In response to the above request, the Secretariat prepared a draft programme of activities for the regional and subregional delivery of technical assistance, which is set out in the annex to the present note.

Possible actions by the Conference of the Parties

3. The Conference of the Parties may wish:
 - (a) To consider and approve the proposed draft costed programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2009–2010;
 - (b) To encourage Parties to contribute to the Voluntary Special Trust Fund, thereby allowing for the implementation of the planned activities;
 - (c) To invite Parties to review the reports of the national and subregional planning meetings, in particular the needs with regard to foundational chemicals management when considering technical assistance programmes activities in these countries.

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

Annex

Programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2009–2010

Introduction

1. The Rotterdam Convention entered into force in February 2004 when there were 50 Parties to the Convention. As of May 2008, that figure had risen to 120 Parties. As the number of Parties has increased, so has the diversity of their needs. In many instances Parties that have benefited from the technical assistance provided are able to meet the basic obligations of the Convention and have identified priorities for action that often require more targeted or specific assistance. In many cases the needs identified are not unique to the Convention but reflect a lack of capacity for foundational chemicals management. In other instances, in particular for some of the newer Parties, there is a need for more basic assistance in order that they might implement the basic obligations of the Convention. A key challenge is to develop a programme of technical assistance capable of responding to the full range of needs of all Parties.

2. In addition to the Convention's well-established technical assistance programme that continues to deliver solid support to Parties, new areas of strategic direction of the proposed programme of work for 2009–2010 will consist of the following:

(a) A shift towards the implementation of the overarching United Nations principle of "delivering as one", which also tallies with the various calls to achieve synergies with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and with associated United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) programmes involved in the delivery of chemical-related technical assistance activities. For the biennium 2009–2010, specific programmatic steps will be taken to strengthen partnerships in the delivery of technical assistance activities. In particular, there will be a major focus on working with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in achieving, where relevant, the joint programmatic implementation of key activities with the ultimate objective of facilitating the work of Parties in the implementation of the two conventions;

(b) The development of a targeted programme to address the sound management of industrial chemicals focusing on the legal, regulatory and administrative infrastructure and framework required to support national multisectoral industrial chemicals management programmes;

(c) The development of programmes of work for technical assistance on legal matters and public awareness;

(d) An increased emphasis on regional participation and delivery, focusing on the need to build on existing infrastructures to support the coordinated and cost-effective implementation of the Convention through the increased use of existing regional capacities and networks such as the UNEP distributed network of regional offices, the regional offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the regional centres of the Stockholm Convention and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which are ideally positioned and equipped to support the delivery of regional and national technical assistance activities associated with the Convention.

3. In developing this proposal, the Secretariat has endeavoured to distinguish between those activities unique to the Rotterdam Convention that are under way and will be reinforced in the following biennium, and those activities that are not unique to the Convention, such as training for Customs officials, mainstreaming and strengthening of capacity in pesticides management, strengthening of infrastructure for industrial chemicals management and integration of activities across related conventions, e.g., the Basel and Stockholm conventions. The activities identified under the latter group would be delivered in cooperation with a range of partners.

4. As a result of the national and subregional planning meetings, Parties have identified a broad range of needs or activities necessary for them to benefit fully from the Rotterdam Convention. In many cases these needs reflect a lack of capacity in foundational chemicals management. Some of the specific issues identified include a lack of infrastructure for the regulation or management of industrial chemicals, together with a need for integrated legislation or a legal framework for chemicals management, assistance to improve enforcement of existing legislation and regulations, assistance in

information management, regulatory decision-making and risk evaluation. Most of these needs cannot be met effectively by a workshop or meeting but will require more sustained forms of financial and technical assistance. It is proposed that the Secretariat could, however, play a role in assisting Parties in developing the capacity to seek the necessary technical and financial support from other sources. Parties will also be encouraged to integrate chemicals management issues into their national economic and development strategies and in working with bilateral and multilateral donors.

5. The proposed programme of work for 2009–2010 focuses on core activities relevant to meeting the basic obligations of the Convention where the Secretariat could be expected to play a lead role and includes the same principal elements as the programme of work for the previous biennium. It also covers those activities identified by Parties at the national and subregional planning meetings. The individual elements have been revised based on experience acquired and in response to the needs and priorities identified by Parties in 2007–2008. The goal is to develop activities that reflect the full range of member countries' needs, including activities that are tailored to the specific needs of individual countries or small groups of countries, with a focus on those actions that are deemed necessary for Parties to implement the Convention fully.

