



**Basel Convention on the Control of
Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal**

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**Rotterdam Convention on the Prior
Informed Consent Procedure for
Certain Hazardous Chemicals and
Pesticides in International Trade**

English only



**Stockholm Convention on Persistent
Organic Pollutants**

**Ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and
coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
Second meeting
Vienna, 10–13 December 2007**

**Report of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing
cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam
and Stockholm conventions on the work of its second meeting**

Introduction

1. The ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions was established pursuant to decision SC-2/15 of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, decision RC-3/8 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 and decision VIII/8 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. The mandate of the group was to prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination among the three conventions for submission to the conferences of the Parties of all three conventions.
2. The above-mentioned decisions provided for each of the conferences to nominate 15 members – three representatives of Parties from each of the five United Nations regions – to participate in the working group.
3. The working group held its first meeting in Helsinki, Finland, from 26 to 28 March 2007. At that meeting the group agreed on a non-exhaustive list of objectives and guiding principles to be applied in its future work.¹ It also agreed that activities to enhance cooperation and coordination fell into three broad categories: activities which were already under way; forward-looking activities to enhance further administrative and programmatic cooperation and coordination; and activities relating to decision-making and oversight.
4. The group was of the view that activities relating to decision-making and oversight might require more profound deliberations and decided to focus its work at its first and second meetings on forward-looking activities to enhance further administrative and programmatic cooperation and coordination. The group agreed on a list of national needs to be used to guide its work on those activities as well as a table setting out for each activity its final objective, the work that it would require

1 UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.1/4, annex I.

and at what level, the person responsible for carrying it out and the time frame for its completion. It was agreed that both the list and the table, which were set out in annexes II and III, respectively, to the report of the group's first meeting,² were subject to revision. As indicated in that annex III, a number of members of the working group volunteered to act as lead countries for work on specific activities during the intersessional period and to present the results of that work in "thought starter" papers for consideration by the working group at its second meeting. The secretariats of the three conventions were also tasked with preparing a number of such papers.

I. Opening of the meeting

5. The second meeting of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions was held at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna in Vienna, Austria, from 10 to 13 December 2007. The meeting was declared open at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 10 December 2007, by Ms. Kerstin Stendahl (Finland), co-chair of the working group, who introduced Mr. Reinhard Mang, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria.

6. Mr. Mang, speaking on behalf of Mr. Josef Pröll, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, welcomed the meeting participants to Vienna and on behalf of his Government expressed official congratulations to Mr. Donald Cooper, Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention and Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, Ms. Katharina Kummer Peiry, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention, and Mr. Peter Kenmore, Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, for having recently taken up their offices, saying that their participation in the current meeting would strongly signal their will to implement the three conventions in an effective and coordinated manner.

7. Citing figures to illustrate his point, he said that chemicals were vital to the world's economic and social well being but also posed serious risks to human health and the environment, both during use and once they became wastes. To ensure that chemicals contributed to sustainable development it was therefore necessary that they be effectively managed and, because chemicals were pervasive in all sectors, a concerted approach was vital. That had been recognized, he said, through the adoption of Agenda 21 at the Rio Summit in 1992 and in the Millennium Development Goals; the optimal approach to chemicals management was the life cycle approach, which took into account production, consumption and disposal. The adoption of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as well as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, were steps toward implementing that approach and achieving effective chemicals management, and the joint working group had an important role to play in enhancing the effective implementation of the three conventions through the mobilization of synergies in the administration and implementation of the conventions and enabling their harmonized and effective implementation at the national level. Invoking the notion that "form follows function", he urged the group to be open-minded and practical and cautioned it against re-inventing the wheel, recalling that many existing organizations could contribute to the integrated implementation of the three conventions at the national and international levels.

8. Ms. Kummer Peiry, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Kenmore made opening statements. All three invited the members of the working group to call on them to provide any needed information during the current meeting.

9. Ms. Kummer Peiry also stressed the need to raise the profile of chemicals and hazardous waste issues on the international development agenda, noted that the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting would be the first Conference to consider the outcome of the working group's work, which would be important to the Conference's consideration of a number of matters going to the heart of the Convention and its governance structure, and highlighted various ways in which the secretariats of the three conventions had already enhanced cooperation and coordination in response to the working group's efforts to date.

10. Mr. Cooper said that the secretariats of the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions viewed the current effort to enhance synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as inevitable and a natural extension of the synergies that had been mandated by the Parties to the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, which utilized many of the same administrative services and shared regional centres and technical activities. He said he looked forward to seeing how the efforts of the working group evolved into decisions and also to how the secretariats of the Rotterdam and

2 UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.1/4, annexes II and III.

Stockholm Conventions could take the working group's recommendations and incorporate them into their existing cooperation and coordination efforts.

11. Mr. Kenmore said that the Rotterdam Convention was unique in having a shared secretariat jointly administered by UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which he said had been intended as a means of achieving synergies by bringing to bear the expertise of FAO on pesticides and that of UNEP on other chemicals. He also briefly described the work of the FAO regional plant protection officers and its links to the Convention and invited the working group to hold its third meeting at FAO headquarters in Rome.

12. The representative of Slovenia, joined by others, thanked the Government of Austria for hosting the current meeting.

II. Organizational matters

A. Officers

13. The following officers elected by the joint working group at its first meeting continued to serve as co-chairs during the current meeting:

Mr. Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez (Chile);

Mr. Yue Ruisheng (China);

Ms. Stendahl.

14. As agreed at the working group's first meeting, the co-chairs jointly performed the functions of a rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda

15. The joint working group adopted the agenda set out below, on the basis of the provisional agenda which had been circulated as document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/1:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Consideration of the intersessional work undertaken by the members of the ad hoc joint working group and by the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.
4. Preparation of joint recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.
5. Venue and date of the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report.
8. Closure of the meeting.

C. Organization of work

16. In carrying out its work at the current meeting, the joint working group had before it working and information documents pertaining to the items on the meeting agenda, including the thought starter papers prepared by members and the secretariats during the intersessional period. Those documents had been made available on the website of the ad hoc joint working group (<http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch>).

17. The working group agreed that it would focus its work on the subjects discussed in the thought starter papers. It also agreed that the lead for the preparation of each paper would make a presentation on the subject of the paper; that the working group would then have a preliminary discussion on that

subject before committing it for more detailed consideration by a contact group; and that it would then consider the outcome of the contact group’s deliberations and complete its consideration of the subject.

18. The group also agreed that the goal of the contact groups would be to agree on proposed elements for draft recommendations to be made to the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions; that in doing so the contact groups should consider proposals against the criterion of what measures would facilitate the joint implementation of the three conventions at the national level; and that they would report the results of their deliberations in a standardized format using an agreed template proposed by the co-chairs, highlighting the proposed elements for draft recommendations and the rationales for those elements.

