

## SUMMARY OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION: 19-23 MARCH 2012

The eighth meeting of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC-8) of Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade convened from 19-23 March 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 88 participants attended the meeting, including 29 committee members, 42 government observers, 2 observers from inter-governmental organizations, and 15 observers from non-governmental organizations.

CRC-8 adopted eight decisions, including on: dicofol; trichlorfon; pentabromodiphenyl ether (pentaBDE) and pentaBDE commercial mixtures; octabromodiphenyl ether (octaBDE) and octaBDE commercial mixtures; perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, perfluorooctanesulfonates, perfluorooctanesulfonamides and perfluorooctanesulfonyls; paraquat; and working procedures and policy guidance.

The CRC moved efficiently through its agenda and concluded its work on Thursday afternoon, one day ahead of schedule.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION AND THE CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Growth in internationally-traded chemicals during the 1960s and 1970s prompted efforts by the international community to safeguard people and the environment from the harmful effects of such chemicals. These efforts resulted in the adoption of the International Code of Conduct for the Distribution and Use of Pesticides by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Both the Code of Conduct and the London Guidelines include procedures aimed at making information about hazardous chemicals readily available, thereby permitting countries to assess the risks associated with their use. In 1989, both instruments were amended to include a voluntary

PIC procedure, managed jointly by FAO and UNEP, to help countries make informed decisions on the import of banned or severely restricted chemicals.

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, delegates adopted Agenda 21, which called for an international strategy for action on chemical safety (Chapter 19), and urged states to achieve full participation in, and implementation of, the PIC procedure by 2000, with the possible adoption of a legally-binding PIC Convention.

In November 1994, the 107th meeting of the FAO Council agreed that the FAO Secretariat should proceed with the preparation of a draft PIC Convention as part of the joint FAO/UNEP programme. In May 1995, the 18th session of the UNEP Governing Council adopted Decision 18/12, authorizing the Executive Director to convene, with the FAO, an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) with a mandate to prepare an international legally-binding instrument for the application of the PIC procedure. The INC held five sessions between March 1996 and March 1998, during which the PIC Convention was drafted, revised, and ultimately agreed upon.

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**CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES:** The Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the PIC Convention was held from 10-11 September 1998, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Ministers and senior officials from approximately 100 countries adopted the Rotterdam Convention, the Final Act of the Conference, and a Resolution on Interim Arrangements.

In line with the new procedures contained in the Convention, the Conference adopted numerous interim arrangements for the continued implementation of the voluntary PIC procedure and invited UNEP and FAO to convene further INCs during the period prior to the Convention's entry into force and to oversee the operation of the interim PIC procedure.

**INC 6-11:** In the period prior to the Convention's entry into force, the INC met six times. The meetings agreed to draft decisions on the definition and provisional adoption of PIC regions, the establishment of an Interim Chemical Review Committee (ICRC), and the adoption of draft decision guidance documents (DGDs) for chemicals already identified for inclusion in the PIC procedure. They also prepared draft decisions for the first COP, including on financial arrangements and dispute settlement procedures. Chemicals added to the interim PIC procedure during these sessions include ethylene dichloride and ethylene oxide, monocrotophos, four forms of asbestos, dinithro-ortho-cresol, and dustable powder formulations of benomyl, carbofuran, thiram, tetraethyl lead, tetramethyl lead, and parathion. Discussions of the inclusion of a fifth form of asbestos—chrysotile—were initiated at INC-10 but no agreement was reached.

**COP-1:** The first COP to the Rotterdam Convention, held in Geneva from 20-24 September 2004, adopted all the decisions required to make the legally-binding PIC Procedure operational. Delegates addressed procedural issues and other decisions associated with the entry into force of the Convention, such as the: PIC regions; inclusion of chemicals in Annex III recommended during the interim period; adoption of financial rules and provisions for the COP, the subsidiary bodies, and the Secretariat; establishment of the CRC; cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO); settlement of disputes; and the location of the Secretariat.

**CRC-1:** The first session of the CRC convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 11-15 February 2005. The Committee agreed that chrysotile asbestos met Annex II criteria and agreed to draft a DGD for consideration at CRC-2.

**COP-2:** This meeting convened from 27-30 September 2005 in Rome, Italy. Delegates adopted decisions on: the programme of work and the budget for 2006; operational procedures of the CRC; the finalization of the arrangements between UNEP and FAO for the provision of the Secretariat to the Rotterdam Convention; pilot projects on the delivery of regional technical assistance; and cooperation and synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Delegates also forwarded bracketed text on a compliance mechanism to COP-3, and tasked the Secretariat with a study on financial mechanisms.

**CRC-2:** The second session of the CRC convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13-17 February 2006, and recommended the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in the Convention's PIC Procedure. The Committee also agreed tributyltin and endosulfan met Annex II criteria and agreed to draft a DGD.

**COP-3:** This meeting convened from 9-13 October 2006 in Geneva, Switzerland. COP-3 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted 16 decisions on, *inter alia*: the programme of work; implementation of the Convention; financial mechanisms; and cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Delegates did not reach agreement on the mechanisms and procedures for non-compliance and deferred the decision on listing chrysotile asbestos in Annex III to COP-4.

**CRC-3:** The third session of the CRC convened in Rome, Italy from 20-23 March 2007. The Committee agreed endosulfan and tributyltin met criteria for inclusion in the Convention's PIC Procedure.

**CRC-4:** The fourth session of the CRC convened in Geneva, Switzerland from 10-13 March 2008. The Committee agreed that alachlor and aldicarb met Annex II criteria and tasked intersessional groups with drafting DGDs.

**COP-4:** This meeting convened from 27-31 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. COP-4 adopted 13 decisions, including the addition of tributyltin compounds to Annex III of the Convention. The meeting also adopted: a programme of work and budget for the triennium 2009-11; a decision on implementation; and the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (AHJWG). However, it could not agree on the inclusion of endosulfan or chrysotile asbestos in Annex III, or on mechanisms and procedures for non-compliance. Delegates agreed to revisit these issues at COP-5.