6. The approach taken in the present paper is to describe the range of technical assistance activities that are available; to identify the Parties that could be expected to benefit most from such activities and the partners that could work with the Secretariat in delivering the activities; and to outline the anticipated level of resources required for 2009–2010. The proposed approach places greater responsibility on Governments to define their technical assistance needs and to be proactive in seeking assistance to meet those needs.

7. The present note is divided into four chapters: the first briefly describes the various categories of assistance that could be undertaken over the period 2009–2010 in response to the technical assistance needs of Parties; the second reviews possible partners that could work with the Secretariat in the delivery of such assistance; the third proposes the elements of a programme of work for 2009–2010, including an initial estimate of possible costs; and the fourth sets out issues to be considered and the next steps in operationalizing the proposed programme of work.

I. Responding to the technical assistance needs of Parties

8. The first stage in assisting Parties in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention is helping them to 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 the activities proposed to meet the needs of Parties in fulfilling their key obligations under the Convention. It also briefly describes some of the types of meetings that could be considered to help Parties satisfy those needs, recognizing that some issues might not be addressed effectively by a meeting but will require more targeted or sustained forms of assistance.

A. Resource kit

9. An important contribution to facilitating work with both Parties and partners has been the development of the Rotterdam Convention resource kit. The resource kit is a comprehensive source of information on the Convention that has been developed with a range of end-users in mind, including the 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. Copies of the resource kit and its various elements have been circulated widely and are available on the Convention website.

B. National and subregional meetings

1. Awareness-raising and training workshops

10. Awareness-raising and training workshops are proposed for new Parties or Parties that have difficulty in meeting their basic obligations under the Convention. They will be given an opportunity to participate in awareness-raising and training meetings to benefit fully from the Convention. The proposed curriculum will provide practical training on the Convention's key operational elements, together with an introduction to the information available under the Convention and how it could be used to strengthen national decision-making on chemicals. The meetings also provide opportunities for participants to understand better the Convention website and resource kit, for countries to share their

experience in the implementation of the Convention and for improved cooperation at the national and subregional levels.

11. Parties eligible to participate in such subregional meetings include developing country Parties that have ratified the Convention since 2004, have a low level of import responses, have experienced difficulties in submitting notifications of final regulatory action or have had changes in their designated national authorities.

2. National and subregional planning meetings

12. The Secretariat has developed a curriculum for a series of planning meetings that facilitate national dialogue between key stakeholders on the implementation of the Convention. These meetings assist Parties in identifying the elements of national action plans or implementation strategies. Their outcome includes a set of tables that establish what needs to be done, by whom and when. They also serve to identify priorities for action and form a basis on which countries can develop requests for specific technical assistance activities from a range of sources.

13. Parties eligible for a national or subregional planning meeting are developing country Parties¹ that have not participated in such meetings in 2007–2008.

14. A related activity is the convening of national seminars of one or two days' duration in follow-up to subregional planning meetings. Given that only a limited number of national representatives participate in the subregional meetings, the seminars provide an opportunity to seek broader support for the outcome of the subregional planning meetings, to review the status of implementation of the agreed actions and to consider further country needs and priorities.

15. Eligible countries are those that have participated in subregional planning meetings and have requested such a seminar. The seminars are organized by the designated national authority working with the representative of the FAO regional office with limited financial support from the Secretariat.

3. Thematic meetings on specific issues

16. The range of issues for which specific assistance may be requested will vary widely within and across regions. Based on a review of the outcomes of the reports of the national and subregional planning meetings, the principal issues of concern where the Secretariat might be expected to play a key role include the trade-related aspects of the Convention, such as implementing export obligations and respecting the import decisions of others, together with procedures and processes for the identification of severely hazardous pesticide formulations.

17. The way in which these issues could be addressed depends on the issue itself and the countries involved. In some cases, it may be that the issue can be effectively dealt with 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 three countries could be convened to share experiences and propose options.

18. It is proposed that the Secretariat work with Parties to convene a limited number of national or subregional meetings related to severely hazardous pesticide formulations and the trade-related aspects of the Convention to understand better the associated challenges, 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.