19. The working group further agreed that in the period between the current meeting and its third meeting the co-chairs of the group would use the elements and rationales prepared by the contact groups to prepare for the working group’s consideration at its third meeting a document containing draft recommendations to the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions, taking into account any amendments to the elements and rationales and any comments made by members of the group during its consideration of them at the current meeting, as well as any written comments submitted by members of the group and others by an agreed deadline. A schedule for the completion of intersessional work for the third meeting of the ad joint working group is set out in annex II to the present report.

20. It was also agreed, in accordance with a recommendation by the co-chairs, that the working group would consider the thought starter papers and the issues raised therein in four groups, clustered according to four themes, and that one contact group would consider each theme and its associated thought starter papers. The four themes and the papers considered by the working group under each are set out in the following table.

Theme	Thought starter papers
Organizational issues in the field	UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/2 and Add.1 (Coordination at the national level) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/4 (Coordinated use of regional offices and centres) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/5 (Programme coordination in the field)
Technical substantive issues	UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/6 (National reporting) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/7 (Potential for cooperation on compliance) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/9 (Experiences of the Basel Convention in the development of a compliance mechanism) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/17 (Potential for cooperation on compliance)
Information management and public awareness issues	UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/3 (Joint outreach and public awareness) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/10 (Information sharing among technical and scientific panels) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/11 (Pooling information on health and environmental impacts/clearing-house mechanisms) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/15 (Joint input into other resources)
Administrative issues	UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/12 (Financial management and audit functions) UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/13 (Back-to-back meetings)

21. One member suggested the possible addition of a fifth theme to deal with programmatic cooperation with regard to the policy development of the conventions. It was agreed, however, that members would make any comments they had on that topic during the discussions on each of the four themes above. The working group also heard a presentation from the representative of Switzerland on an information document that his Government had prepared together with Nigeria on a proposal for joint managerial functions for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, including a single head of the secretariats of all three conventions (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/INF/8). The

working group agreed that it would consider the document at its third meeting, for which it would be made available in the form of a thought starter paper.

22. The contact group on organizational issues in the field was chaired by Ms. Johanne Forest (Canada) and Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez (Uruguay); that on technical substantive issues by Mr. Lee Eeles (Australia) and Mr. Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan); that on information management and public awareness issues by Ms. Cosima Hufler (Austria); and that on administrative issues by Mr. Jolyon Thomson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Mr. Álvarez-Pérez.

D. Attendance

23. Representatives of the following Parties to the Basel Convention participated in the meeting: Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Egypt, France, Jamaica, Kenya, Norway and Pakistan.

24. Representatives of the following Parties to the Rotterdam Convention participated in the meeting: Armenia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Finland, Japan, Jordan, Mauritania, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

25. Representatives of the following Parties to the Stockholm Convention participated in the meeting: Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Sri Lanka.

26. The representatives of Slovakia and the Russian Federation, who had been nominated by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to participate in the meeting, the representative of South Africa, who had been nominated by the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, and the representatives of Ethiopia, Morocco and Nigeria, who had been nominated by the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention, were unable to attend. The Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention had not nominated a third member from Eastern Europe.

27. Ms. Claudia Fenerol, Senior Programme Officer (Resource Mobilization and Partnerships) for the Basel Convention Secretariat, was invited to participate in the meeting as a resource person with respect to resource mobilization.

28. A complete list of participants is provided in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.2/INF/12.

III. Consideration of the intersessional work undertaken by the members of the ad hoc joint working group and by the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

IV. Preparation of joint recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

29. The working group considered agenda items 3 and 4 together. The members of the group welcomed the thought starter papers and agreed that they provided a good basis for the group's deliberations. It was noted that the papers were intended as a starting point only and some members identified certain areas in which they felt that the group should consider additional information not presented in the papers.

A. Organizational issues in the field

1. Coordination at the national level

30. In the discussion following the presentation by the lead author of the thought starter paper there was broad agreement that improved national coordination was necessary to facilitate effective implementation of the three conventions. It was also recognized that coordination could not be imposed from the outside and that countries needed flexibility to determine their own national coordination systems, both out of a concern for sovereignty and in recognition of the fact that countries themselves were best placed to judge which mechanisms best served their particular needs. Many members of the group said that it would be useful to consider additional examples of existing national coordination

systems, in particular from developing countries. It was further suggested that the recommendations to the conferences of the Parties might refer to existing national coordination mechanisms that could serve as models for other countries. Several members suggested that the national ozone units established and funded by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol should be examined for the lessons they might provide on national coordination.

2. Programmatic cooperation in the field

31. There was general agreement that programmatic cooperation was important and that it should result in improved implementation of each of the conventions at the national level. It was also agreed that it should be country driven, but many members noted the need to avoid overburdening developing countries. In that context it was suggested that an examination of what the secretariats could do to further assist countries to improve implementation might be useful, although it was also noted that the secretariats had limited resources. A few members emphasized the need to develop projects that could be undertaken jointly, such as projects on education and training. Some members said it was not entirely clear what programmatic cooperation in the field entailed and that it was necessary to examine further how it related to cooperation at the international level; one suggested that it should encompass coordinated implementation of individual projects that pertained to all three conventions. It was agreed that the working group's recommendations to the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions should also address programmatic cooperation on policy development among the conventions.

3. Coordinated use of regional offices and centres

32. Following the presentation by the lead author of the thought starter paper on the issue, a representative of the Basel Convention secretariat provided an update on the status of the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres, noting that six of those centres (in China, El Salvador, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, Senegal and Uruguay) had applied to be regional centres of the Stockholm Convention, along with two other institutions. A representative of the Stockholm Convention noted that a total of eight institutions (three Basel Convention centres and five other institutions) had been nominated to be Stockholm Convention regional centres (located in Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay), while others had expressed interest but had not yet been officially nominated.

33. In the ensuing discussion, it was generally agreed that common regional centres for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions had the potential to confer substantial benefits. Some members also said that there was a need to assist in strengthening the regional centres as already available delivery mechanisms which could fulfil their functions more synergistically. It was noted, however, that such centres should be established if they served to enhance national implementation of the three conventions. Several members said that while the Basel Convention regional centres might be suitable as regional centres for the three conventions, there were potential problems, including a lack of dependable funding for those centres and differences among the mandates of the regional and coordinating centres under the Basel Convention and the regional centres under the Stockholm Convention. Caution was also urged in the light of the review of the Basel Convention centres currently under way, the cost implications and the resulting increased workload for the Basel Convention secretariat. A few members suggested that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's cleaner production centres, which were currently expanding their mandate to deal with additional issues such as risk reduction, risk assessment and technology transfer, could be used as centres for the three conventions. Further information was sought on those centres, including by one member who said that he would like such information before expressing his opinion about the desirability of nominating them as regional centres. It was noted in that regard that they were national centres and could work with umbrella regional centres. Several members suggested that a coordinating centre could be established to service the three conventions, as well as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). One member suggested the establishment of a "virtual" coordinating centre functioning via the Internet to provide guidance to Parties on which existing centre might best serve their needs. It was further suggested that a list of existing regional centres, outlining their capacities and activities, be developed.

