



**United Nations
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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
First meeting**

Geneva, 20–24 September 2004
Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters stipulated by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries
for action by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting:
physical location of the secretariat**

Physical location of the secretariat

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. In article 19, paragraph 3, the Rotterdam Convention provides as follows: “The secretariat functions for this Convention shall be performed jointly by the Executive Director of UNEP and the Director-General of FAO, subject to such arrangements as shall be agreed between them and approved by the Conference of the Parties.”
2. In its resolution concerning the secretariat¹, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which adopted the Convention called upon the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide a comparative analysis of offers regarding the physical location of the secretariat for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, the preparation of such analysis to be carried out in consultation with the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

* UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/1.
1 UNEP/FAO/PIC/CONF/5, annex I, resolution 2

3. At the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, the representatives of Germany, Italy and Switzerland reaffirmed their respective Governments' offers to host the secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention. The Committee agreed that the secretariat would prepare a list of elements of information required for further consideration of the issue of the location of the secretariat by the Committee at its next session.
4. At its seventh session, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee agreed that the secretariat had prepared an accurate list of the information that should be requested from countries interested in hosting the permanent secretariat. In decision INC-7/8, it invited interested countries to provide to the secretariat, by 15 April 2001, detailed information on the conditions and advantages attached to their offers, with special focus on the items listed in the appendix to that decision. It requested the secretariat to compile the offers received and submit them for consideration at its eighth session. The Committee also agreed that countries interested in hosting the permanent secretariat should submit to the secretariat information on the length of time that they required to process any travel or visa requirements. A number of representatives expressed the view that it would be valuable for the Committee to have an idea of the priority attached to each of the elements. Acknowledging that it would be inappropriate to task the secretariat with such prioritization, the Committee considered that, once the relevant countries had provided the requisite information, the Parties themselves would be in a better position to assess where the priorities lay.
5. By 15 April 2001, the secretariat had received the following offers:
 - (a) Joint offer from Italy and Switzerland to host the secretariat in Rome and Geneva. This offer was made available as information document UNEP/FAO/PIC/INC.8/INF/4;
 - (b) Offer from Germany to host the secretariat in Bonn. This offer was made available as information document UNEP/FAO/PIC/INC.8/INF/5.
6. At the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, formal presentations of the offers were made by representatives of Germany and by representatives of Switzerland and Italy. At the same session, Germany also distributed an updated version (dated 8 October 2001) of their offer. The Committee welcomed the detailed information provided, and expressed its appreciation for the offers by the Governments. It took note of both offers and decided to submit them to the Conference of the Parties for a decision on the matter at its first session.
7. In a letter dated 29 March 2004, Germany informed the secretariat that the updated version of its offer, dated 8 October 2001, was the only valid version. With the same letter it forwarded an updated version, dated January 2004, of the information it had originally provided pursuant to decision INC-7/8, as well as a new document entitled "UN-Campus in Bonn", with a request that those documents be made available to the Conference.
8. The secretariat has the honour to circulate the following:
 - (a) The original, joint offer received from Italy and Switzerland, as information document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/INF/5;
 - (b) The updated version, dated 8 October 2001, of the offer from Germany, as information document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/INF/6;
 - (c) The updated version, dated January 2004, of the information originally provided by Germany pursuant to decision INC-7/8, as information document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/INF/6/Add.1; and
 - (d) The new document entitled "UN-Campus in Bonn", as information document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/INF/6/Add.2.

Annex I

Decision INC-7/8: Consideration of offers to host the permanent secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

1. *Decides* to invite interested countries to provide to the secretariat, by 15 April 2001, detailed information on the conditions and advantages attached to their offers, with special focus on the items listed in the appendix to the present decision;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to compile the offers received and submit them to the Committee for consideration at its eighth session.

Appendix

Categories of information that might be requested from countries interested in hosting the permanent secretariat

Legal framework

1. Privileges and immunities which would be conferred on the permanent secretariat and its staff members.
2. Rules, including any restrictions, applicable to the employment of dependants of staff members.
3. Nature of the headquarters agreement.

Features of the office site and related financial issues

4. Main features of the building to house the permanent secretariat, including office space, facilities for conferences and availability of general services (security, maintenance, etc).
5. Basis for placing the office facilities at the disposal of the permanent secretariat, such as:
 - (a) Ownership by the permanent secretariat (through donation or purchase);
 - (b) Ownership by the host Government without rent;
 - (c) Host Government ownership with rent, and amount of such rent.
6. Responsibility for:
 - (a) Major maintenance and repairs to the office facilities;
 - (b) Normal maintenance and repair;
 - (c) Utilities, including communication facilities.
7. Extent to which the office facilities would be furnished and equipped by the host Government.
8. Duration of the arrangements regarding office space.

Local facilities and conditions

9. Description of the following facilities and conditions:
- (a) Diplomatic representation in the host city;
 - (b) Presence of international organizations;
 - (c) Availability of international conference facilities and the conditions for their use (free of charge, rent, etc.);
 - (d) Access to qualified conference servicing staff, e.g. interpreters, translators, editors and meeting coordinators, familiar with United Nations conferences and practices;
 - (e) International transport facilities;
 - (f) Local transport facilities;
 - (g) Local availability of trained personnel for possible employment in the permanent secretariat, taking account of language and other skills;
 - (h) Health facilities and access to them by staff members of the permanent secretariat;
 - (i) Availability of suitable housing;
 - (j) Availability of schools at all levels, including those providing classes in languages other than the local language;
 - (k) Facilities for the transfer of funds to and from foreign countries for the permanent secretariat and its staff members;
 - (l) Time needed for processing entry requirements.

Other relevant information

10. Any additional contributions to be made by the host Government to meet the operating costs of the permanent secretariat or to defray conference-servicing expenses.
11. Any other information which the potential host country may deem relevant.
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