19. Further consideration could be given to how the Secretariat could assist Parties in addressing cross-cutting needs associated with foundational chemicals management, as described in the introduction to the present paper, where the Secretariat is expected to seek partnerships for successful implementation. This could take the form of a training programme on the development and submission of funding proposals to relevant organizations or bilateral and multilateral donors. These meetings could be convened in cooperation with the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention and other partner multilateral environmental agreements as a further means of encouraging a synergistic and integrated approach to the national implementation of the conventions. Cooperation with the Stockholm Convention will be a specific area of focus under this category, in particular on the joint delivery of technical assistance on areas such as public awareness, Customs training, clearing-house mechanisms and legal support.

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

20. Other meetings under this category will assist Parties with the preparation of final regulatory action notifications and provide assistance for Parties that wish to review their chemicals listings under the Convention.

4. Fostering regional cooperation

21. Biennial meetings between designated national authorities in a subregion provide an opportunity to review progress in the implementation of the Convention, identify common problems and share experiences in finding solutions. The specific technical issues for consideration at meetings in the various regions will vary depending on the designated national authorities participating. The meetings also enable the Secretariat to update the designated national authorities on the information available under the Convention and to seek targeted feedback on such matters as the Convention website and the resource kit.

22. The meetings provide an opportunity to review basic obligations under the Convention, such as the provision of import responses and submission of notifications of final regulatory action. Consistent with the Party-to-Party assistance envisaged in the Convention, each meeting of designated national authorities includes some Parties who are meeting their Convention obligations successfully and others who are less successful. Bringing together designated national authorities in this way may serve to strengthen regional cooperation and support among Parties regarding implementation.

23. Consistent with the interest in promoting integrated implementation of the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions at the national level, a series of regional or subregional meetings between designated national authorities, along with their national counterparts under the Stockholm Convention, is also proposed. These meetings could include separate sessions to discuss regional experience in the implementation of the various conventions and joint sessions where experiences could be exchanged with a view to promoting integrated approaches to issues of common concern.

24. In addition, regional cooperation will be promoted further through regional meetings with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Stockholm and Basel conventions.

C. Working directly with countries on specific issues

25. The range of issues for which assistance may be requested will vary widely and the way in which an issue could be tackled depends on its nature 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 could 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, or through work on related multilateral environmental agreements such as the Basel or Stockholm conventions. The Secretariat could facilitate contact between Parties requesting assistance and the bilateral or multilateral aid programmes or organizations that might be able to provide such assistance.

D. Industrial chemicals

26. A new programmatic area of support under this category will consist of the development of a programme on industrial chemicals. This activity will also be undertaken in cooperation with the Stockholm Convention and other key partners.

II. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance

27. A key outcome of the national and subregional planning meetings on the implementation of the Convention will be the requests for technical assistance based on the identified priorities. Some 17 developing country Parties will have participated in such meetings by the end of 2008; these countries can be expected to seek assistance beginning in 2009. Presuming that additional Parties participate in planning meetings in 2009, the number of requests for follow-up assistance would be expected to increase through 2010.

28. To meet this increased demand for assistance, make the best use of existing resources and benefit from available expertise, the Secretariat will work with a range of partners, in particular with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, and seek opportunities to strengthen and expand the range of partners in the delivery of technical assistance in support of the Convention. The present chapter briefly

outlines other key partners that may work with the Secretariat in the regional delivery of technical assistance in 2009–2010.

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

30. During the biennium 2009–2010, the secretariats of the Stockholm and Basel conventions, the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Industry, Trade and Economics and, in particular, SAICM, the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions and the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination, will be key partners in the delivery of technical assistance activities. A pilot joint liaison office will be established in Panama City, hosted by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, to carry out programmatic and coordinating functions relevant to supporting the coherent implementation of activities of the above-mentioned partners, with the intention of replicating this model in the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions.

31. The region in which the work is to be undertaken will also influence the choice of partners. It is proposed that efforts be made to continue working closely with the FAO and UNEP regional offices in developing and delivering 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 also envisaged.

32. 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 implementation. The further development of this group is seen as an opportunity to promote South-South cooperation and regional solutions to regional problems. Efforts will be made to identify legal experts to join the group.

33. Partnerships with regional entities that are engaged in working with countries on matters relevant to the implementation of the Convention are also important. One such example is the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission, which has 24 member countries, 16 of which are Parties to the Convention. Such cooperation provides an opportunity for countries to integrate their work on the Convention into the activities of these regional partners and to promote ratification of the Convention.

