

Agenda Item 7.6 : Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm COP Strategic Outcomes

Purpose of paper

1. To inform the Meeting of the outcomes of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention and the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention.

Background

2. The Basel Convention addresses concerns over the management, disposal and transboundary movement of the estimated four hundred million tonnes of hazardous wastes that are produced worldwide each year.
3. The Rotterdam Convention creates legally binding obligations for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals to protect human health and the environment from potential harm, and to contribute to the environmentally sound use of those hazardous chemicals.
4. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is an international environmental treaty that aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

Preparation for the BRS COPs

5. The Secretariat of the BRS convention facilitated regional preparation for all parties to the BRS Convention in the months leading up to the face-to-face segment of the BRS Triple COPs. The Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting was held in person in Bali, Indonesia and virtually from the 27-29 March 2022. The objectives of the preparatory meeting was to give Parties the opportunity to consult each other in advance of the face-to-face segment of the COPs taking place from 6 to 17 June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland, consider meeting documents, discuss substantive matters, identify regional priorities and challenges and facilitate the preparation of regional positions.
6. Due to international travel restrictions, no Parties to the BRS Conventions from the Pacific region were able to attend the preparatory meeting in person. Only a few Parties from the Pacific were able to attend the preparatory meeting via the online platform provided by the BRS Secretariat due to differences in time zones from Indonesia as well as poor internet connectivity.

7. With a desire to ensure Pacific voices were represented at the COPS, SPREP organised and hosted a Pacific sub-regional preparatory virtual meeting from the 17-19 May 2022. The meeting was well attended by delegates and observers from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Also in attendance were delegates from SPREP Metropolitan members, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.
8. The Pacific sub-regional preparatory meeting provided an opportunity for Pacific Parties to the BRS Conventions to have a talanoa on the BRS COPs to:
 - Discuss the agenda of the BRS COPS;
 - Identify regional priorities and challenges and facilitate the preparation of regional positions; and
 - Confirm the ongoing support that SPREP Members would like to seek from SPREP.
9. Follow up communication was undertaken by SPREP to confirm participation from Pacific Parties to the BRS COPs. While Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu confirmed registering for the COPs, only Vanuatu was able to attend the COPs in person in Geneva, Switzerland.
10. Members were invited by SPREP to join an on-line communication coordination WhatsApp channel to hold regular on-line meetings and discuss events or to prepare for sessions.

Summary of key outcomes of the BRS COPs

Basel convention

11. Summary of outcomes of the face-to-face segment of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention: At its face-to-face segment, the meeting took up the items of the agenda not considered or concluded during the online segment. Among other things, the Conference of the Parties:
 - adopted amendments to Annexes II, VII and IX of the Convention, upon the proposal by Ghana and Switzerland, subjecting all transboundary movements of electronic wastes, whether hazardous or not, to the Convention's prior informed consent procedure.
 - adopted technical guidelines on mercury wastes, on Persistent Organic Pollutants wastes, on environmentally sound incineration of hazardous and other wastes as covered by disposal operations D10 and R1, on specially engineered landfill (D5), as well as two guidance documents prepared by the Implementation and Compliance Committee - one on transit transboundary movements and the other on insurance, bond and guarantee.
 - decided to update the technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries, to initiate the development of technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of other waste batteries, to improve the strategic framework of the Convention and to initiate a new track of work to improve the function of the prior informed consent procedure.

Rotterdam Convention

12. Summary of outcomes of the face-to-face segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention: At its face-to-face segment, the meeting took up the items of the agenda not considered or concluded during the online segment. Among other things, the Conference of the Parties:
- listed two industrial chemicals in Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention: decabromo-diphenyl ether, and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds.
 - agreed on the work programme for the newly established Compliance Committee for 2022-2023.

Stockholm Convention

13. Summary of outcomes of the face-to-face segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention: At its face-to-face segment, the meeting took up the items of the agenda not considered or concluded during the online segment. Among other things, the Conference of the Parties:
- listed perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), its salts, and PFHxS-related compounds in Annex A to the Convention, setting them for elimination.
 - welcomed new guidance on best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) prepared by BAT and BEP experts and took note of revised guidance on developing and updating national implementation plans, as well as draft guidance on the identification and management of contaminated sites.
 - initiated a consultative process on a possible DDT phase-out plan, urged Parties to step up their efforts by immediately implementing actions to eliminate its use in equipment by 2025, and to achieve the environmentally sound management of relevant PCB wastes by 2028 and called for additional efforts by the Global Environment Facility, United Nations entities, intergovernmental organization, NGOs and others to support Parties in achieving the Convention's objectives related to PCB.

Next steps for Secretariat and Members following the BRS COPs

14. Raise public awareness of chemical pollution to highlight the importance of the BRS Conventions to Pacific SIDS through the implementation of national education and awareness plans on chemical pollution.
15. Support the preparation of SPREP members in their participation in the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to establish an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and a new science-policy panel that is expected to take a broad approach to the sound management of chemicals and waste. Preparations for the first Pacific INC preparatory workshop is being organised with funding support from Australia Department of Foreign and Trade for 16-18 August 2022 in Suva, Fiji.
16. Conduct training on transboundary movements of hazardous wastes to strengthen institutional capacity and minimize instances of illegal trafficking.
17. Support countries with their reporting requirements to the BRS Conventions.
18. Utilise appropriate projects to assist countries in meeting their obligations to the BRS Conventions.

19. Support the participation of countries in future COPs through convening of Pacific preparatory workshops prior, developing regional positions to address issues and funding support for Pacific delegates to attend the COPs in person.

Recommendation

20. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:

- 1) **Encourage** Members that are Parties to the BRS Conventions to attend future COPs and related meetings to amplify Pacific voices and priority needs;
- 2) **Note** with appreciation the support from Australia, New Zealand and NGOs
- 3) **Reaffirm** our commitment as SPREP Members to meeting our obligations to the BRS Conventions in making our region safe from the impacts of chemicals and hazardous wastes; and
- 4) **Request** the Secretariat to work with Members to ensure the commitments made at the COPs are achieved.

29 June 2022