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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 10 of the provisional agenda*

Activities of the secretariat and adoption of a budget

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Note by the secretariat

1. This note provides a brief description of certain activities undertaken by the Secretariat related to implementation of the Rotterdam Convention.
2. The secretariat has undertaken a review of existing resource and training materials that may be used in the regional delivery of technical assistance, with a view to ensuring that maximum advantage is taken of already prepared materials and to identifying areas where further materials are needed. Existing materials have been compiled into a resource kit. Copies of the following documents and a detailed outline of the resource kit are available to meeting participants:
 - (a) Guidance to designated national authorities on the Rotterdam Convention: This document was developed in response to a request by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its eighth session. Copies are available in English, French and Spanish;
 - (b) Companion guide to the Rotterdam Convention on hazardous chemicals and pesticides: A simple booklet targeted at the general public that provides basic information on the Rotterdam Convention. It is available in all six languages of the United Nations;
 - (c) Guide to the development of national laws to implement the Rotterdam Convention: A working document developed to assist countries in assessing national laws when implementing the Rotterdam Convention. The current draft is available in English only.

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

3. In developing the proposal on the regional delivery of technical assistance requested by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its tenth session, the secretariat convened two consultation meetings.
4. The first consultation meeting, attended by regional officers of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the directors of the Basel Convention regional centres, was held in Rome from 26 to 28 April 2004. The meeting participants proposed roles for the regional offices, including functioning as resource centres for the Convention and identifying needs for assistance in the regions and opportunities for linking the work of the Convention with relevant activities in the regions. It was highlighted that there might also be opportunities to raise political awareness, particularly in countries that have not ratified the Rotterdam Convention.
5. The second consultation involved representatives of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry bodies and bilateral aid agencies involved in chemicals management and safety issues, and was held in Geneva on 7 and 8 June 2004. It was attended by representatives of the secretariats of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, UNEP, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Pesticides Action Network, the International Council of Chemical Associations, CropLife International, the World Bank, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the German technical cooperation agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).
6. As a follow-up to these consultations, a meeting is planned for 18 to 22 October in Bangkok, Thailand, to which representatives of the regional offices of FAO, UNEP and the Basel Convention regional coordinating centres have been invited to participate. The meeting will provide practical training on the operation of the Rotterdam Convention and also represents an opportunity to continue the dialogue initiated at the consultative meeting in April on the regional delivery of technical assistance for the Rotterdam Convention, specifically with respect to cooperation with other programs on chemicals management and with other regional organizations, including the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the secretariat of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte Contre la Secheresse au Sahel, or CILSS). Participants will prepare and exchange information about challenges and opportunities for activities and work on ideas for further development of the technical assistance programme in the different regions. Participants will receive an introduction to the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, in particular how they relate to the provisions of the Rotterdam Convention. Participants will also be introduced to selected national and regional activities on chemicals management as examples of opportunities for coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for feedback to the Secretariat on the materials contained in the resource kit.
7. In response to a request from China, an agenda is under development for a national workshop on the Rotterdam Convention. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for November or December of this year. A key outcome will be a national action plan on the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention.
8. A three day planning and training meeting is also under development in cooperation with the secretariat of the Sahelian Pesticides Committee (Comité Sahélien des Pesticides, or CSP) under CILSS. The mandate of CILSS includes acting as the registration authority for pesticides in the nine CILSS member countries (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). Six of these countries are Parties to the Rotterdam Convention. The meeting participants will consider how the obligations of Parties to the Rotterdam Convention can be integrated into the work of CSP, as well as possible opportunities for work on cross-cutting issues. They will also consider how to support ratification of the three countries that have yet to ratify the Rotterdam Convention. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 2005 in Dakar, Senegal.