34. Parties providing bilateral assistance in accordance with article 16 of the Convention constitute a further set of potential partners. Countries willing to provide technical assistance could be invited to review the reports of the national and subregional planning meetings, particularly the priority actions identified by countries. The focus of this assistance could be the cross-cutting issues related to foundational chemicals management set out in paragraph 4.

35. Parties could also be invited to inform the Secretariat of their expertise and ability to assist countries, including on legal matters such as the review and drafting of legislation to implement the Convention. As proposed in section C of chapter I above, when a request for assistance is 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 2009–2010 on the regional delivery of technical assistance

36. The present chapter contains a proposed programme of work for the regional delivery of technical assistance in 2009–2010. 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. It also notes the importance of measures of success or indicators of progress 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

37. The resource kit will be updated to reflect experience acquired 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 will be developed. Continued efforts will be made to ensure that as many documents as possible are available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

38. The prototype of the e-learning programme on the key operational elements of the Convention will undergo further field testing and be made available in English, French and Spanish. The goal is to facilitate continuous and self-directed training at the national level to meet the challenges that arise from frequent changes in designated national authority in some countries.

39. Section E of the resource kit, on cross-cutting issues, is designed to provide guidance on how the work of the Convention could be integrated into the activities undertaken 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. This section will continue to be refined and expanded to reflect new information as it becomes available.

B. National and subregional meetings

1. Training and awareness-raising meetings

40. Training and awareness-raising meetings are proposed for Parties that experience difficulties in meeting their basic obligations under the Convention, in order that they might fully benefit from the Convention and its activities. The meetings will provide practical training on the Convention's key operational elements and will highlight opportunities for an integrated approach to implementation, along with relevant international activities such as the Stockholm and Basel conventions and SAICM. It includes case studies and discussion in small groups on the preparation and submission of notifications of final regulatory actions; review of decision guidance documents and preparation and submission of import responses; review and completion of the incident report form for severely hazardous pesticide formulations and an exercise on export notification.

41. Participants will also be introduced to the information available under the Convention and how it might be used to strengthen national decision-making on chemicals, together with the Convention website and the resource kit. The meetings will provide an opportunity for countries to share their implementation experience and for opportunities for improved cooperation at the national and subregional levels.

42. As of May 2008, 20 developing countries Parties had ratified the Convention since 2004 and had a low level of import responses, in addition to having experienced difficulties in submitting notifications of final regulatory action and seen changes in designated national authorities. These countries would be eligible to participate in those subregional meetings. It is proposed to convene two subregional meetings each year involving up to 25 participants from a maximum of five countries. As a result, over the period 2009–2010, up to 20 Parties will have the opportunity to participate in training and awareness-raising meetings.

2. National and subregional planning meetings

43. As a key first step in defining country needs, the national and subregional planning meetings aimed at identifying the elements of national action 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 for new chemicals. A further measure of success will be the number of requests for technical assistance submitted by Parties, based on the priority actions identified as a result of in these planning meetings.

44. As of the end of 2008, there will be some 28 developing country Parties that have yet to participate in a national or subregional planning meeting. These Parties will be offered the opportunity to participate in such meetings in 2009–2010. The meetings provide an opportunity to build on the national implementation plans developed under the Stockholm Convention and to promote cooperation with such partners as the FAO and UNEP regional offices. National focal points for the Basel and

Stockholm conventions and SAICM will continue to be invited to participate in the meetings, since their participation 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. It is proposed to convene three national and three subregional meetings involving three countries each year. As a result, over the period 2009–2010, up to a further 24 Parties will have identified the elements of national action plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention.

45. In cooperation with the FAO regional offices, national seminars would be convened for those Parties that had participated in the subregional planning meetings held in 2008 and for the some 18 Parties that will participate in subregional planning meetings in 2009–2010. It is foreseen that only a relatively small number of participants per country will participate in the subregional meetings. The national seminars provide an opportunity to seek broader support for the national implementation plans, to review the status of implementation of the plans and to consider further country needs and priorities. As a result, over the period 2009–2010, up to 24 national follow-up seminars are proposed.

3. Thematic meetings

(a) National and subregional meetings on specific issues

46. Those Parties that have participated in national or subregional planning meetings will be accorded priority for participation in national or subregional meetings on specific issues as a means of providing follow-up on the some of the key priorities identified.