34. A representative of the Basel Convention secretariat reported on the process under way for the review of the operation of that convention's regional and coordinating centres. She noted that the first draft report on the review would be posted on the Basel Convention website by 15 December 2007. Comments on the report were requested, which, she pointed out, presented an immediate opportunity for synergies.

B. Technical substantive issues

1. National reporting

35. It was suggested that while there were differences in the requirements for reporting under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions (and no reporting requirement under the Rotterdam Convention), as outlined in the thought starter paper, there might nevertheless be important advantages to be gained from some form of coordinated reporting. It was noted too in that context that reporting under the two conventions was complex and cumbersome and that efforts to enhance coordination might therefore entail a measure of learning by doing. Several members suggested that while there was little or no overlap in the kind of information to be reported under the conventions it might nevertheless be possible to achieve synergies with regard to reporting procedures. One member said that some countries were not in compliance with their reporting obligations under both the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, which suggested that a coordinated approach might be beneficial. He noted too the need to apply to each convention lessons drawn from the other. Another member suggested that one long-term goal might be the elaboration of a single reporting form to be used for both conventions as well as for other processes such as SAICM. Another suggested the establishment of a clearing-house mechanism to make available all reports under the two conventions on a single website. Several members noted the need for capacity-building in the area of reporting and suggested that it might be a fruitful area for a coordinated approach. One member noted the potential for conflicting reporting by a single country regarding a given chemical under the reporting regimes for the two conventions and said that the working group should include in its recommendations a call for countries to involve all national focal points in their reporting processes, as well as the establishment of coordinated reporting cycles for both conventions. Several members said that the thought starter paper showed that there were limited opportunities for achieving synergies with respect to reporting, but it was noted that the secretariats of the conventions were already sharing information and lessons learned; one member said the group's recommendation should call for the secretariats to continue that practice.

2. Potential for cooperation on compliance

3. Experiences of the Basel Convention in the development of a compliance mechanism

36. In the discussion on compliance issues it was noted that negotiations on the establishment of non-compliance mechanisms were under way in the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and that both bodies had taken advantage of lessons learned from experience with the mechanism under the Basel Convention. One member suggested that the views of the working group on, for example, the desirability of having a single committee for the three conventions be made available as an aid to the discussions under the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. One said that a joint compliance committee was perhaps a long-term option. Another said that such a committee could not be envisaged. Another said that the scope for coordinated activities on compliance overall was very limited. Another said that the fact that only one of the three Conventions had a compliance mechanism in place created opportunities for achieving synergies in establishing those of the other two conventions, especially with regard to capacity for reporting and how assistance could be provided to countries in non-compliance. One member suggested exploring the establishment of a common secretariat serving the compliance committees of all three conventions, with meetings of the committees held back to back. Another said that as there were underlying causes of non-compliance common to all three conventions, such as a lack of capacity and financial resources, it was logical to take a broad approach to compliance that encompassed all three conventions and to seek coordination and cooperation. Another, noting similarities in the obligations under the Stockholm and Basel Conventions, suggested that there should be one compliance committee for those two conventions and a separate one for the Rotterdam Convention. It was also suggested that the secretariat of the Montreal Protocol be requested to provide a paper for the next meeting of the working group on the experience of the Protocol's Implementation Committee. Several members were cautious about the prospects for synergies with regard to compliance.

C. Information management and public awareness issues

1. Joint outreach and public awareness

37. Several members noted with approval the existing joint activities by the secretariats of the three conventions in the areas of outreach and public awareness; it was suggested by some members that the group's recommendations could include a request from the conferences of the Parties that such activities

be strengthened and that they be extended to include activities with the SAICM secretariat. It was also suggested that the recipients of outreach actions should be clearly defined and that further joint outreach could be achieved by publishing a single newsletter for all three conventions.

38. Responding to questions, a representative of the secretariat said that the impact of outreach and awareness raising by the Basel Convention secretariat was currently measured primarily by the number of times people accessed the Basel Convention website and the number of requests for information received by the Secretariat. Regarding efforts to enhance activities in the area, she noted that a pamphlet describing the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions had been prepared by the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat and that provision for the development of indicators to determine the impact of outreach and public awareness was being made in the Basel Convention's budget for the next biennium. One member reported on a regional workshop that had been held for East Asian countries on chemicals information sharing at the regional level and the establishment of a related website; she suggested that they could serve as models that might assist other regions and inform the working group's efforts and said that copies of a related CD and pamphlet were available for the members.

2. Information sharing among technical and scientific panels

39. Several members said that information available to the technical and scientific panels of the conventions should be made available on the internet, perhaps on a shared website. One member suggested that the thought starter, while very useful, should not have limited its analysis to the Stockholm Convention's Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee and the Rotterdam Convention's Chemical Review Committee. He suggested that the working group take a broader approach and compare all the technical and scientific bodies under all three conventions. There was both support and opposition for the proposal in the thought starter for annual joint meetings of the secretariats and chairs of the Chemical Review Committee and the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee. Those in opposition felt that the two committees did not have enough in common and that such meetings would not be appropriate from the point of view of ensuring full transparency. Others supported such meetings, especially when the two committees were both considering the same substance. Another member said that both committees had been subjected to similar pressures from outside not to adhere to a technical and scientific approach but to respond also to political considerations; he said that a coordinated approach to addressing such pressures would be beneficial.

3. Pooling information on health and environmental impacts/clearing house mechanisms

40. It was generally agreed that in accordance with paragraph 9 of article 4 of the Rotterdam Convention information on human health and safety should not be treated as confidential. One member said that information related to serious incidents prejudicial to health should be included among the information to be taken into account. It was suggested that access to information could be facilitated by having a single common website with links to the websites of the three conventions or a single portal of entry to those websites. A single entry portal could inform users where common information could be found and how to find information specific to each convention. It would also be visible and serve well to promote the issues covered by the conventions to the public in general. Several members referred to the Stockholm Convention's clearing-house mechanism and said that the potential for synergies should be explored.

4. Joint input into other processes

41. Several members agreed that joint input into other processes could be recommended, with one arguing that a single representative speaking for all three conventions would have a greater voice than three representatives acting separately. It was noted, however, that each convention had particularities that would have to be taken into account in the fashioning of common positions.