**CRC-5:** The fifth session of the CRC convened in Rome, Italy, from 23-27 March 2009, and recommended the inclusion of alachlor and aldicarb in the Convention's PIC Procedure.

**CRC-6:** The sixth session of the CRC was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15-19 March 2010. The Committee approved a revised DGD on endosulfan and recommended the inclusion of endosulfan in the Convention's PIC Procedure.

**CRC-7:** The seventh session of the CRC was held in Rome, Italy, from 28 March - 1 April 2011, and recommended the inclusion of azinphos-methyl in the Convention's PIC Procedure. This recommendation will be considered at COP-6, scheduled to convene in 2013. CRC-7 agreed to draft DGDs for PFOS, its salts and the precursor PFOSF, and BDEs contained in commercial mixtures, including tetraBDE, pentaBDE, hexaBDE, heptaBDE, octaBDE, nonaBDE, and decaBDE.

**COP-5:** This meeting convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 20-24 June 2011. COP-5 adopted 13 decisions, including listing aldicarb, alachlor, and endosulfan in Annex III of the Convention. The meeting also adopted decisions on: the budget; technical assistance; synergies; information exchange; trade; and the work of the CRC. Delegates addressed those issues that eluded consensus during the last meeting of the COP, but still could not agree on mechanisms and procedures for non-compliance and the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III of the Convention.

## CRC-8 REPORT

On Monday, 19 March 2012, Jim Willis, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, opened CRC-8, welcoming delegates and noting that the CRC, like

its counterparts, the Basel Convention Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), and the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC), provides the substance for the work of the Convention. He drew attention to changes in CRC, noting that decisions will be reflected in an annex to the official meeting reports, and that interventions made by observers will be reported only if they are taken up by a Committee member. On synergies, Willis acknowledged recent financial pledges from Switzerland, Germany and the European Union (EU).

CRC Chair Hala Al-Easa (Qatar) introduced the agenda (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/1), which members adopted, and outlined the organization of work for the week. Chair Al-Easa welcomed 14 new members to the CRC and said she looked forward to a successful and challenging meeting.

The Committee met in plenary throughout the week. Drafting groups, open only to Committee members, convened daily on a variety of topics, and a contact group, open to members and observers, convened once on trichlorfon.

The current members of the CRC are Armenia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, the Gambia, Germany, India, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Yemen and Zambia.

This summary of the meeting is organized according to the agenda.

#### **REVIEW OF COP-5 OUTCOMES RELEVANT TO THE COMMITTEE'S WORK**

On Monday, the Secretariat reported on COP-5 decisions relevant to the work of the CRC, including: agreement to list endosulfan in Annex III; agreement to promote cooperation among the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions and, in particular, the POPRC and the CRC; and COP-5's request that the Secretariat prepare guidelines for notifications of final regulatory action, with an explanation of the phrase "severely restricted chemical."

The Secretariat noted that the CRC had prepared a second draft DGD for endosulfan intersessionally that would include two additional notifications. Chair Al-Easa proposed, and the Committee agreed, to suspend the development of the additional DGD, because only one is required by the Convention. Germany noted that the DGD under development includes new information, and Chair Al-Easa confirmed the information would be made available through the clearinghouse mechanism.

#### **OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

**ROTATION OF MEMBERSHIP:** Participants welcomed 14 new CRC members, who comprise almost half of the Committee's membership. New members include: Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Congo, the Gambia, Germany, India, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Mali, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and Zambia.

**REPORT ON EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION:** The Secretariat reported that 24 members attended a workshop on CRC working procedures, policy guidance and meeting preparation. India and Jamaica highlighted the usefulness of the workshop in preparing for CRC-8.

#### **WORKING PROCEDURES AND POLICY GUIDANCE:**

The Secretariat introduced two documents updated by intersessional groups on: the application of Annex II paragraph (b) criteria in the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/10), and preparing internal proposals and DGDs for severely hazardous pesticide formulations (SHPFs) (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/11).

Mirijam Seng (Germany), who led the intersessional work, reviewed the comments on the working paper on the application of Annex II paragraph (b) criteria. She noted a comment received from a US observer that not all sub-criteria must be fulfilled for the Committee to determine that a chemical meets the Annex II paragraph (b) requirements. She also highlighted comments from CropLife International that called for, *inter alia*, amending the definition of risk evaluation and removing the example of "bridging." She reported that the working group noted, but did not accept, these comments. Mexico underscored the importance of bridging, explaining that it allows developing countries to use risk evaluations from another country as the basis for a national final regulatory action.

Seng noted that the second document, which provides guidance for preparing internal proposals and DGDs for SHPFs, was previously adopted with the understanding that it would be amended when a proposal was brought to the Committee, and she reminded members that Burkina Faso's proposal for paraquat at CRC-7 was the first proposal for an SHPF. She reported that the main areas of revision included: creating a standard list of abbreviations; updating the scope of information on active ingredients; and updating the list of international reviews. Seng also noted a comment from the Berne Declaration, an NGO, suggesting that FAO pesticide guidelines be used to assist the development of proposals for SHPFs.

On Wednesday morning, Chair Al-Easa introduced the draft decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.3) on the working paper on the application of the Annex II paragraph (b) criteria and the draft decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.4) on the working paper on preparing internal proposals and DGDs for SHPFs, and the Committee adopted both decisions without amendment.

**Final Decisions:** In the decision on the working paper on the application of the criteria set out in paragraph (b) of Annex II to the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.3), the CRC decides to use the amended working paper on the understanding that it is a living document to be further developed in the future on the basis of additional experience.