47. The more Parties participate in national and subregional planning meetings, the more opportunities for developing activities in follow-up to various issues will arise in the course of 2009–2010. The primary activities foreseen in 2009–2010 include working with Parties on the trade aspects of the Convention, severely hazardous pesticide formulations and in seeking assistance to handle the more cross-cutting issues identified in the course of national and subregional meetings relevant to building capacity for foundational chemicals management.

48. The series of workshops focused on the trade aspects of the Convention will be continued: one for exporting countries and one for exporting countries and their principal trade partners (for example, for three importing countries within the exporting country's region or in various regions). These meetings would focus on those developing country Parties that are major manufacturers and exporters of chemicals. 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.

49. Up to two national trade meetings and two trade partner meetings would be convened in 2009–2010. The precise locations and countries to be involved will need to be determined.

50. Up to three subregional meetings to support Parties with the overall process of preparation of submissions for the Chemicals Review Committee would be convened during the forthcoming biennium. It is envisaged that this targeted assistance will result in submissions that will pass the scrutiny of the Chemical Review Committee.

51. Up to three subregional meetings to develop and implement a programme of assistance for Parties that wish to review their chemicals listings under the Convention to maximize their benefits at the national level would be convened. The chemicals listed in Annex III to the Convention include pesticides and industrial chemicals that Parties have banned or severely restricted for health or environmental reasons. Parties may wish to review their import responses to reflect current national positions, i.e., final decisions, interim decisions, specification of any conditions, whether they would seek any assistance from the Secretariat and what type of assistance Parties may require in evaluating the chemicals of choice. These meetings will address article 10 of the Convention by reviewing the appropriate legislative or administrative mechanisms on which the import responses are based.

52. Severely hazardous pesticide formulations continue to pose problems under the conditions of use in many countries. The overall objective of the activities in 2009–2010 will be to establish appropriate links between designated national authorities and community health monitoring activities in the selected countries and a process for the preparation and submission of proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations under article 6 of the Convention. The work will build on the results of the collaboration with the Pesticide Action Network in 2007–2008. The methodology developed in association with the Network will be tested further in additional communities in two of the pilot countries and a similar programme of community health monitoring involving input from the relevant designated national authorities initiated in up to two other countries in the region. The experience acquired will serve as a possible basis for an expanded programme in the Africa region, and possibly

elsewhere, which could be developed and presented to bilateral or multilateral donors for consideration in late 2010.

53. To assist countries in following up on the outcome of the national and subregional planning meetings, a series of subregional training meetings on the development of proposals for financial and technical support for cross-cutting issues relating to foundational chemicals management will be convened. As a result of this training, countries should understand better how they could seek support from a range of multilateral and bilateral donors. These meetings will be held in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention as a further means of encouraging integrated approaches to implementation of the conventions at the national level. Over the period 2009–2010, up to four subregional training programmes will be carried out in which a minimum of up to 18 Parties will have received training on development and submission of funding proposals in support of the key activities identified through the national and subregional planning meetings. The locations and countries to be involved will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

54. These national and subregional meetings will, as appropriate, be convened in cooperation with the regional centres established under the Basel and Stockholm conventions and the FAO and UNEP regional offices of as a means of strengthening the role of those offices in the regional work of the Convention. This enhanced cooperation will help to define further country needs, identify opportunities for cooperation with other related activities at the national and subregional levels and facilitate follow-up.

55. Following guidance expected at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat will develop a specific activity to address the issue of decreasing numbers of notifications being submitted to the Secretariat, in particular from developed countries.

(b) Joint delivery with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat

56. A significant number of activities mentioned in the present document will be undertaken in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention. For the activities mentioned below, however, joint delivery with that Convention will be specifically one of the intended outcomes to promote the integrated implementation of the two conventions at the programmatic and national levels. This kind of cooperation could also involve other relevant partners. The topics of the joint thematic meetings are set out below.

(c) Public awareness

57. The secretariats will develop a programme to address the issue of public awareness, which will focus on the development of a communications strategy and associated materials intended to raise public awareness of the objectives and work of the two conventions. It will also focus on health and environment issues relevant to the chemicals covered by the two conventions, stressing the life-cycle approach and involving a broader audience, i.e., the public and private sectors. Up to four meetings on this issue are envisaged during the biennium 2009–2010.

(d) Customs training

58. In addition to the continuing work that the secretariats undertake within the overall context of the Green Customs initiative, the Secretariat envisages working with the Stockholm Convention and WCO in providing support to Parties on facilitating the implementation of Harmonized System codes. Cooperation with WCO will be enhanced 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 WCO 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, the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant organizations will continue through 2009–2010. Up to four meetings on this subject are envisaged.

