

## POPS COP-2 HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 1 MAY 2006

The second Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs COP-2) opened on Monday, 1 May, in Geneva, Switzerland. During morning and afternoon plenary sessions, delegates addressed organizational matters, heard general statements, and considered agenda items on rules of procedure, the Secretariat's activities, the budget, non-compliance and financial resources.

### OPENING PLENARY

Fernando Lugris, Uruguay's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of Mariano Arana, Uruguay's Minister of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment, noted the urgency of working efficiently to strengthen the Convention, and the need for progress on issues related to the financial mechanism, technical assistance and regional centers.

Bruno Oberle, Swiss Agency for the Environment, highlighted the role of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in providing the necessary financial support to address POPs, and called for enhanced synergies among the Rotterdam, Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

Shafqat Kakahel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, underlined the need to strengthen national capacity, and the importance of regional centers in developing capacity building and monitoring activities.

Leonard Good, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the GEF, reported on the GEF's work with the Stockholm Convention. He called for integration of national chemicals programmes and mainstreaming of chemicals management in national development strategies. He underlined that a modified resource allocation framework (RAF) could apply to other focal areas besides biodiversity and climate change in the future.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Delegates elected Nik Kiddle (New Zealand) as President of COP-2. Honduras, on behalf of GRULAC, nominated Fernando Lugris (Uruguay) as Vice-President. Egypt and Burkina Faso were nominated as Bureau members for their region while nomination of other members was postponed to allow for further regional consultations.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:** SWITZERLAND, supported by Austria, on behalf of the EU, requested non-compliance mechanisms be added to the agenda. Noting the small size of some delegations, INDIA, GRULAC, and others,

opposed establishing a contact group on non-compliance. COP-2 President Kiddle said the issue of non-compliance was already incorporated into the agenda, and delegates adopted the agenda (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/1) without amendment.

**ORGANIZATION OF WORK:** COP-2 President Kiddle proposed, and delegates agreed, that contact group meetings be held in parallel with plenary, rather than creating a Committee of the Whole, and introduced a draft meeting schedule. CHINA, with INDIA, BRAZIL and Kenya, for the AFRICA GROUP, suggested delaying discussion on non-compliance until later in the week, while the EU preferred commencing such discussion on Monday afternoon. Delegates agreed to introduce the Open-Ended Working Group on Non-Compliance (OEWG NC) report on Monday afternoon, and postponed substantive discussion on non-compliance for later in the week.

### RULES OF PROCEDURE

Delegates agreed to apply the rules of procedure (UNEP/POPs/COP.2/3) for the COP and its Subsidiary Bodies under Decision SC-1/1 (Rules of procedure), keeping in brackets a provision for decisions to be taken, as a last resort, by a two-thirds majority vote of the parties.

### REPORT ON CREDENTIALS

The Secretariat presented an interim report on credentials, and noted that a final report will be provided by the Bureau on Friday morning.

### ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT AND ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET

John Whitelaw, Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention, reported on the activities undertaken by the Secretariat, the 2006 budget and the 2007 indicative budget (UNEP/POPs/COP.2/24, UNEP/POPs/COP.2/INF/16 and UNEP/POPs/COP.2/INF/13). He highlighted, *inter alia*: the preparatory work for COP-2; finalization of the permanent arrangements for the Secretariat in Geneva; elaboration of guidance for National Implementation Plans (NIPs); and cooperation with other organizations, especially the Basel and Rotterdam Convention secretariats, the GEF, UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) (Chemicals Branch), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

MEXICO, with CHILE, expressed concern about increasing the 2007 budget, while the EU, with CANADA, called for only minimal increases. NORWAY, with MEXICO and SWITZERLAND, expressed concern about funding core activities via the Special Trust Fund. CANADA advocated

balancing activities funded through different sources, namely the Special Trust Fund, core budget, and other funding sources, while SOUTH AFRICA noted that doing so is dependent on discussions on synergies. CHILE highlighted the budgetary implications of proposed expert groups. In response to a comment from NIGERIA, the Secretariat noted that it is taking into account geographical and demographic diversity in selecting Secretariat personnel. A contact group was established to discuss budgetary issues.

### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**

The EU emphasized the need to finalize the non-compliance provisions, calling for the OEWG NC to continue its work during COP-2. The EU also called for the inclusion of further substances in the list of POPs, announcing that details of three proposed additions to the relevant annexes would be provided before the next meeting of the POPs Review Committee.