D. Administrative issues

1. Back-to-back meetings

42. A number of members said that the thought starter paper provided a good starting point for the working group's discussions. It was also noted that the issue would need to be considered in conjunction with the other issues being discussed by the working group.

43. One speaker said that while back-to-back meetings might yield cost savings they would put undue pressure on the secretariats to the three conventions and meeting delegates. Her Government therefore felt that the current model was appropriate. Others echoed the view that the current practice was best. Others said that back-to-back meetings might be advantageous but that they supported a case-by-case approach.

44. Several members said that holding coordinated but separate meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions spaced out over the course of a year was the best option, while several others said that the current arrangement was preferable. Some members, however, expressed concern about the burdens that the other measures proposed in the thought starter paper might impose on small delegations and worried that simultaneous meetings of the conferences of the Parties would make national coordination difficult and deny Parties the time they needed to contemplate their positions. Some said it would also be difficult to ensure the presence of ministers at high-level segments of coordinated meetings. Others, however, said that such meetings would promote the participation of ministers in high-level segments.

45. One member argued that as the conventions were separate instruments the experience of other conventions and their protocols that held joint meetings was not relevant. He did, however, express support for considering the possibility of back-to-back meetings for the Rotterdam Convention's Chemical Review Committee and the Stockholm Convention's Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee, as well as for formalizing the secretariat and bureau meetings of the three conventions.

46. Another member said that holding joint meetings of the conventions' conferences might provide important benefits, including that such meetings would attract more ministerial level participants and raise the profile of the chemicals management agenda. It might therefore be good to hold such meetings from time to time, he said, and he suggested that the working group's recommendation on the issue invite the conferences of the Parties to consider doing so. He suggested that it might be opportune to hold a joint extraordinary one-day meeting back to back with the fourth meeting of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention, in 2009, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Basel Convention.

47. Another member echoed the view that it might be beneficial for the conferences of the Parties to the conventions to have occasional back-to-back meetings but thought that the working group's recommendation should highlight the potential benefits of such meetings without being too prescriptive.

2. Resource mobilization

48. Recalling that it had not been possible to prepare a thought starter paper on resource mobilization for the current meeting owing to a lack of time, the co-chair introduced Ms. Fenerol, Senior Programme Officer (Resource Mobilization and Partnerships) with the Basel Convention secretariat, who had been invited to act as a resource person on resource mobilization, to make a presentation on the issue.

49. In the discussion following her presentation, there was extensive agreement on the need for a strong resource mobilization programme. A general concern was raised that the increasing need for resources to deal with the broadening chemicals agenda had not been matched by an increase in available resources, a trend that would only worsen as new initiatives to deal with chemicals management issues were undertaken. The need for new and additional funding was therefore stressed. Several members made the point that resources were needed for short- medium- and long-term activities to ensure steady attention to problems from the time they were identified to their final resolution; the budgets of the conventions, however, currently made no provision for long-term funding. Some members said that awareness raising on chemicals management at the national level was essential to influence political will to obtain additional resources.

50. Several members supported the establishment of a joint resource mobilization programme to serve the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. It was noted in that regard that, while there were different approaches to securing funds for chemicals management activities, as the three conventions faced similar challenges in the areas of resource mobilization it made sense for them to pursue a united approach. Several members echoed Ms. Fenerol in saying that it would be more effective to seek funding through coordinated efforts than through uncoordinated approaches through which the three conventions might end up competing with one another for the same funds.

51. Attention was drawn to certain other principles of joint resource mobilization such as prioritization of funding to ensure long-term, stable and predictable resources to support sustainable programmes. It was also emphasized that it was generally more effective to seek funds for coherent and

relatively large programmes that offered the prospect of long-term impact than for smaller individual projects, which were often time limited. Pursuing a joint approach to resource mobilization for the three conventions could take advantage of this principle, it was suggested, including in the case of Global Environment Facility funding.

52. Some members suggested that the SAICM Quick Start Programme could be a source of funding for activities under the three conventions. The programme offered a clear vehicle for mobilizing resources but was time limited to five years, disbursed a maximum of \$250,000 and was restricted to enabling activities. Its usefulness was thus limited. One member suggested that a clear and integrated system based on the Quick Start Programme but broader in nature would avoid the problem of competitive funding efforts and might attract more donors. Some members suggested exploring a means of tapping into local government resources or securing a percentage of domestic industry profits. One said that assistance was necessary to establish mechanisms for obtaining funds from industry at the national level, observing that industry was often willing to support chemicals management but lacked mechanisms for making financial contributions. One member said that the convention secretariats or other stakeholders could investigate options for resource mobilization and that resources could be allocated to undertake such a study and to identify barriers to industry contributing to an environment fund.

3. Financial management and audit functions

53. One member said it was important to bear in mind always that the group's mandate was only to provide recommendations to the conferences of the Parties and that it would be up to the conferences to take any final decisions. That point, he said, should be made clear in the working group's final output. He stressed too, and others agreed, that it was necessary to remember that the conventions were separate and sovereign legal entities.

54. Many members said that it was good to have a clear indication that there was nothing in the financial rules or terms of reference of the conventions that would prohibit the greater coordination of their financial management and audit functions, including by unifying them in a single office serving all three conventions, or the merging of their budgets and trust funds.

55. It was agreed, however, that in line with the idea that form should follow function no changes should be made to current arrangements unless it was clear that they would confer a meaningful benefit. In that context a number of members stressed the need to proceed cautiously, bearing in mind the differing circumstances of the three conventions, and to be very clear about what the goals were. It was also suggested that the degree of coordination that might be required with respect to budget and financial management issues would depend on the extent of coordination elsewhere and that it would therefore be necessary to consider the matters holistically. Several said that in the light of that it might not be wise to agree on possible elements of recommendations at the current meeting and that it would be best to wait until recommendations under the other themes were agreed. One member noted that merging budget structures would increase transparency, strengthen internal audit procedures and allow for more comprehensive programming. He said that merging the budget periods was more complicated but still possible. Another member said that in-depth discussions on the issue might have to take place intersessionally as well as at the next meeting of the working group. One member said that while it might make sense to establish a joint financial office or to standardize various procedures, he thought that it would be difficult to agree to merging the budgets and trust funds of the three conventions, as doing so would impinge on their independence.

56. Several members said that greater coordination or consolidation of financial management and audit functions seemed more plausible than did the consolidation of the trust funds and budgets of the conventions and urged that particular care be taken in considering the latter possibility.