(e) Clearing-house mechanism

59. In the context of the Convention's information exchange mechanism, a clearing-house mechanism for the Convention compatible with the Stockholm Convention's clearing-house mechanism would be established to provide specific support to Parties on increasing access to the Prior Informed

Consent (PIC) database and other relevant information resources available to Parties. Particular stress will be laid on ways to reduce some Parties' technical and logistical constraints in gaining access to the online information. Further efforts would be made to improve the provision of access to information on the chemicals subject to the Rotterdam Convention. Links to information sources identified under section E of the resource kit on cross-cutting issues to include other relevant sources of information would also be further developed. Up to four meetings on this subject are envisaged.

(f) Joint legal support

60. Joint efforts with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat will also focus on developing resources and guidance materials for the development of relevant national legislation, taking into account the need for flexibility to accommodate national differences; the production of legal information and assistance tools to facilitate national programme implementation, supported by a network of indirect and direct assistance to Parties on gaining access to the programmes and using them at the national level; the development of national capacity including personnel and infrastructure to implement the legal mandates of the Convention; the development of innovative mechanisms for delivering information and assistance packages to Parties who request them; and support for the development of legislation for the management of industrial chemicals. Up to four meetings in this area are envisaged.

4. Fostering regional cooperation

(a) Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities

61. Biennial meetings between designated national authorities in a subregion provide an opportunity for them to review progress in the implementation of the Convention, identify common problems and share experience in finding solutions. The regional or subregional meetings of designated national authorities initiated in 2007–2008 will continue in 2009–2010. A key element of the meetings is the opportunity offered to address specific issues of concern to Parties and to ensure awareness and understanding of information available under the Convention through a review of the Convention website and the resource kit. The meetings of designated national authorities originally scheduled for 2007–2008 but not completed owing to lack of funds will be accorded priority in 2009–2010. To facilitate constructive discussion, participation is limited to around 15 participants. Overall, up to eight subregional meetings are envisaged for the biennium.

(b) Regional and subregional meeting of designated national authorities and focal points under the Stockholm Convention

62. Consistent with the interest in promoting integrated implementation of the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions at the national level, a series of regional or subregional meetings between designated national authorities, along with their national counterparts under the Stockholm Convention, is also proposed. The meetings could include separate sessions to discuss regional experiences in the implementation of the various conventions and joint sessions where experiences could be exchanged with a view to promoting integrated approaches to issues of common concern.

63. Beginning in 2010, four subregional meetings between designated national authorities and their relevant Stockholm Convention counterparts will be convened. The specific issues, location and countries to be involved will be determined on a case-by-case basis. These meetings will be limited to approximately 25 participants.

(c) Cooperation with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Basel and Stockholm conventions

64. The Secretariat will also endeavour to cooperate with the SAICM secretariat and the Stockholm and Basel conventions at the regional level to support and enhance cooperation and joint implementation and to promote sound chemicals management. Whenever possible, the Secretariat will seek opportunities to participate in the 10 planned regional meetings for the biennium 2009–2010. These meetings will be convened back-to-back with meetings of SAICM and the Basel and Stockholm conventions in the regions to further enhance coherence and promote synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster and among the chemicals Conventions.

C. Working directly with individual countries on specific issues

65. 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 could 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, SAICM or the work of other regional or subregional organizations.

66. In some instances, depending on available resources, the Secretariat could arrange for the designated national authority to work with a regional expert; in others, the Secretariat could facilitate contact between Parties requesting assistance and those programmes that could be able to provide such assistance. One specific area of focus on which direct support to countries is envisaged lies within the context of joint delivery of technical assistance activities with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat.

D. Industrial chemicals

67. A new area of work for the Secretariat will be the development of a comprehensive programme on the sound management of industrial chemicals to address the lack of, or weak, infrastructure for the regulation or management of this group of chemicals, encountered in most developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This work will focus on the legal, regulatory and administrative infrastructural framework required to support national multisectoral industrial chemicals management programmes. In addition, the programme will address the need to mobilize a number of stakeholders and resources at the international, regional and national levels.

68. This work will complement the agricultural chemicals management programmes in effect in most Parties and would address the initial steps that would need to be taken by Parties to manage this group of chemicals soundly. The use of tools available within the Rotterdam Convention, the involvement of relevant sectors and the associated legal requirements, the need for awareness-raising and access to information on the Rotterdam Convention are some of the initial steps to be taken by Parties in conjunction with the Rotterdam Convention and other partners.

