



# UNEP Chemicals *Newsletter*

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## WHO, UNEP Cooperation

WHO Director-General Gro Harlem Brundtland and UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer have signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations to better protect human health and the environment. Copies are available from UNEP Chemicals.

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## UNEP Chemicals Expands Assessment Activities

UNEP Chemicals is consolidating and expanding its chemicals assessment activities, emphasizing impacts on water.

Starting in spring 2000, it will execute the two-year US \$5 million global project, Regionally Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This project will contribute to GEF priority setting and serve to guide international action to protect human health and the environment from persistent toxic substances.

In addition, UNEP Chemicals has initiated the preparatory GEF project, Assessing National Management Needs for Persistent Toxic Substances. There will be strong linkages between these two projects as well as the GEF Global International Waters Assessment. UNEP Chemicals is contributing to work on emerging issues being done by the International Programme on Chemical Safety, which is made up of the International Labour Organization, World Health Organization, and UNEP. A key example is endocrine disruption. Effects have been demonstrated on aquatic organisms, for

example, and sewage water has been implicated as a potential source.

Under the umbrella of the Inter-organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, work has been initiated with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to harmonise approaches for assessing environmental exposure to chemicals, focusing on methods for assessing persistence, bioaccumulation, and long-range transport.



UNEP/Angel Carollo/TOPHAM

## More Than 50 Capacity Building Workshops Set

To promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals, UNEP Chemicals is conducting more than 50 regional/sub-regional workshops in 2000-2001, with the part of the schedule in this issue's Calendar.

This capacity building programme builds on the successful awareness raising workshops held by UNEP and others on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). It also focuses on specific issues identified as priorities through current negotiation of the POPs convention.

Major themes will be the reduction of emissions of dioxins and furans and management of polychlorinated biphenyls, sustainable alternatives to POPs pesticides, and management of stocks of obsolete pesticides. A substantial portion of the funding has been provided by the United States.

Additional support will go to workshops on implementation of the Rotterdam Convention and introduction of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers at the national level.



UNEP/K.C. Limariga/TOPHAM

Floating market

## From the Director



For more than 20 years, UNEP Chemicals has actively supported chemicals-assessment-related activities. We have been a partner in the International Programme for Chemical Safety, provider of the IRPTC Database on chemical safety information, and participant in OECD's risk assessment initiatives for which we have published SIDs initial assessment reports.

I am pleased to note developments that will strengthen global understanding of chemical risks and enable us to strengthen our joint efforts to protect human health and the environment. First is the Global Environment Facility's approval of the first-ever global assessment of chemical problems, done on a regional basis. It should enable us to identify adverse impacts and strengthen response capacity and pro-

grammes to safeguard affected populations, including aquatic ecosystems, urban environments, and indigenous people. Work has also begun on a GEF preparatory project to assess national needs for managing persistent toxic substances.

As these activities complement ongoing work, we anticipate a strengthened programme of support for developing countries and countries with economies in transition in responding to global chemical safety crises and protecting people and ecosystems.

James B. Willis  
Director, UNEP Chemicals

*Nine African countries that have recently used or still use DDT for routine malaria control participated in the consultation.*

## WHO/UNEP Partnership To Reduce Reliance on DDT Control

WHO and UNEP have joined forces to create a win-win situation for protecting both health and the environment by promoting strategies to reduce malaria with reduced reliance on DDT.

An important first step has been taken through a WHO-convened Regional Consultation to Prepare African Countries Towards Reduction of Reliance on DDT for Malaria Control, with UNEP support.

Nine African countries that have recently used or still use DDT for routine malaria control participated in the consultation, which included the objective of identifying requirements and needs

of countries to reduce reliance on DDT.

Among other outcomes, participants identified actions to limit DDT to public health use and reduce reliance on DDT for malaria control, and made recommendations toward strengthening inter-sectoral and regional collaboration and establishment of linkages among health, environment, agriculture and other sectors.

## POPs Negotiations To Consider Assistance Issues

Assistance proposals will be taken up by the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding treaty on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), in Bonn from 20-25 March 2000.

According to INC Chair John Buccini (Canada), developing a text with the minimum number of unresolved issues will enable governments to consult sufficiently to be able to come to INC-5, to be held in late 2000 in South Africa, with mandates to resolve issues and conclude the negotiations.

In Bonn, negotiators will build on progress made at the third session of the INC in Geneva 6-11 September 1999 at which governments favored draft proposals to eliminate the 10 intentionally produced POPs, while

providing an exemption for DDT for public health needs. They also were supportive of an action plan approach for releases of dioxins and furans, and generally agreed on criteria and a procedure for identifying additional pollutants for international action.

Success in Bonn is linked to progress on assistance to enable countries to implement the future treaty, with draft text for Articles J (Technical Assistance) and K (Financial Resources and Mechanisms) expected by the session's close. More information is available on the Internet ([www.chem.unep.ch/pops](http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops)).

***A copy of the video news release on INC-4 will be available soon from UNEP Chemicals.***



Negotiations on POPs Treaty,  
20-25 March 2000, Bonn

Photo/M. Sondemmann

## Basel Declaration Sets Agenda for Next Decade

The agenda for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes over the next decade is embodied in the Basel Declaration adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. It met in December 1999 in Basel on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention. Also adopted was an enabling decision that provides for practical implementation of the Declaration.