57. One member noted that some of the proposals outlined in the thought starter paper were in line with efforts under way to harmonize the budget formats of the three conventions. Another said that there had not been enough time to study the thought starter and that her Government would need additional time to do so, while another cautioned that any measures adopted should not increase the burden on developing countries. After the presentation of the information document on a single head for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (as noted in paragraph 21, above) one member suggested that instead of establishing such a single head another option could be to adopt a rotation scheme for the existing heads of the three conventions. The working group agreed to consider that option at its third meeting.

E. Discussion of the outcome of the contact group deliberations

58. In accordance with the procedure agreed by the working group on the organization of its work at the current meeting, the working group discussed the conference room papers prepared by the contact groups on the four thematic areas outlined above. The working group agreed that the conference room papers, amended to reflect the working group's discussions at the current meeting, would be appended as annexes to the present report. The papers prepared by the contact groups, as so amended, are set out in a consolidated form in annex I to the present report.

59. During the group's discussion members of the group made specific suggestions for amending the contact group papers, in some cases providing text, as well as suggestions for the co-chairs of the working group to take into account in their preparation of draft recommendations from the working group to the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to be considered by the working group at its third meeting. The comments in the first category are reflected in the contact group papers as they appear in annex I to the present report and those in the second were to be incorporated into the draft recommendations prepared by the co-chairs.

60. In addition there was discussion of several other issues.

61. There was considerable discussion of the working group's mandate and the scope of the recommendations that it could make to the conferences of the Parties. In the context of the paper prepared by the contact group on technical substantive issues, one member said that the working group's recommendations to the conferences of the Parties should not include any recommendations for consideration by the conferences pertaining to or contingent upon the conclusion of the negotiations under the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on the establishment of non-compliance mechanisms for those conventions and that the group's recommendations should be limited to existing work on compliance. He also said that recommendation 1 of the same section, calling for greater coordination of the negotiations, was improper in that it was calculated to influence the negotiations. He likewise objected to recommending consideration of a possible single compliance mechanism for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, for the same reason. He later expanded on the point, saying that in general the group's work should not touch on any matter that, like the negotiations, was in some sense not complete.

62. The suggestion under recommendation 2 that the operations of the compliance mechanisms under the three conventions be reviewed after a period of years, he said, was in substance a suggestion to amend the Stockholm Convention, as that convention had a separate article calling for the establishment of a non-compliance mechanism, and was therefore beyond the working group's mandate.

63. He also asked that the present report reflect his concern that the paper prepared by the contact group on administrative issues gave disproportionate weight to the potential advantages of back-to-back meetings of the conferences of the Parties and presented the potential disadvantages in a way that did not adequately reflect the concerns of those who opposed or had reservations about such meetings.

64. Several other members expressed disagreement with the notion that the working group's freedom to make recommendations was circumscribed in the manner suggested by the speaker above. They agreed that it was necessary to be sensitive to the fact that negotiations on establishing compliance mechanisms were under way. They pointed out, however, that while the ultimate decisions would be taken by the conferences of the Parties, the working group's very mandate was to make recommendations to the conferences on possible ways to improve synergies. One noted that if the working group failed to make such recommendations the conferences would have nothing on which to decide; another that the negotiations themselves already entailed a considerable degree of coordination among the three conventions, with many countries party to the negotiations under both conventions and both taking into account the Basel Convention mechanism; and another that prohibiting the group from considering matters that were in some sense under development would render its work meaningless, as many important issues, such as resource mobilization, were in a more or less constant state of development.

65. One member, echoed by others, suggested that the first member's concerns might be allayed by revising the text on reviewing the compliance mechanisms to emphasize that the group's concern was with learning from experience rather than with imposing a requirement of periodic review. In a similar vein another suggested adding text to stress that the working group did not wish to interfere in the negotiations on the Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention compliance mechanisms or to prejudge their outcome. Another member said that the first member had correctly suggested that the proposals in the contact group's paper raised complex legal and technical questions. Those questions, he said, had

however been answered in the relevant thought starter paper, and he suggested that it be considered again at the working group's next meeting and perhaps forwarded to the conferences of the Parties together with the working group's final recommendations. He also suggested highlighting that the group was working on the basis of the current text of the three conventions and was not proposing that they be amended.

66. Another member suggested that the discussion outlined above revealed a concern with the working group's mandate and said that it was important that the members of the group have a common understanding on the question. At the suggestion of another member a copy of decision SC-2/15 of the Stockholm Convention Conference of the Parties was distributed, which the group agreed set out its mandate in substantially the same terms as did the corresponding decisions adopted by the conferences of the Parties to the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. The members of the working group reviewed the decision, following which the co-chair observed that the mandate laid out there, which contained no express limitations, was quite broad and appeared to be consistent with the work and proposals that had been mooted thus far.

67. There was also some discussion on the possible need for more information and further work pertaining to financial matters. The working group accordingly requested the secretariats to explore for its next meeting options on external financing for national coordination and implementation mechanisms to achieve synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, including cost considerations. During the discussion of the paper prepared by the contact group on administrative issues one member pointed out that to date the working group had not considered any authoritative information on whether the various proposals being discussed would achieve cost savings and noted that efforts to improve coordination and cooperation might in fact result in additional costs. He suggested that the working group should consider the issue further.

68. On the subject of financial management, a number of members said that it would be useful to have information explaining why the Basel Convention secretariat had more financial management staff than either the Rotterdam or the Stockholm Convention secretariat. One member, however, said that if information concerning financial management was to be provided it should relate to all three convention secretariats. The Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention explained that the difference was due in part to the fact that during the period in question the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions had not been fully staffed and had received some of their financial management services from UNEP. She also said that she could provide further information.

69. Another member suggested that it would be good to have additional information on how coordinated administrative arrangements might liberate financial resources for the implementation of the three conventions. The representative of Switzerland undertook to prepare a document for the consideration of the group at its third meeting on the basis of information that UNEP had been compiling in recent months.

V. Venue and date of the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group

70. The working group agreed to hold its third meeting at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome, from 25 to 28 March 2008.

VI. Other matters

1. Resource persons

71. Under this item, the co-chairs asked for guidance from the group on the participation of resource persons at the working group's next meeting to provide information on questions that might arise during the meeting. Suggestions were made to invite representatives of UNEP, in particular UNEP Chemicals, whose participation one member said was essential, as well as a representative of FAO. It was pointed out that there was no money in the working group's budget to support the participation of resource persons and that any who did attend would therefore have to defray their own costs. It was agreed that the co-chairs, taking into account the guidance given by the group, would make the necessary arrangements for the attendance of relevant resource persons at the group's third meeting.

2. Additional information

72. The working group also agreed that it would be useful to have additional information from the secretariat of the Montreal Protocol on the operation of the Protocol's Implementation Committee and other issues. It was agreed that the secretariats, in consultation with the co-chairs, would undertake to arrange with the secretariat of the Protocol for the provision of such information. The Secretariats were also asked to seek information from the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on its experience with organizing back-to-back meetings and to provide a document setting out such information for the third meeting.