UGANDA noted that it is unlikely to be able to transmit its NIP in time, and therefore supported a non-compliance mechanism that assists parties with compliance. The AFRICA GROUP reported that many countries in Africa are developing their NIPs, and noted that the completion of the SAICM process will facilitate the process of information exchange on POPs. MONGOLIA called for strengthening capacity and mobilizing financial resources for NIPs. COTE D'IVOIRE, the PHILIPPINES, MOROCCO, EGYPT, RWANDA and KUWAIT called for technical and scientific assistance to enable developing countries to carry out their Convention obligations.

GUINEA highlighted problems with controlling illegal transboundary movement of pesticides and a lack of awareness of risks of exposure to dangerous pesticides.

The INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF FREE TRADE UNIONS stressed that technical and financial assistance is crucial for phasing-out POPs while ensuring a proper transition for affected workers. NAMIBIA highlighted a lack of financial resources and technical capacities to address POPs issues, especially in Africa, and the need for developing alternatives for DDT for disease vector control.

The UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH outlined details of its activities on chemicals waste and environmental governance, especially training initiatives for NIPs. The WORLD BANK highlighted activities it has carried out to assist developing countries in implementing the Convention, including: promoting capacity building, especially in Africa; fostering developing countries' participation in the SAICM process; and assisting developing countries in identifying and assessing gaps and needs for chemicals management.

The INTERNATIONAL POPs ELIMINATION NETWORK said that a non-compliance procedure should recognize the linkage between compliance and availability of financial resources. The US called for a transparent, science-based risk assessment process for adding chemicals to the list of POPs.

The WHO reported on a study monitoring POPs levels in human milk, and offered to share information and experiences in monitoring implementation of the Convention. The UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION reported on work with the private sector on the introduction of best available techniques and best environmental practices to eliminate and reduce the use of POPs. The UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME stated that the sustainability of results relies on synergies and harmonization of efforts at the national and global levels.

### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

COP-2 President Kiddle introduced the agenda item on non-compliance (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/27). OEWG NC Chair Anne Daniel (Canada) summarized the major issues of the OEWG NC, including: establishment of the non-compliance committee and the basis for selection of members; trigger mechanisms; non-compliance measures; and the nature and principles of the non-compliance procedures. The plenary then took up discussion on when to reconvene the OEWG NC. AUSTRALIA suggested an intersessional meeting. ETHIOPIA, the EU and NORWAY emphasized the necessity of a non-compliance mechanism to facilitate implementation of the Convention and, supported by SWITZERLAND but opposed by CHINA and INDIA, favored continuing the OEWG NC during COP-2. NORWAY and SWITZERLAND further noted the relevance of compliance to agenda items on technical and financial assistance. GRULAC said its members' delegations were too small to attend a contact group on this subject during COP-2. INDIA further noted the budgetary implications of convening an intersessional OEWG NC. The EU noted the need for COP-2 to take a decision on any future work of the OEWG NC and JAPAN suggested COP-2 agree, at a minimum, to reconvene the OEWG NC at COP-3. President Kiddle noted the difficulty of accrediting participants for an additional OEWG at COP-2 and, as per Chile's suggestion, parties agreed to forward discussion on reconvening OEWG NC to the Bureau.

### **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Following the Secretariat's introduction of the agenda item on financial resources, the GEF indicated a willingness to respond to questions from parties during contact group meetings and at two side events hosted by the GEF. NORWAY noted that the draft report of the independent evaluation of the GEF's activities in support of the implementation of the Convention (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/INF/9) was positive, and that the GEF has demonstrated its ability and value as the financial mechanism of the Convention. The EU noted that the GEF should be confirmed as the principal financial mechanism on a permanent basis, and expressed disappointment with the lack of analytical methodology in the draft decision on the terms of reference for work on modalities on the needs assessment (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/18). EGYPT noted that even though the Convention states that all developing countries have a right to financial assistance and the Gulf States are developing countries, they do not receive support because they do not fall within the GEF standards. SWITZERLAND questioned whether the GEF RAF would benefit the functioning of the Convention, but stated a willingness to work with the GEF to find a positive solution. CHINA noted the need to eliminate POPs at their source and his hope that financial support would be available to assist China with this. Plenary discussion of this item will continue on Tuesday morning.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

On the opening day of COP-2, some delegates anticipated that issues related to regional centers, the financial mechanism and availability of funds for implementing the Convention, and technical assistance would emerge as major topics this week. Following a positive and productive COP-1, some delegates were optimistic that even if these issues are contentious, the COP-2 agenda would prove comparatively light, leaving participants plenty of time to enjoy the Geneva spring.