In the decision on the working paper on preparing internal proposals and DGDs for severely hazardous pesticide formulations (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.4), the CRC decides to use the amended working paper on the understanding that it is a living document to be further developed in the future on the basis of additional experience.

#### **TECHNICAL WORK**

**BUREAU REPORT ON PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF NOTIFICATIONS:** On Tuesday, Azhari Abdelbagi (Sudan) introduced the working procedures and policy guidance for the CRC priority setting process for candidate chemicals (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/5). He outlined three categories for candidate chemicals: chemicals for which notifications from at

least two PIC regions appear to meet Annex II criteria; chemicals for which notifications from one PIC region appear to meet Annex II criteria; and chemicals for which no notifications appear to meet Annex II criteria. He noted that trichlorfon falls within the first category and dicofol in the second.

#### REVIEW OF NOTIFICATIONS OF FINAL

**REGULATORY ACTION: Dicofol:** On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the documents on notifications related to dicofol (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/4, UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/4/Add.1 and Add.2, and UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/4/Rev.1). Dicofol task group Co-Chair Peter Ombajo (Kenya) reported on the task group's review of the notifications from the EU and Japan. Ombajo said the group concluded that while the EU's notification meets all of the criteria for Annexes I and II, it was not possible to confirm that a risk evaluation was carried out in Japan, and therefore Japan's notification does not meet Annex II paragraph (b) criteria. Zambia and Spain expressed support for the conclusions of the group.

Chair Al-Easa asked the Committee to confirm whether the criteria were met for both notifications. The Committee agreed that the EU's notification meets all of the criteria, but concluded that Japan's notification did not meet the criteria in Annex II paragraph (b). A drafting group, co-chaired by Ombajo and Susan Collier (New Zealand), was then established to prepare a rationale stating that the EU's notification meets the Annex II criteria.

On Wednesday, Ombajo reported that the drafting group had finalized the rationale. Chair Al-Easa introduced the draft rationale for dicofol (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.10).

Ombajo reviewed the rationale prepared for the EU notification, explaining that it, *inter alia*: was taken to protect human health and the environment; was the result of a risk evaluation; and is expected to significantly reduce use of and exposure to the chemical. The committee adopted the decision with minor editorial amendments.

On Thursday morning, Chair Al-Easa briefly revisited this decision to clarify that no further action would be taken on dicofol because the Committee agreed that only one notification meets Annex II criteria.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.10), the CRC adopts the rationale for the conclusion by the Committee that the notification for dicofol (CAS No. 15-32-2) submitted by the EU meets the criteria set out in Annex II to the Rotterdam Convention.

**Trichlorfon:** On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the notifications from the EU and Brazil (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/5, UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/5/Add.1 and Add.2) and supporting documentation submitted by the notifying parties.

Mirijam Seng, Chair of the intersessional task group, reported on the group's review of the notifications for trichlorfon submitted by EU and Brazil, and noted the task group's conclusion that both notifications meet all criteria in Annex II. Seng also highlighted CropLife International's concern that Brazil's notification did not meet the criteria in Annex II paragraph (b), requiring that final regulatory action be taken as a consequence of a risk evaluation. Seng said Brazil had subsequently confirmed that the final regulatory action was based on toxicological evaluations.

Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Sudan and Pakistan expressed support for the group's conclusion that this additional information addressed the issue raised by CropLife International.

India noted a delay between the date of the final regulatory acts and receipt of the notifications by the Secretariat, and also noted that there was no date on the second document provided by the EU. Chair Al-Easa clarified that the date of the EU cover letter reflects the legal date of the final regulatory act. India asked how the timeline issues associated with both notifications could be addressed by the CRC. Germany explained that the issue was procedural and should therefore be dealt with by the COP, as opposed to the Committee. Norway noted that clarification had been sought on this issue during CRC-7, and said that the UNEP Legal Adviser had confirmed that notification is valid even if it is submitted more than 90 days after regulatory action. Switzerland suggested that the issue be taken up by the COP in discussions related to compliance, and the Committee agreed to record India's concern in the report of the meeting.

Chair Al-Easa asked the Committee to agree whether the criteria for Annex II paragraphs (a-d) were met for both notifications, and the Committee agreed that both notifications satisfy the Annex II criteria.

A contact group, chaired by Seng, was then established to consider any outstanding issues related to the notifications on trichlorfon. Chair Al-Easa proposed, and delegates agreed, that the group would be closed after an hour to allow members to initiate drafting activities, including a rationale stating that the trichlorfon notifications meet Annex II criteria, and a work plan and timeline for the development of a DGD.

The contact group met briefly on Tuesday afternoon. One observer sought clarification on the purpose of the discussion, given that the Committee had already decided that the trichlorfon notifications meet Annex II criteria. Seng clarified the purpose of the discussion was to address any residual concerns, and to articulate precisely how the CRC sees that the criteria have been met.

Another observer requested additional information on Brazil's final regulatory act. Brazil explained the timeframe for its activities: the first action (restricting the use of the chemical) was based on a lack of information, and the final regulatory act (banning all use of trichlorfon) took into account a risk evaluation, informed by a toxicological assessment. After an intensive discussion between several observers and Brazil, questioning the interpretation of which regulatory action was final, several CRC members intervened, noting the variability of the regulatory process from country to country, and consequently the need to let the Party determine what action is final, and what is not.

Seng assured participants that the drafting group would take these concerns into account when developing the rationale.

On Thursday, Chair Al-Easa introduced the draft decision to recommend listing trichlorfon in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.9/Rev.1), the draft rationale (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.13), and the draft work plan to draft a DGD (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.14).

Seng reviewed the draft rationale explaining that the notifications from EU and Brazil meet Annex II criteria. She said that the EU regulatory action to ban trichlorfon as a

pesticide, *inter alia*: was taken to protect human health and the environment; would reduce use and exposure to the chemical; and documented likely health and environmental concerns in other countries. Seng noted that the drafting group agreed the notification listed enough concerns to meet the criterion in Annex II paragraph (b)(iii), although data limitations precluded some conclusions.