3. Transparency

73. The working group agreed that transparency with regard to its work was extremely important. It accordingly agreed that the report of the current meeting and the draft recommendations paper to be prepared by the co-chairs for consideration at the group's third meeting should be made freely available for review and comment by all stakeholders. The two documents would be posted on the group's website and letters announcing their availability would be sent to permanent missions, to focal points and to designated national authorities of the three conventions and others.

VII. Adoption of the report

74. The ad hoc joint working group adopted the present report on the basis of the draft circulated, as amended and on the understanding that the co-chairs, working in consultation with the secretariats, would be entrusted with its finalization.

VIII. Closure of the meeting

75. The meeting was declared closed by the co-chair at 6.15 p.m. on Thursday, 13 December 2007.

Annex I

Elements of joint recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

I. Organizational issues in the field

A. Coordination at the national level

The contact group agreed to request the Secretariats to explore further for the consideration of the working group at its third meeting options for financing for national coordination and implementation mechanisms for synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, considering, for example, experiences with financing of the Implementation Committee of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

The contact group also noted that Parties should be asked to provide examples of good practices during the intersessional period.

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- Need to strengthen national coordination for effective implementation of the three conventions.

Elements

- Broad support for the idea/concept of flexible national coordination mechanisms in the area of chemicals and hazardous wastes;
- Mindful of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and other relevant policy frameworks;
- Role of focal points/designated national authorities;
- Not to increase burden at national level, to build on existing structures.

Recommendation 2

Rationale

- Need to enhance cooperation and coordination at the national level in areas of particular benefit to improve implementation.

Elements

- Provide an inventory of good practices – need for additional models/examples/case studies from developing countries on national coordination mechanisms;
- The following areas for capacity-building and technical assistance of particular benefit for enhancing cooperation and coordination for the national implementation of the three conventions were identified:
 - Customs: combating illegal traffic/trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes;
 - Protection of human health and of the environment in case of accidents;
 - Information flow;
 - Transfer of know-how;

- Preparation of national positions for conference of the Parties and other meetings of convention bodies.

The conferences of the Parties should consider requesting the secretariats to collaborate on the elaboration of guidance and training in these areas.

B. Programmatic cooperation in the field

The contact group noted that some delegations in plenary had advised that they had not had a chance to review the thought starter and could therefore only engage in preliminary discussions. The thought starter focused on national needs as the basis for joint programmatic cooperation at the national level. Several delegates identified the need to address better programmatic cooperation at the regional and international levels to respond to these national needs.

The contact group discussed some elements for recommendations to the conferences of the Parties but recognized that further intersessional work would be required in order adequately to address the regional and international response elements. It was agreed that participants should be invited to provide input and in doing so to focus on the identification of programmes and project areas that could benefit from joint development and implementation. The work on this item should also take into consideration discussions and outcomes on other areas that touch on programmatic cooperation and coordination.

Rationale

- To better meet national needs for coherent implementation of the three conventions;
- To promote more coherent international and regional programmes to respond to those national needs and for delivery of coordinated capacity-building and technical assistance;
- To build and sustain foundational capacity in chemicals and wastes management.

Elements

The contact group discussed elements in annex II of the report of the first meeting of the ad hoc joint working group (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.1/4) and agreed that further work on national needs identified in that annex could yield proposals for programmatic cooperation and coordination at the international, regional and national levels.

Cooperation on development and implementation of policies, strategies and work programmes

- Better coordination among relevant United Nations and international bodies as well as multilateral environmental agreements;
- Better reflection of coordinated programmatic cooperation within United Nations United Nations common country assessments and United Nations development assistance frameworks;
- Programmatic cooperation on cross-cutting issues;
- Synergistic responses to country and regional demand;
- Combating illegal trade through, for example, the Green Customs initiative.

Examples of areas for programmatic cooperation at the national level

- Integration of a package of sound chemicals and wastes management measures, using the life cycle approach, into national development strategies;
- National regulatory framework which promotes a life cycle approach, including for industrial chemicals;
- Monitoring and enforcement;
- Waste minimization and management;
- Best available techniques/best environmental practices; integrated pest and pesticide management;

- Production facilities;
- Consumption patterns;
- Awareness raising.

C. Coordinated use of regional offices, centres

The Basel and Stockholm Conventions provide for regional centres to build capacity and transfer technology. By coordinated use of centres, it would be possible to take a life cycle approach to these tasks and incorporate regional needs under the Rotterdam Convention and other aspects of chemical and wastes management, bearing in mind the existing and on-going work with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and institutions.

The contact group recognized that increased coordination between regional centres as a means of strengthening and facilitating implementation across the three conventions would have to take into account the following factors: that selection of centres should be flexible and continue to be country and region driven; that the broadening of the mandates of centres may require adjustments to criteria or terms of reference to reflect a coordinating role for more than one convention; that the issue of sustainable financing of the operation of centres needs to be addressed; and that the results of the Basel Convention centres review will need to be considered in the final recommendations to the conferences of the Parties.

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- To strengthen and facilitate implementation of the three conventions through regionally relevant delivery of capacity-building and technology transfer;
- To increase coordination at the regional level in an efficient manner and promote a life cycle approach to chemicals and wastes management;
- To strengthen and enhance the use of existing centres by all stakeholders;
- To ensure the viability of regional centres.

Possible elements

- Conferences of the Parties, as well as Parties and other stakeholders in a region, should promote coordinated use of regional centres to strengthen the regional delivery of technical assistance under all three conventions;
- Have coordinating centres, subject to regional agreements, with responsibility for both chemicals and wastes management, that could coordinate activities in the regions, ensure delivery of the work in accordance with priorities and serve as an entry point for countries needing assistance or guidance on which centre in a region could provide assistance for a specific purpose;
- Undertake pilot projects on coordinated use of centres to gain experience;
- Further cooperation and coordination of the regional or subregional centres with other relevant institutions and centres to ensure complementarity of efforts and avoid duplication;
- Ensure the secretariats are familiar with the capacities and work programmes of all the regional centres;
- Promote communication by all regional centres interacting with the stakeholders of all three conventions;
- Strengthening centres for exercising a more synergistic approach as delivery mechanisms under the three conventions.

Recommendation 2**Rationale**

- To strengthen and enhance the use of existing centres by all stakeholders;
- To promote economies of scale through joint projects;
- To attract more resources and funding through greater visibility and capacity to deliver a coordinated response.

