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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 (g) of the provisional agenda**

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: trade

Cooperation with the World Trade Organization

Note by the Secretariat

1. By its decision RC-1/15, on cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention requested the Secretariat:

(a) To seek observer status in the Committee on Trade and Environment in Special Session of the World Trade Organization (CTESS) and inform parties when the request had been submitted and when it had been granted;

(b) To report to the Conference of the Parties on any WTO meetings that it attended, any substantive contacts that it had with the WTO secretariat and any general or factual information provided to, or any other information requested by, the WTO secretariat or any other body of that organization;

(c) To ensure that it at no time provided an interpretation of the provisions of the Convention;

(d) To monitor developments in CTESS and report on such developments to the Conference of the Parties;

(e) To reflect on ways of enhancing information flows on matters of common interest with WTO.

2. At its fourth meeting, by its decision RC-4/10, the Conference of the Parties took note of the progress in the implementation of decision RC-1/15 and requested the Secretariat, while continuing to follow up the request for observer status in CTESS, to seek observer status in the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) of WTO, and to inform parties when the request had been submitted and when it had been granted.

3. Regarding the Secretariat's request for observer status in CTESS, no change in status has taken place since the Secretariat wrote officially to the WTO secretariat (letter dated 17 December 2004) requesting to be granted observer status. A response received by the Secretariat from the Committee's

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Chair (letter dated 17 January 2005) indicated that the Convention would be invited to CTESS meetings on a “meeting-by-meeting basis”. It should be noted that negotiations are continuing at WTO on criteria for the granting of observer status to the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements pursuant to paragraph 31 (ii) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration.

4. With regard to progress made on the issue of observer status in CTE, the Secretariat wrote officially to the WTO secretariat (letter dated 26 March 2009) referring to decision RC-4/10 and formally requested to be granted observer status at CTE regular sessions. The request was circulated to CTE in document WT/CTE/COM/14.

5. A response received by the Secretariat from the Committee’s Chair (letter dated 15 June 2009) indicated that the request was being considered by CTE. At the July 2009 meeting of CTE, its Chair recalled that at the meeting of 4 October 2001 CTE had agreed to postpone discussion on all requests for intergovernmental observer status in the Committee pending discussions in the General Council (WT/CTE/M/47, para. 136).

6. The latest report by the Chair of CTESS to the Trade Negotiations Committee, in addition to the latest report of CTE, can be found in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.5/INF/7.

7. Regarding ways of enhancing the flow of information on matters of common interest to the Convention and WTO, the Secretariat provided relevant awareness-raising material on the Convention and its work at a WTO regional workshop on trade and environment for French-speaking countries in Africa that took place in Dakar between 6 and 8 July 2010.

Possible action by the Conference of the Parties

8. The Conference of the Parties may wish to take note of the progress made towards the implementation of decision RC-1/15 on cooperation with WTO and, given the relevance of the topics considered by WTO, request the Secretariat to follow up on the work of CTESS and CTE.