Reviewing Brazil's notification, Seng outlined that the drafting group agreed the final regulatory act occurred in 2010 prohibiting production, import, trade and re-registration. Seng stated that the drafting group concluded that this final regulatory act was, *inter alia*, based on a risk evaluation of prevailing conditions of use in Brazil and is likely to be representative of possible health problems in other developing countries.

Spain, Mexico, Kenya and Sudan all expressed support for the rationale.

CropLife International disagreed and suggested the inclusion of additional text reflecting the impacts of the first regulatory action in Brazil that prohibited trade and import of trichlorfon.

The Committee then adopted the decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.9/Rev.1). Seng reviewed the draft work plan for an intersessional task group to draft a DGD, and explained that a first round of comments would be open to CRC members and a second round would be open to observers.

An observer from the US requested additional opportunities for input, drawing a comparison to the intersessional drafting process in the POPRC. The Secretariat clarified that the process to draft DGDs is set out in COP Decision RC-2/2, which outlines a step for distributing draft DGDs to members and observers present at this meeting.

**Final Decision:** In its decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.9/Rev.1), the CRC agrees to recommend that the Conference of the Parties include trichlorfon (CAS No. 52-68-6) in Annex III to the Convention, and adopts the rationale for the recommendation (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.13) and the work plan for the preparation of a decision guidance document for the chemical (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.14).

#### CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT GUIDANCE

**DOCUMENTS:** The draft DGDs on penta- and octaBDE were introduced separately and were addressed in separate decisions, but the substances were discussed together both in plenary and a drafting group on Tuesday and Wednesday.

**PentaBDE Commercial Mixtures:** On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the draft DGD on pentaBDE commercial mixtures (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/7) and a summary of comments received intersessionally from members and observers (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/8).

Drafting Group Co-Chair Jacqueline Arroyo Daul (Ecuador) reported on the comments received intersessionally, and noted that tetraBDE and pentaBDE are the main components of the commercial mixture of this substance.

New Zealand suggested using CAS numbers to list the substance, as done in the Stockholm Convention.

Chair Al-Easa asked the drafting group to prepare a revised table of comments and DGD.

On Thursday morning, Chair Al-Easa introduced the revised DGD on PentaBDE (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.11/Add.1), and Arroyo Daul explained that the title of the DGD had been

adjusted to specify pentaBDE and pentaBDE commercial mixtures. The Committee adopted the DGD.

Chair Al-Easa then introduced the draft decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.11) to recommend the COP list pentaBDE and pentaBDE commercial mixtures in Annex III of the Convention, and the Committee adopted it without amendment.

**Final Decision:** The CRC adopts the draft text of the DGD on pentaBDE (CAS No. 32534-81-9) and pentaBDE commercial mixtures as contained in UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.11/Add.1, and decides to forward it, together with the related tabular summary of comments set out in document UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/8, to the COP for its consideration.

**OctaBDE Commercial Mixtures:** On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the DGD on octaBDE commercial mixtures (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/8) and the summary of comments received intersessionally (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/9).

Drafting Group Co-Chair Lonneke van Leeuwen (the Netherlands) reported on the comments received intersessionally, noting that most focused on editorial issues.

New Zealand reiterated her suggestion that DGDs for both pentaBDE and octaBDE should mirror the language used in the Stockholm Convention, noting that her Australian colleagues can only regulate substances according to a CAS number.

Spain, supported by Norway and Kenya, proposed citing specific congeners in the listing, as octaBDE is not traded as a pure substance.

CropLife International supported aligning the DGDs for both octaBDE and pentaBDE with the notifications, and suggested looking at the congeners used by the Stockholm Convention to identify the commercial mixture.

An observer from the US said the CRC must recommend listing chemicals in the notifications, and supported listing octaBDE and other commercial mixtures but opposed listing each congener.

Switzerland said the precautionary principle may be necessary for the work of the Rotterdam Convention in a way that differs from that of the Stockholm Convention.

Chair Al-Easa requested the drafting group to prepare a revised table of comments and DGD.

On Tuesday, van Leeuwen reported that the drafting group had worked on both the octa- and pentaBDE DGDs, and said the group had amended the title of the draft DGDs to include specific congeners.

Canada noted that CRC-7 agreed to consider the commercial mixtures of penta- and octaBDE based on the original notifications from Canada, Norway and the EU, and expressed concern that the new titles of the draft DGDs went beyond the intent of the notifications. An observer from the US supported Canada, noting the Committee's procedure is to list chemicals as identified in notifications. An observer from Norway supported the new DGD titles, noting that the CRC-7 decision included congeners of penta- and octaBDE. Canada concurred with Norway that the CRC-7 decision listed the congeners and underscored the need to refer to the commercial mixtures. Chair Al-Easa asked the drafting group to consider this issue further.

On Wednesday, van Leeuwen reported that the penta- and octaBDE drafting group had reached agreement, and on

Thursday morning Chair Al-Easa introduced the revised DGD on octaBDE (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.12/Add.1). Van Leeuwen explained that the title of the DGD had been adjusted to OctaBDE commercial mixtures. The Committee then adopted the DGD.

Chair Al-Easa then introduced the draft decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.12) to recommend the COP list octaBDE commercial mixtures in Annex III of the Convention, and the Committee adopted it without amendment.

**Final Decision:** The CRC adopts the draft text of the DGD on octaBDE commercial mixtures, as contained in document UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.12/Add.1, and decides to forward it, together with the related tabular summary of comments (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/9), to the COP for its consideration.

**PFOS, its salts, and PFOF:** The Secretariat introduced the DGD on PFOS, its salts and precursors (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/6 and INF/7) on Monday. Co-Chair of the intersessional working group on PFOS Jürgen Helbig (Spain), explained that the DGD was based on notifications received from Canada, the EU and Japan.