69. This programme area will aim to achieve programmatic synergies with other relevant chemicals management agreements, particularly the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, and will be implemented in close collaboration with the Basel Convention and the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Industry, Trade and Economics.

70. Technical assistance activities in the form of up to six meetings on industrial chemicals will also be organized.

E. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance

71. The Secretariat will continue to seek out 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 some groups of countries. 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.

72. Some of the specific regional partners with whom cooperation is foreseen in 2009 and 2010 are set out below.

1. FAO and UNEP regional offices

73. Annual meetings with representatives of the FAO and UNEP regional and subregional offices are proposed, as is continuation of the informal newsletter on regional activities circulated within the Secretariat and between the regional offices. A meeting is proposed for the end of 2009 to review progress in 2008 and assist in the preparation of planning activities for 2010 following the outcome of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. A further meeting in 2010 is proposed to review progress in 2009 and develop further ideas for meeting the countries' technical assistance needs in preparation for fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

74. As indicated in paragraph 30 above, a pilot joint liaison office will be established in Panama City, hosted by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, to carry out programmatic and coordinating functions relevant to supporting the coherent implementation of activities of the above-mentioned partners, with the intention of replicating this model in the Africa and

Asia-Pacific regions. This activity will be supported by the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and the Environment and by the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions, with a focus on the joint implementation on Stockholm and Rotterdam convention activities in the region, in coordination with activities carried out by SAICM and the Basel Convention Secretariat in the region.

2. Stockholm and Basel regional centres

75. Integration with activities under the Basel and Stockholm conventions will be explored further with a view to strengthening the links between national implementation plans and associated action plans under the Stockholm Convention and the obligations of countries under the Rotterdam Convention. Efforts will be made, whenever relevant and feasible, to cooperate and use Stockholm and Basel regional centres.

3. Group of regional experts

76. 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 between Parties within and between subregions. Annual meetings of this group are proposed to follow up on the experience acquired, to provide an opportunity to include new experts in the group and perhaps to expand the range of expertise available within the group.

4. Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission

77. The next session of the Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission is scheduled for September 2009. In follow-up to the work initiated in 2005, participation in the meeting of regional experts or a limited number of designated national authorities from representative member countries would be sponsored to promote the inclusion of the Rotterdam Convention in the work programme of the Commission.

5. Other partners

78. The nature of the technical assistance activity will, in many instances, determine the choice of partners by the Secretariat. There will be opportunities to work with the relevant UNEP programmes such as SAICM, the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination and the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Industry, Trade and Economics, in addition to the FAO programme on pesticides, joint activities such as the European Union-funded activities of multilateral environmental agreements in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries through the regional hubs, the Caribbean Community secretariat, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the African Union and the Africa Stockpiles Programme.

F. Measuring progress - indicators of success

79. The work with the FAO and UNEP regional offices and the national and subregional meetings represent an opportunity to provide feedback to the Secretariat so that the lessons learned in the delivery of technical assistance may be used to develop further and refine a programme of work that meets Parties' technical assistance needs.

80. There is a range of straightforward quantitative indicators that may be used to measure the impact of the technical assistance activities in support of the Convention. These include the notifications of final regulatory action and import responses submitted to the Secretariat and requests for assistance in the implementation of the Convention. The addition of new chemicals to Annex III of the Convention as a result of the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting will provide a further opportunity to use rate of response to measure the effectiveness of technical assistance activities.

81. Consideration will be given to exploring the feasibility of developing longer-term indicators that would assist in determining whether the Convention itself is attaining its overall objective of protecting human health and the environment in cooperation with the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions.

IV. Issues to consider

A. Participation and attendance

82. Consistent with the procedure adopted following the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat will compile lists of Parties who have not yet had an opportunity to participate in a national or subregional planning meeting 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 time frame, for example two months, their interest in participating in meetings and to identify a person or office responsible for follow-up. Based on the responses received and the resources available to the Secretariat, meetings will be scheduled over the biennium 2009–2010.

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

B. Planning: funding and review of activities

84. 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 2009–2010. Consequently, the delivery of the full technical assistance package will be dependent on the overall timely availability of funds received by the Secretariat to plan and implement its activities during the biennium 2009–2010.