Possible elements

- Improve the sustainability of operational financial resources of the regional centres;
- Remove structural barriers and build the capacity of coordinated centres to interact directly with the international donor system;
- Adopt a joint approach to developing and attracting finance and technical assistance for programmes delivered through the regional centres.

II. Technical substantive issues**A. National reporting****Recommendation 1****Rationale**

- Allow better use of resources at the national level, recognizing the information technology (IT) implications;
- Allow Parties to have a comprehensive overview of the reporting process at the national level.

Possible elements

- **Every 4 years**, synchronize the procedure (e.g., timing) pursuant to which reports under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions are submitted together.

Recommendation 2**Rationale**

- Facilitate national coordination;
- Identify priority areas for in-depth capacity-building under recommendation 3.

Possible elements

- Develop joint capacity-building activities, such as joint workshops, with the aim to assist Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

Recommendation 3**Rationale**

- Allow Parties to address challenges faced in the implementation of the three conventions in order to assist Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions as well as the information exchange provisions under the Rotterdam Convention.

Possible elements

- Develop joint capacity-building activities addressing the issue of institutional strengthening to facilitate the collection and provision of data and information at the national level required in order to fulfil Parties' reporting obligations under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions (and possibly addressing the information exchange provisions under the Rotterdam Convention). This could include the development of national legislation, development of national databases and inventory and monitoring programmes.

Recommendation 4

Rationale

- Reduce reporting burden on Parties, recognizing that streamlining of reporting formats may be one option;
- Build on the experience gained from capacity-building activities and other relevant lessons learned.

Possible elements

- With a view to reducing the reporting burden on Parties in future consider streamlining the reporting formats under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions;

B. Compliance/Non-compliance mechanisms

The contact group recognized that negotiations and consultations are ongoing under the auspices of the Conferences of the Parties to the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on compliance/non-compliance mechanisms. Accordingly, some recommendations put forward are for consideration of the three Conferences of the Parties at a later date, once or if decisions have been adopted by the Conferences of the Parties to the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

The contact group agreed to request the Secretariats to seek information from the Secretariat for the Montreal Protocol on the experience of the Montreal Protocol compliance regime for consideration at the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group.

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- Facilitate coordination among the compliance mechanisms ultimately established;
- Recognition that the difficulties faced by Parties in complying with the three conventions may frequently stem from the same causes and that enhanced coordination may allow for a comprehensive overview of such difficulties.

Possible elements

- At the present time, the conferences of the Parties may wish to seek greater coordination of the negotiations currently under way in the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and take into account lessons learned from existing mechanisms including those under the Basel Convention and the Montreal Protocol;
- In the long-term, the conferences of the Parties may wish to initiate a process to explore the possibilities for enhancing coordination among the agreed mechanisms by, for example, the convening of back-to-back meetings, establishing a single committee to administer the three mechanisms and encouraging membership of those who have experience of other compliance mechanisms.

Recommendation 2**Rationale**

- Enhance the operation of mechanisms by benefiting from the lessons learned within Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and in other forums.

Possible elements

- Review the operations of the mechanisms established under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, taking into account the experience with those mechanisms and other relevant mechanisms with a view to enhancing their operation or function.

Recommendation 3**Rationale**

- If three committees are established to administer three mechanisms, facilitate coordination and information exchange on common issues, including exchange of experiences and lessons learned;
- Possible cost savings.

Possible elements

- Explore and promote administrative synergies by, for example, the convening of back-to-back meetings of the committees, the provision of joint secretariat support for the committees and the mechanisms they administer and the participation of the chairs of all three committees in each other's meetings.

III. Information management and public awareness issues**A. Joint outreach and public awareness****Recommendation 1****Rationale**

- Increase political awareness by sending coherent messages informing the general public on issues relevant to the mandate and work of the three conventions, being mindful of cost-effectiveness and of the need to target a greater audience.

Possible elements

- Support further efforts carried out by the secretariats, in particular with regard to content development and delivery, such as the development of a common newsletter for the three conventions and the development of a common web portal (common entry point) for the three conventions, including links to other relevant websites;
- Encourage the adoption of a joint information service;
- Initiate joint outreach activities on issues of common concern among the conventions;
- Encourage the development of a systematic approach to addressing awareness-raising activities among the three conventions;
- Focus activities in particular on issues such as those related to the life-cycle approach as well as the environmentally sound management of chemicals, questions related to trade and environment, general chemicals management issues including legal infrastructure and chemicals common to the Stockholm and the Rotterdam Conventions in informing the general public. Joint

outreach activities should also be pursued at the national and regional levels.

B. Information sharing among technical and scientific panels

Recommendation 1

Rationale³

- To enhance the information base of technical and scientific panels of the three conventions to foster national coordination, facilitate the participation of experts attending these committees as well as the exchange between these bodies in terms of technical information and at the various implementation levels.

Possible elements

- Support the strengthening of the technical capacities of Parties, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to achieve the objectives of the three conventions;
- Encourage information exchange between these bodies in terms of procedures and the chemicals being considered and on the exchange of information on national, subregional and regional activities as well as by, when relevant, inviting chairs of committees to participate in each others' meetings as well as the sharing of relevant reports and materials on the web;
- Continue the maintenance of the table developed under annex I of the report of the first meeting of the ad hoc joint working group⁴ and make it available on the web.
- Encourage the adoption of common practices with regards to procedures relevant to these bodies.

C. Pooling information on health and environmental impacts/clearing-house mechanism

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- Improve the availability of information on environmental and health impacts and seek better possibilities for accessing such information.

Possible elements

- At the national and regional levels, establish common websites displaying all relevant information available, including in cases of accidents. For this purpose examples of existing models, such as the Chemical Information Exchange Network, hazardous substances information systems and relevant information warehouses, could be taken into account;
- At the international level, elaborate on a common approach concerning information and data transmission related to the impacts on health and the environment for the purpose of making such information more accessible, including data on assessments for chemicals under the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.
- Consider a possible longer-term goal of common databases for the three conventions including the Stockholm Convention clearing-house mechanism

3 The co-chairs are invited to address the issue of information sharing among the three conventions at a broader level intersessionally.

4 UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.1/4.

D. Joint input into other processes

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- Enhance effective cooperation and input into related organizations, while maintaining the technical substance of each process;
- Through this the information base at national level would be enhanced, which could contribute to easing burdens on delegations in terms of representation. At the international level this would contribute to greater visibility, effectiveness and efficiency.

Possible elements

- Whenever feasible, encourage a joint representation and joint input of the secretariats of the three conventions in participating in and providing information to other related organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility, the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Customs Organization, the International Labour Organization and the International Maritime Organization.

IV. Administrative issues

A. Resource mobilization

Recommendation 1

Rationale

- Enhance mobilization of resources in support of the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to a level beyond that achievable through separate action;
- Avoid competitive and uncoordinated resource demands to donors.