An observer from the US said that the PFOS DGD provides an accurate compilation of information provided by Canada and the EU, but questioned whether Japan's notification was taken as a consequence of risk evaluation and, supported by CropLife International, suggested it be removed from the DGD. Delegates agreed to discuss this issue in a drafting group and reconsider PFOS in plenary on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Helbig updated plenary on the drafting group's work, noting that the PFOS drafting group agreed to amend the title of the DGD to include PFOS, PFOS potassium salt, ammonium salt, lithium salt, diethanolamine salt and PFOF. He also noted that the drafting group agreed to include the CAS numbers of PFOS, its four salts, and PFOF.

CropLife International asked if the drafting group considered the applicability of including Japan's notification in the draft DGD, as this notification did not appear to include a risk assessment. Spain responded that CRC-7 agreed to include Japan's notification and said the drafting group did not consider this issue further.

On Wednesday morning, Helbig requested time for the PFOS drafting group to review late comments. An observer from the US asked if the tabular summary of comments for PFOS (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.7/Add.2) was intended to include observer comments, since a submission from the US had not been included. Helbig said the comment had been addressed despite its omission from the table, and Chair Al-Easa requested that the table be updated to reflect the comment.

An observer from Norway suggested that the PFOS draft DGD could include a greater number of PFOS salts and precursors, said the notifications from Canada and Norway were meant to include more substances, and highlighted two reports from the OECD and Environment Canada citing 165 and 56 substances, respectively. Switzerland responded that the draft DGD included the chemicals listed in the notifications submitted by Canada and Norway. Helbig explained this issue was considered by CRC-7 and offered to provide clarification in the draft DGD to reflect this.

On Thursday morning, Helbig reported that the drafting group had addressed Norway's comments that the draft DGD did not align with the original notifications from Norway, the EU and Canada. He reported that the drafting group revised the title three categories to include: perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, perfluorooctanesulfonates, perfluorooctanesulfonamides and perfluorooctanesulfonyls. He noted that these categories align with the notifications of two parties, Canada and the EU, which represent two different PIC regions.

Ecuador and Saudi Arabia requested clarification if the three categories listed in the title in fact included all the chemicals listed in the DGD. Chair Al-Easa clarified, "as a chemist to a chemist," that the categories encompass all the chemical substances listed in the DGD. With that clarification, the Committee approved the draft DGD.

**Final Decision:** In its decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.7/Rev.1), the CRC recommends to the COP that it should include perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, perfluorooctanesulfonates, perfluorooctanesulfonamides and perfluorooctanesulfonyls in Annex III to the Convention as industrial chemicals. As part of this decision, the CRC also adopts the draft text of the DGD (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.7/Add.1/Rev.1) and decides to forward it, together with the related tabular summary of comments (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.7/Add.2) to the COP for its consideration.

**Gramoxone Super:** The Secretariat introduced the DGD on Gramoxone Super (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/9 and INF/10, 12, 14), noting that Gramoxone Super is a trade name, and that it was intended that the precise chemical formulation would be listed. The Secretariat recalled that CRC-7 had considered Burkina Faso's proposal to list Gramoxone Super as an SHPF, concluded that the criteria had been met, and tasked an intersessional working group with preparing a DGD.

Co-Chair of the intersessional working group Anja Bartels (Austria) explained that the group had drafted the DGD and eleven comments had been received. She noted that the working group concluded that two Gramoxone formulations were available and subsequently amended the name of the DGD to take into account both formulations, specifically "for liquid formulations (emulsifiable concentrate and soluble concentrate) containing paraquat dichloride at or above 276 g/L, corresponding to paraquat ion at or above 200 g/L."

Noting that 53 poisoning cases have been associated with Gramoxone Super, Chair Al-Easa asked the drafting group to finalize the DGD.

On Wednesday, Chair Al-Easa notified Committee members that new comments had been received since Monday and had subsequently been addressed in the drafting group. Chair Al-Easa then introduced the draft DGD (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.8/Add.1) and the tabular summary (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.8/Add.2), and the Committee adopted the draft DGD with minor editorial amendments.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/CRP.8), the CRC adopts the DGD and tabular summary of all received comments, and agrees to recommend to the COP that liquid formulations (emulsifiable concentrate and soluble

concentrate) containing paraquat dichloride at or above 276 g/L, corresponding to paraquat ion at or above 200 g/L, be listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention.

**REVIEW OF DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF NOTIFICATIONS OF FINAL REGULATORY ACTIONS:** On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced draft guidelines to assist parties in preparing notifications of final regulatory actions (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/11). She explained that the COP requested the preparation of guidelines specifically focusing on the terms and definitions used in the Convention, and noted CRC may wish to review the guidelines and provide feedback.

Spain, Poland, Mexico, India, Ecuador and Sudan thanked the Secretariat for preparing the guidelines and proposed allowing members to provide comments in writing. India noted that an online training module would also be useful and the Secretariat clarified that it has also made available an e-learning module. CropLife International expressed interest in providing comments on the guidelines and proposed that the guidelines clearly state that countries may have a different understanding of what constitutes a final regulatory action, but that the decision on what actually constitutes a regulatory action is ultimately taken by the COP. Chair Al-Easa proposed, and Committee members agreed, that comments should be submitted to the Secretariat by the end of May 2012.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

On Thursday, Chair Al-Easa introduced the issue of possible cooperation between the POPRC and the CRC (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/INF/13) and welcomed her co-author, Reiner Arndt, Chair of the Stockholm Convention POPRC. Arndt presented the outline of a joint working paper on cooperation between the POPRC and CRC. Explaining that the paper would compare the work of the two committees and evaluate options for cooperation, Arndt and Al-Easa invited members to submit comments that could be considered for inclusion in the paper.

