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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  
Fifth meeting**

Geneva, 20–24 June 2011

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:  
technical assistance**

**Technical assistance: report on activities and analysis for the  
period 2009–2011**

**Note by the secretariat**

1. By its decision RC-4/9, on regional and national delivery of technical assistance, the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade requested the Secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its next ordinary meeting on the experiences gained in the regional and national delivery of technical assistance, taking into account among other things the activities of donors and implementing organizations, information exchange on technical assistance activities and opportunities for joint activities with the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

2. The annex to the present note provides a summary of technical assistance activities undertaken to support the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. More detailed information is presented in tabular format in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/INF/6.

**Possible action by the Conference of the Parties**

3. The Conference of the Parties may wish:

(a) To take note of the progress made by the Secretariat in the implementation of decision RC-4/9;

(b) To acknowledge the valuable support of those countries that have contributed to the voluntary trust fund, thereby allowing technical assistance activities to be undertaken.

\* UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/1/Rev.1.

## Annex

# Technical assistance: report on activities and analysis for the period 2009–2011

## Introduction

1. The technical assistance programme for the period 2009–2011 was developed in response to the needs identified by parties and built on initiatives carried out either by the Secretariat or by other conventions, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals. The programme also took into consideration new elements, such as the efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination with the Basel and Stockholm conventions. By its decision RC-4/9, on regional and national delivery of technical assistance, the Conference of the Parties took note of the programme.
2. In adopting an overall programme of work and budget for the triennium 2009–2011 in its decision RC-4/12, the Conference of the Parties also endorsed a total of 21 activities that served as the basis for a comprehensive programme on technical assistance for the implementation of the Convention. The detailed costed programme for technical assistance, totalling around \$5 million, was presented in table 1 of the decision. Technical assistance activities were funded by the voluntary trust fund established under the Convention.
3. The present report describes activities undertaken to implement decision RC-4/9 and analyses the results.

## I. Implementation of technical assistance activities

4. Detailed information listing all national and regional technical assistance activities organized during the period between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2010 is provided in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/INF/6, as is detailed information regarding the recipients of technical assistance activities and partners and donors involved in the activities.
5. The Secretariat made available on the Convention website a calendar of all meetings organized within the scope of the technical assistance programme and other events of interest to the Convention organized by partners. Parties were afforded the opportunity to review the programme and schedule of events and to express interest in specific technical assistance activities. The proceedings of most of the meetings convened under the technical assistance programme were posted on the website and distributed to participants in hard copy. Detailed information regarding the progress made in the implementation of the technical assistance programme has been provided through the Convention website in the form of three progress reports.
6. In September 2010, the Secretariat reviewed with the Bureau of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties the progress made in relation to specific technical assistance activities.
7. As summarized in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/INF/6, in addition to delivering technical assistance the Secretariat continued to develop the Convention resource kit. The kit was reviewed and expanded, with many of its key documents made available in the six official languages of the United Nations. Some 400 copies of the kit and its various elements were reproduced in 2009 and 2010 and distributed to all new designated national authorities, workshop participants and regional partners, including the regional offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme. More details of the resource kit can be found in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/22.
8. Progress was also made with regard to an interactive e-learning course intended to facilitate continuous and self-directed training at the national level in the implementation of the key elements of the Convention. The course was translated into French and Spanish and will be made available in these languages as a CD-ROM in 2011.

## II. Opportunities for joint activities with the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions and the Strategic Approach

9. Decision RC-4/9 pertained to activities to be jointly implemented with the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention as part of continuing efforts to enhance synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. This cooperation was formalized by the conferences of the

parties to the three conventions at their simultaneous extraordinary meetings, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 22 to 24 February 2011.

10. Consequently, the Secretariat, jointly with the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions, developed and implemented a number of joint activities. The Secretariat also continued to seek out opportunities to initiate and strengthen cooperation with other partners, including regional and subregional organizations involved in chemicals management activities. Details of these activities and opportunities are provided in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/INF/6.

### **III. Summary of outcomes**

11. Most of the concept notes and meeting documentation such as presentations, guidance to meeting participants and relevant background documents were made available in English, French and Spanish and periodically revised to reflect feedback from meeting participants and regional variations. These materials have become part of the resources that the Secretariat uses when working with countries.

12. Designated national authorities from 55 countries that recently became parties to the Convention, or parties that experienced difficulties in implementing the Convention, received training in relation to their obligations as designated national authorities under the Convention. Those parties were also afforded the opportunity to exchange experiences and discuss approaches to solving common problems. In addition, delegates from four non-parties participated in training workshops, which served as an additional encouragement for the ratification of the Convention.