At the core of the Declaration's vision is the view that environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes should be accessible to all Parties, with emphasis placed on waste minimization and capacity building.

The Declaration recognizes effective and efficient partnership between Parties and civil society as essential for avoiding severe repercussions from the generation, treatment, transport, recycling, or disposal of hazardous wastes. Industry involvement in implementation of the concept of environmentally sound management is seen as critical in achieving the Declaration's objectives.

In adopting this Declaration, Parties called for enhanced cooperation to make use of the range of UNEP's longstanding experience in management of hazardous chemicals.

They specifically requested cooperation among the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, UNEP Chemicals, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) on persistent organic pollutants and waste pesticides.

A major barrier to environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous materials is the increasing complexity of the chemicals being manufactured and used, together with the growing quantity of hazardous wastes being generated.

Prevention and minimization strategies are key to improving the situation worldwide and achieving the objective of the Basel Convention to protect human health and the environment. For more information, visit the Basel Secretariat website. ([www.unep.ch/basel](http://www.unep.ch/basel)).



## Two Pesticides Recommended as Additions to PIC

The first session of the Interim Chemical Review Committee under the Rotterdam Convention, which took place in Geneva from 21-25 February 2000, took significant action.

The Committee agreed to recommend two chemicals—ethylene dichloride and ethylene oxide—for inclusion as pesticides in the Interim Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure. It forwarded draft Decision Guidance Documents for those chemicals to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for consideration at its next meeting, scheduled to take place from 30 October to 3 November in Geneva.

The Committee, which consists of 29 government-designated experts in chemicals management from the seven PIC regions, elected Rainer Arndt (Germany) as chair, and the following members as vice-chairs: Dudley Achu Sama (Cameroon), Flor de María Perla de Alfaro (El Salvador), Tamás Kömives (Hungary), and Masayuki Ikeda (Japan). Dudley Achu Sama will serve as rapporteur.

Recognizing the many important tasks entrusted to it by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the urgent need to become fully operational, the Committee established a number of Task Groups, which will work inter-

sessionally, on various issues related to its operational procedures. Those groups will make full use of modern communication technology to facilitate their work and to ensure communication and transparency.

The Report from the Committee is available on the Internet ([www.pic.int](http://www.pic.int)).

### ROTTERDAM CONVENTION\*

Status of ratifications  
(as of 1 March 2000):

73 signatories;  
3 Parties:  
El Salvador, Oman, Slovenia.

\*The Convention has not come into force.



FAO Photo/P. Cennini

Spraying cowpeas with pesticide

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Photo/Steve C. Delaney

## Sound Chemical Management

UNEP Chemicals works with countries to identify solutions to chemical management problems by discussing management needs and options, and providing assistance or identifying potential funding. Projects range from better access to chemical information to case studies on POPs. For information, contact UNEP Chemicals.

*The UNEP Chemicals Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.*

*UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.*

*Inquiries and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Director, UNEP Chemicals. Material may be reproduced without fee, with acknowledgement.*

## Selected Publications

**Master List of Actions on Reduction and/or Elimination of Releases of POPs, Second edition.** Available in hard copy (English), March 2000.

**Regionally-based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances – Project Brief.** Available in hard copy (English), March 2000.

**Inventory of Information Sources on POPs.** Available in hard copy and on POPs Homepage (English), November 1999 (reprint).

**International Activities Related to Chemicals.** Available in hard copy (English), December 1999.

**Press Coverage: Third Round of Talks on Treaty on POPs.** Available in hard copy (English), November 1999.

A publications list is available from UNEP Chemicals and at [www.chem.unep.ch](http://www.chem.unep.ch). Documents are free of charge.

## Calendar

### 20-25 March 2000

Fourth Session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4) for POPs Treaty-Bonn

### 29-31 March 2000

Workshop on Inventory of Stockpiles of Obsolete Pesticides-Voronezh, Russia

### 17-21 April 2000

Regional Training on Management of Dioxins/Furans, PCBs-Yaounde, Cameroon

### 9-12 May 2000

Subregional Workshop on Rotterdam Convention, PIC-Nairobi (Tentative)

### 22-25 May 2000

Workshop on National Chemical Legislation for CIS Countries-Novgorod, Russia (Tentative)

### 22-26 May 2000

Training on Management of Dioxins/Furans, PCBs-Dubrovnik, Croatia (Tentative)

### 12-15 June 2000

Regional Workshop on Dioxins/Furans-Seoul, Republic of Korea

### 24-28 June 2000

Regional Training on Management of Dioxins/Furans, PCBs-Iran, Islamic Republic

### 4-7 July 2000

Regional Workshop on Alternatives to POPs Pesticides-St. Petersburg, Russia (Tentative)

### 17-21 July 2000

Regional Workshop, GEF PDFB Project on Assessing National Needs for PTS Management-Budapest

### 18-22 September 2000

Regional Training on Management of Dioxins/Furans, PCBs-Montevideo or Punta Del Este, Uruguay

### 30 October -3 November 2000

Rotterdam Convention-Seventh Session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-7)-Geneva

### 9-13 October 2000

Regional Training on Management of Dioxins/Furans, PCBs-Arushu, Tanzania

### 14-20 October 2000

Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS-3) -Salvador, Brazil

### 4-9 December 2000

Fifth Session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on POPs Treaty (INC-5)-South Africa



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