Spain noted the different processes taken by the two committees, highlighting that the POPRC undertakes scientific work while the CRC evaluates notifications against the Rotterdam Convention's criteria, and suggested that it might be difficult for members to switch between processes.

Executive Secretary Willis requested that the joint document also be shared with the Basel Convention OEWG, noting that the OEWG might think about opportunities for cooperation among the three subsidiary bodies of the chemicals conventions.

#### **DATES AND VENUE OF CRC-9**

On Thursday, the Secretariat announced that CRC-9 is scheduled to convene from 11-15 March 2013 in Rome, Italy, and noted that the number of notifications to be addressed at this meeting will be known by November 2012. The Chair proposed, and the Committee agreed, to confirm the meeting dates in November to allow for a possible reduction in days to suit the expected workload.

#### **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

On Thursday, Committee members reviewed the draft report of the meeting (UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.8/L.1). An observer from the US queried why the new process excludes observer comments unless a member responds. She noted this may

decrease the transparency of the CRC process, such a practice fails to accurately reflect the proceedings of the meeting, and more observer comments seem to be included in POPRC reports. The Secretariat responded that POPRC and CRC reports are written using the same process, noting that the POPRC plenary tends to engage in more interactive discussion and, as a result, more observer comments are taken up by POPRC members.

CropLife International queried why their comments were not included in the report, given that CRC members responded to comments questioning whether Brazil's final regulatory act for trichlorfon and Japan's notification for PFOS meet the criteria in Annex II paragraph (b).

The Committee then adopted the report with minor amendments.

On behalf of the FAO as Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, Christine Fuell thanked members for their efforts. She noted that the former Co-Executive Secretary, Peter Kenmore, had recently taken up a new post as head of the FAO's office in India. Fuell highlighted that the approval of the DGD for paraquat marked the first time the Committee approved an SHPF, and said this demonstrates the ability of the Convention to empower developing countries to protect human health and the environment.

Chair Al-Easa thanked the Committee members for their preparation, hard work and good spirits, and gavelled the meeting to a close one day early on Thursday, 22 March, at 4:18 pm.

### **A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CRC-8**

The CRC moved through its lean agenda at lightning pace, with little distraction or discussion. By late Thursday afternoon, CRC-8 had adopted eight decisions and concluded its work, one day ahead of schedule. While some members lauded the efficiency of the Committee's work, not all participants appreciated the pace of the meeting. Observers complained vehemently about the lack of opportunities to participate in the technical work of the Committee, highlighting what they perceive to be a systemic and persistent lack of transparency. Some members rejected these concerns, however, and suggested that observers were confusing the role of the CRC with the more science-based work of Stockholm Convention's Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC), pointing out that there are critical differences between the mandates of these subsidiary bodies.

This analysis considers the mechanics and mandate of the CRC, issues of transparency and participation, and the influence of increased cooperation and collaboration between the CRC and the POPRC on the Committee's work.

#### **THE MECHANICS OF THE CRC**

The Rotterdam Convention promotes shared responsibility and protection of human health and the environment through cooperative efforts in the international trade of hazardous chemicals. Through its PIC procedure, the Convention facilitates information exchange about chemical characteristics, provides for a national decision-making process on the export and import of hazardous substances, and disseminates decisions on these matters to parties.

The CRC is a subsidiary body of 31 government-designated experts responsible for reviewing notifications from parties and making recommendations to the COP on chemicals to be listed under the PIC Procedure. The CRC is responsible for: confirming that final regulatory action has been taken as a consequence of risk evaluations conducted by notifying parties; reviewing the risk evaluations, and ensuring data have been collected and analyzed according to scientific methods; and determining whether final regulatory action provides a sufficiently broad basis to merit listing the notified substance in Annex III. Thus, the CRC's work is to evaluate notifications of final regulatory actions against the Convention's criteria, not to gather additional information regarding the effects of a candidate chemical.

The provisions of Article 6 are particularly important, as they allow developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to nominate severely hazardous pesticide formulations (SHPF) if they are experiencing problems with a substance. These provisions give developing country parties the power to "act, and to protect" their citizens from hazardous substances. So far, however, developing countries have made little use of the provision. Significantly, CRC-8 marked the first time an SHPF was recommended for listing in the Convention. Burkina Faso nominated Gramoxone Super, a paraquat-based herbicide, after exposure to the substance caused health problems for 53 people using backpack sprayers to apply the pesticide to cotton and maize fields.

Some participants suggested that this inaugural SHPF notification signaled that technical assistance activities have been effective, and others hoped that, given alarming increases in rates of chemical poisoning, developing countries will make additional notifications in coming years. Some suggested that increased SHPF notifications would also signal progress towards sound chemicals management in the developing world, emphasizing that chemicals management issues are often overshadowed at the national level by pressing concerns such as poverty and health. Given that chemicals mismanagement negatively impacts health, the environment and food security, such attention could be beneficial to wider development concerns.

### **CRC—THE CLOSED COMMITTEE**

In contrast to the growing usefulness of the Convention on a global scale, however, many observers expressed ongoing frustrations with the CRC's lack of transparency. Most of the technical work was completed in drafting groups closed to observers, and plenary sessions were characterized by their lack of interactive discussion. Instead, plenary discussions were limited to introductory remarks from intersessional working groups, followed by questions from industry and country observers, and then a quick promise that the closed door drafting group would take concerns into account. While one observer said the summary of intersessional comments for a particular substance reflected his concerns (although none were actually accepted), observers from NGOs and both party and non-party governments expressed frustration at the Committee's inaccessibility.