13. At least 34 parties identified elements of national action plans or strategies for the implementation of the Convention as an outcome of the national action plan workshops convened during the reporting period. Three were afforded further opportunities to review their needs and priorities through national follow-up seminars and country visits.

14. Two parties (the European Union and China) convened trade partner meetings focusing on the implementation of the import and export aspects of the Convention.

15. Ten parties convened inception workshops and initiated the development of field monitoring and reporting programmes on pesticide poisoning arising from the use of severely hazardous pesticide formulations.

16. A programme on industrial chemicals management was initiated, with Botswana and Jordan serving as the pilot countries. Scoping missions were carried out to seek high-level commitment to the programme. Initial workshops also took place.

### **IV. Lessons learned and challenges**

17. During the reporting period, the technical assistance programme for 2009–2011 took a more country-driven approach, whereby parties expressed interest in specific activities based on their needs. This approach appears to have proved effective for those designated national authorities that participated in the process.

18. In other instances, however, designated national authorities and official contact points in parties failed to communicate effectively with the Secretariat, while in others some designated national authorities were omitted from subregional activities because they were unable to mobilize delegations of stakeholders from their countries. In addition, some designated national authorities also nominated themselves for all activities but did not meet their obligations regarding the implementation of the Convention.

19. The efforts to follow up with parties, through national seminars, subregional meetings of designated national authorities, individual country visits and the work of the FAO regional officers, has helped to build designated national authorities' confidence and broaden their experiences.

20. A continuing challenge is how to measure the impact of the technical assistance activities. There was a clear increase in the number of submissions of import responses and of notifications of final regulatory action. Furthermore, one severely hazardous pesticide formulation was submitted by a developing country for the consideration of the Chemical Review Committee at its seventh meeting. Further analysis is needed, however, to determine whether there has been a measurable impact on some quantitative indicators.

21. The lack of progress on the part of some parties appears to reflect problems of a more systemic nature, including a general lack of intra-ministerial or inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation.

The problem of inadequate chemicals management in many developing countries is often compounded by deficiencies in the regulatory infrastructure, inadequate disposal and lack of recycling facilities. In addition, challenges with regard to insufficient resources, inadequate enforcement and poor training are quite common. Some of the challenges related to chemicals legislation include:

- (a) Overcoming an exclusive sectoral approach in legislating the management of chemicals (some parties have identified more than 100 laws and decrees pertaining to chemicals that are often inconsistent with one another);
- (b) Identifying those legislative measures and policy instruments that could efficiently reduce risks while entailing minimum administrative costs;
- (c) Designing and updating national legislation or risk-reduction activities in a way that facilitates implementation, taking into account the existing administrative and technical infrastructure;
- (d) Developing a national legislative framework that allows for:
  - (i) Incorporation of international harmonization efforts;
  - (ii) Implementation of national obligations under the growing number of international legally binding instruments.

22. Below are some needs identified by parties during national and subregional workshops to improve their national regulatory frameworks with a view to meeting the objectives of the Convention for industrial chemicals:

- (a) Legislation to support the regulation and enforcement of sound management of industrial chemicals;
- (b) National chemicals policy frameworks;
- (c) Capacity to undertake risk assessments;
- (d) Processes for making decisions on risk management for selected chemicals;
- (e) Increased public awareness of and information on potential risks from hazardous chemicals.

23. A major concern is the low rate of submission of notifications of final regulatory action for banned or severely restricted chemicals, in particular for chemicals not listed in Annex III to the Convention. More training and support are required to improve the situation. To date, outreach has tended to focus on developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Some further thought is needed regarding the role of developed countries, as they are best placed to submit notifications that meet the requirements of Annexes I and II to the Convention.

24. Establishing linkages between Customs officers and designated national authorities, and improving information management, should become areas of focus.

25. Upon developing their national action plans, many parties accorded priority to and requested external assistance for the development of programmes focusing on monitoring and reporting problems caused by severely hazardous pesticide formulations.

26. Administrative support in the delivery of technical assistance activities is key to the timely delivery of such activities.

27. In the light of this experience, the Secretariat proposes in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/19 a workplan for technical assistance for the period 2012–2013. This technical assistance programme focuses on fewer activities while continuing to cover the major challenges and takes into consideration joint activities with the Basel and Stockholm conventions. This programme also takes into consideration the reduction in voluntary contributions expected during the period 2012–2013.