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Item 5 (k) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the
Conference of the Parties: Secretariat**

**Report by the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and
Stockholm conventions on cooperative activities with the
secretariat of the Minamata Convention in areas of mutual
interest**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out a report by the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on cooperative activities with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention in areas of mutual interest. The information is reproduced as received, without formal editing.

* UNEP/MC/COP.2/1.

Annex

Report by the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on cooperative activities with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention in areas of mutual interest

Introduction

1. The present report summarizes the main cooperation and coordination activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention in areas of mutual interest, as well as other activities conducted jointly by Parties to the BRS conventions and States implementing the Minamata Convention. This report is an updated version of the report submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-1).¹

2. The cooperative activities described in the present report are undertaken by the BRS secretariat in response to requests made by the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in the framework of their dialogue with the Conference of the Parties of the Minamata Convention.² Decisions adopted by the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions that make specific reference to the Minamata Convention were made available to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention.³ Cooperation between the two entities also takes place under the joint task force on programmatic cooperation among the Chemicals and Health Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariats of the BRS Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The task force which was established in 2014 was reinvigorated in early 2018 with updated terms of reference.

3. At their meetings in May 2017, in their decisions on international cooperation and coordination,⁴ the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions requested the secretariat to continue to enhance cooperation and coordination with the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. In their decisions on programmes of work and budgets,⁵ the conferences of the Parties invited the Executive Secretary to continue cooperating on programmatic matters with the interim secretariat to the Minamata Convention and to provide any secretariat support that may be requested and is fully funded by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention.

4. In fulfilment of the above-mentioned mandates, the Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention participate in meetings of the respective conventions' governing bodies. In particular, the BRS secretariat will participate in the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-2) and related regional preparatory meetings. Likewise, the secretariat of the Minamata Convention will participate in the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the associated regional preparatory meetings. More details on regional meetings are provided below under the section related to awareness-raising activities.

Activities pertaining to mercury wastes

5. In Article 11 of the Minamata Convention, the resolutions adopted by the Conference of the Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention, and decision BC-11/5 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, Governments recognize the close relationship between the Minamata Convention and the Basel Convention on issues related to the management of mercury wastes, including with respect to the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes.

6. By its decision BC-12/4, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention adopted the technical guidelines on mercury wastes and requested them to be disseminated to Parties and others,

¹ See document UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/5.

² The dialogue took place previously with the Conference of the Plenipotentiaries or the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument (INC).

³ UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/14.

⁴ BC-13/16, RC-8/10 and SC-8/20.

⁵ BC-13/24, RC-8/17 and SC-8/27.

including the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The technical guidelines on mercury wastes which are available in the six official languages of the United Nations are set out in document UNEP/CHW.12/5/Add.8/Rev.1.⁶ By the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties and others to use the technical guidelines and to submit comments on their experiences and on any developments regarding methods for the environmentally sound disposal of mercury wastes. No comments or information have been received in response to decision BC-12/4 for consideration by the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 2017. The requests for information set out in decision BC-12/4 remain valid.

7. The BRS secretariat takes part in the process established by decision MC-1/19 on mercury waste thresholds. In addition, the BRS secretariat, as a member of the Partnership Advisory Group of the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Mercury Partnership, participated in its eighth meeting held in September 2017.

8. The Expert Working Group on Environmentally Sound Management (ESM), a group mandated by the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to elaborate and implement actions for the implementation of ESM, has developed fact sheets on specific waste streams, including mercury wastes.⁷ The fact sheets, which were welcomed by the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, are intended as a collection of practical, user-friendly information for various stakeholders on the ESM of specific waste streams under the Basel Convention. Practical manuals and other tools developed by the Working Group that are relevant to the management of mercury wastes can be found on the Convention's website.⁸

Activities pertaining to the environmentally sound interim storage of mercury

9. The BRS secretariat takes part in the process established by decision MC-1/18 on draft guidelines on the interim storage of mercury and of mercury compounds.

Activities pertaining to the arrangements in regard to effectiveness evaluation as referred to in paragraph 2 of article 22 of the Minamata Convention

10. According to Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Conference of the Parties shall evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention commencing four years after the date of entry into force of the Convention, and periodically thereafter. The first effectiveness evaluation pursuant to the Stockholm Convention was completed in May 2009. It was noted that the procedures for the evaluation stage of the effectiveness evaluation were not defined at that time and an ad hoc working group was established to write a report on possible procedures for this purpose. At its sixth meeting held in May 2013, the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention adopted the framework for the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention pursuant to Article 16. The framework encompasses: the purpose of the effectiveness evaluation; the arrangements for conducting the effectiveness evaluation; the elements and indicators for the effectiveness evaluation; limitations of the effectiveness evaluation; and terms of reference for an effectiveness evaluation committee.

11. Article 22 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury includes similar requirements on effectiveness evaluation under the Convention, including information on the timing and scope of the evaluation. The Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, in its decision MC-1/9, decided on a road map for establishing arrangements for providing itself with comparable monitoring data and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework. The road map included a face to face meeting of an ad hoc group of experts to prepare a draft report including an outline, plan and elements of the effectiveness evaluation framework.

12. The BRS secretariat participated in the meeting of the ad hoc group of experts, held from 5 to 9 March 2018 in Ottawa, Canada, to share the relevant experience of the Stockholm Convention on the effectiveness evaluation framework and on monitoring arrangements. The ad hoc group of experts reviewed the process of the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention as a basis, with a view to identifying methodological approaches applicable to the Minamata Convention. The information exchange supported the group of experts' work on the development of monitoring arrangements and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework.