Many observers emphasized their desire to participate in, not just passively observe, the decision-making process, and said the CRC's practice of raising an issue in plenary and then moving directly into members-only drafting groups precludes

any meaningful engagement of observers. Several observers contrasted the CRC with the more open and inclusive practices of the POPRC, where issues tend to be discussed extensively in plenary and in contact groups that are open to observers. In that Committee, drafting groups are formed (and observers are excluded) only after issues have been addressed in detail, with observers often contributing language to the development of various documents (e.g., risk profiles and risk management evaluations). As a result, observers feel they participate in a substantive and meaningful way repeatedly throughout POPRC's decision-making process. Several participants commented on the striking contrast between the processes of the POPRC and the CRC, and said the latter seems to operate in the reverse order, with decisions to approve final regulatory actions taken in plenary, and then the rationale for such decisions documented afterward by a drafting group.

Such frustrations, which have been highlighted in previous CRC meetings and were also raised at COP-5, were not lost on the Secretariat. The Secretariat took pains to highlight the transparency of the process, and signaled both in plenary and in informal conversations with participants that the CRC process may evolve and attempt to create more opportunities for observer participation. A single one-hour contact group was convened to deliberate on issues related to trichlorfon, after complaints from country observers, as well as repeated calls from industry.

Despite this marginal improvement, several observers were extremely frustrated by the Secretariat's announcement that observer interventions would no longer be included in the report of the meeting, unless a Committee member takes up the point. The US protested that such a practice would undermine the accuracy of this meeting record. The Secretariat clarified it was merely normalizing the rules of the other chemicals and wastes conventions, noting this is already practiced in the POPRC and Basel COP. That said, several observers noted that even points that had been taken up by members were not included in the report.

While some observers expressed appreciation for the increased emphasis on transparency and participation, several saw the convening of a contact group at CRC-8 as one step forward, followed promptly by two steps backward when the Secretariat announced observer comments would be omitted from the meeting report.

### **POPRC AND CRC**

Throughout the week, participants drew comparisons between the working style and the substantive work of the CRC and POPRC. The synergies process is bringing the two technical committees even closer together, as the joint Secretariat now services both. It is therefore understood the Committees will learn from and be influenced by each other, and in the words of the one hopeful delegate, will take "the best bits of both." Institutional learning was evident at CRC-8, with decisions being taken for the first time in a formal decision format, as is the POPRC norm, as opposed to agreements of the CRC being recorded in the DGD package. Several Committee members noted this would assist in ensuring the outcomes of the CRC are clear, easy to understand, and—crucially—more transparent.

Another key difference between the two committees is evident in the distinct roles of the Chair. The POPRC has had a consistent Chair, Reiner Arndt, since its inception nine years ago, and many credit his leadership with creating the collegial and participatory atmosphere of the Committee. The requirement that CRC Chairs serve no more than two years precludes such consistency. A natural consequence of this term limit is that CRC Chairs are often seen to be “finding their feet” for their first CRC, relying heavily on guidance from the Secretariat, and consequently having less chance to influence and drive the Committee’s atmosphere and working modalities.

Despite the potential for cross-Committee learning, a few participants drew clear distinctions between the Committees’ respective roles, and questioned if, even in the best of scenarios, the CRC could be as participatory as the POPRC. In both bodies, observers see themselves as “watchdogs,” ensuring due process is followed and requirements for listing are met, thereby ensuring the integrity of the decision-making process, and consequently, the Committee. Currently, observers say it is impossible to fulfill this role when the CRC discussions are taking place behind closed doors. However, some commented that even if the CRC opened the doors to full observer participation, the degree of participation would still not match that of the POPRC. The CRC assesses whether regulatory action notified by a party was final, that is, that the use of the chemical is permanently prohibited, and that the action was taken on the basis of risk evaluation. This is a much narrower task than that of the POPRC, which: assesses whether a substance fulfills screening criteria related to its persistence, bioaccumulation, potential for long-range environmental transport, and toxicity; then drafts a risk profile to evaluate if a substance is likely to lead to significant adverse human health and/or environmental effects, and therefore warrants global action; and finally develops a risk management evaluation, reflecting socio-economic considerations associated with possible control measures. Such a comprehensive assessment is required since the Stockholm Convention bans the production and use of chemicals it lists. The broader basis of work undertaken by the POPRC leads to more space for contribution of information and data from observers, and ultimately creates additional opportunities for participation.

### LOOKING FORWARD

It is difficult to see, even within a completely transparent and open CRC, how observer participation could ever equal that of the POPRC. Ultimately there is less debate, and consequently, fewer opportunities for participation. Some NGO participants say this is reasonable, pointing to the fact that the Rotterdam Convention’s role is to ensure parties are aware that specific chemicals have been regulated by other parties.

There were indications that the Committee is synergizing, evolving, and is at least partially opening its doors and reforming its processes to allow observer input. CRC-8’s agreement to recommend the Convention’s first SHPF also indicates that developing country parties are making use of the Convention. Many hoped this would be the first of many SHPF notifications, bulking up future CRC agendas, and consequently increasing opportunities for participation in the work of the Committee. Ultimately, they said, this would ensure the Convention’s sustainability through its continued evolution and growth.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**International Dialogue on Environmentally Sound Management of E-Waste:** The Basel Convention Regional Center for Central America and Mexico (CRCB-CAM), with support from the Basel Convention Regional Center for South America (CRS-CB) and US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), will host this discussion of management of post-consumer electronic waste (“e-waste”). Among the topics expected to be discussed are CRCB-CAM’s proposal under preparation, in coordination with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Development Programme (UNDP), to create an e-waste recycling facility for Central America and the Caribbean in El Salvador. The Dialogue will be followed on 25-27 April 2012 by the Fifth Physical Meeting of the Basel Convention’s Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment (PACE) Working Group. **dates:** 23-24 April 2012 **location:** San Salvador, El Salvador **contact:** Miguel Araujo, Director, CRCB-CAM **phone:** +503-2248-8990 **fax:** +503-7701-1681 **email:** maraujo@sica.int