Possible elements

- Joint resource mobilization service of the three Secretariats based on:
 - Coordinated approaches;
 - Raising awareness to enhance political support for chemicals and waste management;
 - Avoiding duplication of efforts and uncoordinated demands to donors;
- Consider the most appropriate source of financing of the joint resource mobilization service;⁵
- Develop joint support and advice to countries on what they can do at a national level to generate funds and to better access international and bilateral funds;
- Build on available methodologies, guidance and case studies that have been developed by other institutions.
- Joint resource mobilization strategy for the short, medium and long term.

Recommendation 2

Rationale

- Resource mobilization for a life cycle approach to chemicals and waste management;

5 To be revisited between the second and third meetings of the ad hoc joint working group.

- Prioritized coordinated efforts to explore new, innovative and adequate sources of funding.

Possible elements

- Send coherent and coordinated messages from each of the three conferences of the Parties on the need for access to Global Environment Facility funding for the sound management of chemicals and wastes through the implementation of the three conventions;
- Send coherent and coordinated messages to other funding institutions.

B. Back-to-back meetings

The contact group agreed that the issue of back-to-back meetings would be discussed substantively at the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group, noting that conclusions on the issue would be influenced by the conclusions of the other contact groups, as well as on other administrative issues. Accordingly, the possible elements recorded by the contact group did not constitute final conclusions on the matter.

In developing the possible elements for recommendations for consideration at the third meeting, the contact group emphasized that the starting point of the discussion was the recognition of the independence and autonomy of each convention and of each conference of the Parties.

It was agreed that the co-chairs of the working group, in the preparation of the documents for the group's third meeting, would reflect that there were different levels of ambition in the group.

Many members identified possible advantages and disadvantages that could result from the holding of back-to-back meetings. As some members of the contact group expressed concern as to the practicalities and feasibility of holding meetings back-to-back, the members of the ad hoc joint working group were invited to facilitate work at the third meeting by making written contributions setting out their views on the possible advantages and disadvantages, as well as the practicability and feasibility, of such arrangements. The contact group also agreed that possible advantages and disadvantages identified during its deliberations at the present meeting should be set out for consideration at the next meeting. These are set out below and precede the possible elements for recommendation 1.

Some members were of the view that there was no legal impediment to the organization of back-to-back meetings. Other members considered that further work was required to address the legal and practical feasibility of the options put forward for back-to-back meetings.

To assist the ad hoc joint working group in its consideration of this issue at its third meeting, the Secretariats were requested to seek information from the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on its experience with organizing back-to-back meetings and to provide a document setting out this information for the third meeting.

Possible advantages and disadvantages of back-to-back meetings

Disadvantages

- Burdensome for small delegations
- Lengthy absences from capital
- Questionable feasibility and practicality
- Heavy workload to be addressed in one series of meetings
- Might be perceived as an indication that the three conventions were not sufficiently important to merit independent meetings of the conferences of the Parties
- Experience shows that back-to-back meetings do not necessarily ensure greater outreach.
- In the case of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, back-to-back meetings might not bring the advantages that may be gained under other multilateral environmental agreements because of the distinct nature of these three instruments.
- Different membership of the three conventions, different focal points and different representation at the national level

Possible advantages

- Travelling once, albeit for a long period, may be better than travelling three times.
- Promotes regular coordination of decision-making
- Beneficial for national coordination
- Allows for a broad, comprehensive overview
- Higher visibility of the three conventions, which might attract greater high level (ministerial) participation
- Facilitates agreement on concrete activities
- Efficiency and cost savings

Recommendation 1**Rationale**

- Regular coordination of meetings would assist in coherent development of policies and programmes of work, attract voluntary contributions by donors and facilitate the provision of coherent guidance to the secretariats.
- Such coordination might take a variety of forms aimed at maximizing coordination.

Possible elements

- The meetings of the conferences of the Parties should operate in a coordinated manner and should be scheduled in such a way as to facilitate such coordination.

C. Financial management and audit functions

The contact group agreed that financial management and audit functions would be substantively discussed at the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group.

The contact group requested the secretariats to provide the following information for the third meeting:

- Noting that the Basel Convention had more “financial” staff than the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, clarification as to whether this was required because of additional work resulting from the interaction with the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres;
- Information from UNEP as to the possibilities for further provision of audit services to the conventions, in particular with a view to providing Parties with more financial information.

Recommendation 1**Rationale**

- Common unit would release staff to undertake other duties

Possible elements

- Establish a joint financial unit.

Recommendation 2 (pending receipt of above information)

Rationale

- Enhance provision of information to Parties on financial and managerial performance.

Possible elements

- Establish a joint auditing function to undertake internal audit.

Annex II

Schedule of work for the third meeting of the ad hoc joint working group (AHJWG) on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

	Item of work (listed in parentheses are the paragraphs or sections of the report or its annex I that refer to the item)	Responsible entity(ies)	Deadline
1	Post report of AHJWG-2 on web and forward to AHJWG members and official focal points for the three conventions and Geneva-based missions.	Secretariats and co-chairs	As soon as possible
2	Ensure the e-mail addresses of AHJWG members are correct.	Secretariats	As soon as possible
3	Provide to the secretariats any written comments on the elements and rationales contained in annex I to the report of AHJWG-2 and on possible elements and rationales for coordination (paragraph 19) in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Good practices on coordination at the national level (annex I, I.A); b) Provide input on the identification of programmes and project areas (at the regional and international levels) that could benefit from joint development and implementation (annex I, I.B, paragraph 2); c) Back-to-back meetings (annex I, IV.B paragraph 4). 	Members and others	8 February 2008
4	Prepare additional inputs on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Experience of the Montreal Protocol with its compliance regime (paragraphs 36, 72 and annex I, II.B); b) Cost of national ozone units at the national level (paragraph 30); c) Options on external financing for national coordination and implementation mechanisms for synergies; (paragraph 67 and annex I, I.A); d) Experience of the Convention on Biological Diversity in organizing back-to-back meetings (paragraph 72 and annex I, IV.B, paragraph 6); e) Information from UNEP on the provision of audit services for the three conventions; (annex I, IV.C); f) Clarification regarding the financial staff of the Basel Convention (paragraph 68). 	Secretariats	8 February 2008
5	Develop draft recommendations (in a format suitable for submission to the Conferences of the Parties) for discussion at a face-to-face meeting.	Co-chairs	25 February 2008
6	Post final draft recommendations on the AHJWG website and send to all AHJWG members, all official contact points of the three conventions and permanent missions in Geneva for information and comment.	Secretariats	29 February 2008
7	Compile and make available to the AHJWG as an information document any comments received.	Secretariats	24 March 2008