⁶ Available at: <http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/ConferenceoftheParties/Meetings/COP12/tabid/4248/mctl/ViewDetails/EventModID/8051/EventID/542/xmid/13027/Default.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/CountryLedInitiative/EnvironmentallySoundManagement/ESMToolkit/Factsheets/tabid/5843/Default.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/CountryLedInitiative/EnvironmentallySoundManagement/Overview/tabid/3615/Default.aspx>

Activities pertaining to financial resources

13. The Stockholm Convention has gathered extensive experience with the operations of its financial mechanism in accordance with Articles 13 and 14 of the Convention. Several arrangements have been established under the Convention to ensure the effectiveness of the mechanism, particularly the existence of a memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties and the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the provision of specific guidance on funding priorities, the determination of the funding needs for the implementation of the Convention, and a review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

14. The BRS secretariat cooperates and coordinates with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention on relevant experience with procedures and approaches established under the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention. As part of the cooperative activities undertaken, joint discussions between the GEF, the BRS secretariat, the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of SAICM are being organized on a regular basis.

15. The BRS secretariat cooperates and coordinates with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention on other related financial resources issues, such as the special programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM. Cooperation on issues pertaining to the special programme takes place as part of an internal task team consisting of representatives from the secretariats of the BRS conventions, the Minamata Convention, SAICM and the GEF to assist the special programme secretariat to undertake an appraisal of the applications received.

Activities pertaining to compliance

16. The BRS secretariat participated in an information session preceding the first meeting of the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Minamata Convention held in Geneva, on 29 and 30 May 2018, aimed at the sharing of experience from selected multilateral environmental agreements. This was an opportunity to provide information on the features, operations and activities of the Basel Convention Implementation and Compliance Committee.

17. The secretariat of the Minamata Convention was invited to attend as an observer the open sessions of the thirteenth meeting of the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Basel Convention, to be held in Geneva, from 7 to 10 September 2018.

Activities pertaining to awareness-raising and technical assistance including regional centres

18. Another area of common interest among the four conventions pertains to awareness-raising and technical assistance, including regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm conventions. These centers are referred to as the Basel Convention Regional Centers (BCRCs), Basel Convention Coordinating Centers (BCCCs), and Stockholm Convention Regional Centers (SCRCs).

19. Representatives of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention provided an update on status of ratifications of the Minamata Convention and the outcomes of COP-1 during the annual joint meeting of the regional centres held on 7 and 8 November 2017 in Barcelona. For the upcoming annual joint meeting, which is scheduled to be held on 15 and 16 November 2018 in Geneva, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention will be invited to provide an update on the possible discussion at COP-2 on regional centres. During these meetings, the regional centres exchange information on their current activities involving the Minamata Convention as well as possible future activities.

20. Apart from this, several regional centres have listed in their business plans/workplans for the period of 2016-2019 several activities relating to management of mercury wastes and awareness-raising activities on the Minamata Convention. These centres are: BCRC Argentina, SCRC Brazil, BCRC/SCRC China, BCRC Caribbean, BCRC Egypt, SCRC India, BCRC/SCRC Indonesia, SCRC Mexico, BCCC Nigeria, BCRC Russian Federation, BCRC/SCRC South Africa, BCRC Slovakia, SPREP, SCRC Spain and BCRC/SCRC Uruguay. These plans have been published on the regional centres' webpages of the Basel and Stockholm conventions.

21. With regard to awareness-raising activities, the BRS secretariat will participate in all four regional meetings organized by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention in preparation for COP-2 to be held as follows: in Lusaka, Zambia, on 9 and 10 October 2018, for Africa; in Chisinau, Moldova, on 16 and 17 October 2018, for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia; in Bangkok, Thailand, on 23 and 24 October 2018, for Asia and the Pacific and in Lima, Peru, on 30 and 31 October 2018, for Latin America and the Caribbean. Back-to-back with those meetings, the BRS secretariat will convene half-a-day information sessions on activities of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions of relevance to the Minamata Convention. The SAICM secretariat will also organize half-a-day sessions on their issues. The BRS secretariat will organize regional meetings to prepare for the

meetings of the conferences of the Parties to be held in March 2019. An offer has been made to the secretariats of the Minamata Convention and SAICM to hold back-to-back sessions to those regional meetings.

22. As a follow-up to a technical assistance project for the development of inventories and management plans for hazardous wastes containing or contaminated with mercury in Argentina, Costa Rica and Uruguay, the BRS secretariat is disseminating the experience and results of the project in cooperation with the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre in Uruguay.

Activities pertaining to the servicing of meetings

23. The BRS secretariat and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention have taken steps to enhance their cooperation on the organisation and servicing of COPs meetings as well as regional preparatory meetings/consultations.

24. Staff from the secretariat of the Minamata Convention provided support to the BRS secretariat during the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in Geneva in 2017. Likewise, the BRS secretariat provided support to the secretariat of the Minamata Convention during COP-1 in September 2017 in Geneva and will provide similar support to COP-2.

25. Upon request by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the BRS secretariat provides substantive inputs to the documents being prepared for meetings of the COPs where it has a particular expertise and experience.

Other cooperative activities undertaken by the BRS secretariat and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention

26. In response to the mandate received from the COPs at their 2017 meetings on programmes of work and budgets as set out in the paragraph 3 above, the BRS secretariat put forward an offer of secretariat support services it could provide to the secretariat of the Minamata Convention on a cost recovery basis, which included information technology and knowledge management, conference services, communication, public awareness and outreach, legal support and organization of joint regional preparatory meetings. Of the range of services offered by the BRS secretariat, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention is still considering which of the services it would consider.