**SAICM QSP Executive Board Meeting:** The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Quick Start Programme (QSP) Executive Board Meeting will review progress under the Programme on the basis of reports from the Trust Fund Implementation Committee and programme participants. **dates:** 7-8 May 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8532 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org/index.php?content=events&period=future&menuid=29>

**North American Chemicals Conference:** Organized by the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the Conference will address: an overview of chemicals management programs in Canada, Mexico and the US; activities of the CEC’s Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) Working Group; innovative approaches to promote sustainability, such as green chemistry, alternatives assessments, and design of greener products; transparency, risk communication and stakeholder engagement; and emerging issues and future North American efforts to advance SMOC. **dates:** 15-16 May 2012 **location:** San Antonio, Texas, United States of America **contact:** Ned Brooks, Program Manager **phone:** +1-514-350-4372 **fax:** +1-514-350-4314 **email:** nbrooks@cec.org **www:** <http://www.CEC.org/chemicals2012>

**Sixth Caribbean Environment Forum and Exhibition (CEF-5) and 16th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe):** These two events will be held simultaneously under the unified theme “The Green Economy: Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Health, Water, Waste, Land, Energy, Climate Change and our Natural Resources” to emphasize technologies, actions and strategies to address key environmental and health issues facing Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS). The CEF series on Caribbean health and environment has been organized by the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) biennially since 2000. The annual ReCaribe has been organized since 1995 by Clean Islands International (CII) to discuss waste management issues in the wider Caribbean region. The combined event is being

co-sponsored by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, UNEP's Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit, the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management project, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). **dates:** 21-25 May 2012 **location:** Saint Kitts and Nevis **contact:** Caribbean Environmental Health Institute **phone:** +1-758-452-2501 **fax:** +1-758-453-2721 **e-mail:** cef@cehi.org.lc **www:** <http://www.cehi.org.lc/cef/index.htm>

**E-Waste Academy:** The United Nations University's (UNU) "Solving the E-waste Problem" (StEP) Initiative and the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) are organizing a week-long E-waste Academy for Western African policymakers, government officials and small and medium-sized enterprises (recyclers, refurbishers, pre-processors, etc.) interested in the issue of electronic waste management. The Academy is intended to facilitate exchange of best practices, promote interaction with experts and develop collaborative partnerships for long-term, sustainable solutions and approaches on all policy-related areas related to e-waste, from policy to technology to economics to social aspects, taking into account regional disparities. The organizers hope to duplicate the E-waste Academy approach in other regions. **dates:** 25-29 June 2012 **location:** Accra, Ghana **contact:** Federico Magalini **email:** ewa@unu.edu **www:** <http://www.ewasteacademy.org>

**Fourth Session of the INC to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury:** This meeting is scheduled to be the fourth of five Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury. INC 4 will be preceded on 26 June by regional consultations and pre-session events. **dates:** 27 June - 2 July 2012 **location:** Punta del Este, Uruguay **phone:** +41-22-917-8192 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/INC4/tabid/3470/Default.aspx>

**International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-3):** This meeting is expected to consider, *inter alia*: adding nanotechnology and hazardous substances within the lifecycle of electrical and electronic products to the SAICM Global Plan of Action (GPA); adding endocrine disruptors and persistent pharmaceutical pollutants to the emerging issues; and the future of financing SAICM implementation after the expiration of the Quick Start Programme (QSP). **dates:** 17-21 September 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8532 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

**16th International Conference on Heavy Metals in the Environment:** This meeting will focus on applying a multidisciplinary approach to developing and validating new and current environmental policies that help reduce the impact of heavy metals on both human health and the broader environment. **dates:** 23-27 September 2012 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Nicola Pirrone **phone:** +39-06-9067-2694 **fax:** +39-06-9067-2472 **email:** pirrone@iia.cnr.it **www:** <http://ichmet16.iia.cnr.it/>

**Eighth Session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG-8) of the Basel Convention:** The Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) of the Basel Convention seeks to: assist the Conference of the Parties (COP) in developing and keeping

under continuous review the implementation of the Convention's work plan, specific operational policies and decisions taken by the COP for the implementation of the Convention; consider and advise the COP on issues relating to policy, technical, scientific, legal, institutional, administration, finance, budgetary and other aspects of the implementation of the Convention within the approved budget; and prepare its work plan for consideration by the COP. **dates:** 25-28 September 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Basel Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8212 **fax:** +41-22-797-3454 **email:** sbc@unep.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int/>

**POPRC-8:** The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) is a subsidiary body to the Stockholm Convention established for reviewing chemicals proposed for listing in Annexes A, B, and/or C. A meeting of the intersessional working groups will precede the meeting on Sunday, 14 October 2012, in English only. **dates:** 15-19 October 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Stockholm Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** pops@pops.int **www:** <http://www.pops.int/>

**Fifth Session of the INC to Prepare a Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury:** This meeting is scheduled to be the final of five Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury. **dates:** early 2013 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **phone:** +41-22-917-8192 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/MercuryNot/MercuryNegotiations/tabid/3320/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

**Ninth Meeting of the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee:** This meeting is expected to take place in 2013. **dates:** 11-15 March 2013 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Rotterdam Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** pic@pic.int **www:** <http://www.pic.int/>

**Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (PIC COP-6):** The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC COP-6) will consider the recommendations of the CRC for listings in Annex III to the Convention, as well as the development of a compliance mechanism and matters related to technical assistance. **dates:** 1-5 July 2013 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** pic@pic.int **www:** <http://www.pic.int>

**Eleventh International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant:** Participants in this meeting are expected to include government representatives, policymakers, research organizations, utilities and commercial companies. The meeting aims to exchange information on the science of mercury behavior and release, and its effect on ecosystems. **dates:** 28 July - 2 August 2013 **location:** Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom **contact:** Marcus Pattison **phone:** +44-1727-858840 **fax:** +44-1727-840310 **email:** info@mercury2013.com **www:** <http://www.mercury2013.com>