85. To make the best use of the available resources to assist Parties in the implementation of the Convention, participation in national or subregional planning meetings on that subject is considered to be an essential first step.

86. It is recognized that a review of activities 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 be invited to assume this role.

87. In addition, the Secretariat will be required to develop a report on technical assistance activities for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting and a programme of activities for the biennium 2011–2012.

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 2009–2010

	Unit cost (US\$)	2009 (US\$)	2010 (US\$)	Total (US\$)
A. Resource kit (paragraph 9)		30 000	30 000	60 000
Subtotal		30 000	30 000	60 000
B. National and subregional meetings				
1. Subregional training and awareness-raising meetings				
• Four subregional meetings (max. five countries, 25 participants) (paragraph 10–11)	60 000	120 000	120 000	240 000
Subtotal		120 000	120 000	240 000
2. National and subregional planning meetings				
• Six national meetings (paragraphs 12–13)	35 000	105 000	105 000	210 000
• Six subregional meetings (three countries, 15 participants) (paragraph 12–13)	50 000	150 000	150 000	300 000
• Twenty-four national follow-up seminars (paragraph 45)	5 500	66 000	66 000	132 000
Subtotal		321 000	321 000	642 000
3. Thematic meetings				
(i) National and subregional meetings on specific issues				
• Two national trade meetings (paragraph 49)	40 000	40 000	40 000	80 000
• Two meetings involving four trade partners (paragraph 48)	80 000	80 000	80 000	160 000
• Four monitoring programmes on severely hazardous pesticide formulations (paragraph 52)	20 000	40 000	40 000	80 000
• Four programmes on severely hazardous pesticide formulations (paragraph 52)	50 000	100 000	100 000	200 000
• Four subregional meetings on preparing and submitting funding proposals (paragraph 53)	50 000	100 000	100 000	200 000
• Three subregional meetings to support the preparation of final regulatory action notifications (three countries, 15 participants) (paragraph 20)	50 000	100 000	50 000	150 000
• Three subregional meetings to support the development and implementation of a programme of assistance for Parties who wish to review their chemicals listings under the Convention (10 countries, 20 participants) (paragraph 51)	80 000	160 000	80 000	240 000
• Two meetings with countries of the Western Europe and others group to increase their participation in the operation of the Convention (i.e., issue of low level of notifications) (paragraph 55)	-	-	-	-
(ii) Joint delivery with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat				
• Up to four meetings on public awareness (five countries each) (paragraph 57)	40 000	80 000	80 000	160 000
• Up to four meetings on Customs training (five countries each) (paragraph 58)	75 000	150 000	150 000	300 000
• Up to four meetings on clearing-house mechanisms (five countries each) (paragraph 59)	40 000	80 000	80 000	160 000
• Up to four meetings on joint legal support (five countries each) (paragraph 60)	50 000	100 000	100 000	200 000
Subtotal		1 030 000	900 000	1 930 000

4. Fostering cooperation				
(i) Fostering cooperation among designated national authorities				
• Eight subregional meetings for the biennium (paragraph 61)	50 000	200 000	200 000	400 000
(ii) Regional and subregional meetings of designated national authorities and focal points of the Stockholm Convention				
• Four subregional meetings in 2010 (paragraph 63)	65 000	-	260 000	260 000
(iii) Cooperation with the SAICM secretariat, Stockholm and Basel conventions				
• Ten planned regional meetings for the biennium (paragraph 64)	18 000	90 000	90 000	180 000
Subtotal		290 000	550 000	840 000
C. Working directly with individual countries on specific issues (paragraphs 65–66)		50 000	50 000	100 000
Subtotal		50 000	50 000	100 000
D. Working on industrial chemicals				
• Up to six meetings (six countries, 20 participants) (paragraphs 67–70)	70 000	210 000	210 000	420 000
Subtotal		210 000	210 000	420 000
E. Partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance				
1. FAO and UNEP regional offices (paragraphs 73–74)	70 000	70 000	70 000	140 000
2. Group of regional experts (paragraph 76)	50 000	50 000	50 000	100 000
3. Working with regional liaison offices (paragraph 74)	-	-	-	-
4. Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission:				
• One meeting in 2009 (paragraph 77)	18 000	18 000	-	18 000
Subtotal		138 000	120 000	258 000
F. Measuring success				
• Work on indicators (paragraphs 79–81)		20 000	-	20 000
Subtotal		20 000	-	20 000
Total		2 209 000	2 301 000	4 510 000