

Report of the meeting of the Presidents of the conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Geneva, Switzerland, 14 November 2018

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The Presidents of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Mr. Abraham Zivayi Matiza (Zimbabwe, Basel Convention), Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez-Pérez (Chile, Rotterdam Convention), Mr. Mohammed Oglah Hussein Khashashneh (Jordan, Stockholm Convention) met on Wednesday, 14 November 2018, morning at the International Environment House I in Geneva. The meeting opened at 2:10 p.m.

2. Chairing of the joint meeting of the Presidents and the joint meeting of the bureaux on 15-16 November 2018

2. The Presidents discussed the chairmanship of the joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, taking place on 15 and 16 November 2018. At their first joint meeting in March 2011, the bureaux had decided to rotate the chairmanship of joint meetings of the bureaux meetings among the Presidents in alphabetical order of the names of the conventions, starting with the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. Mr. Álvarez-Pérez would thus chair the fifth joint meeting of the bureaux. The Presidents further agreed that Mr. Álvarez-Pérez would chair the present joint Presidents' meeting.

3. Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda, as adopted by the Presidents, is contained in the annex to the present report.

4. Walk-through of the provisional agenda of the joint meeting of the bureaux on 15-16 November 2018, including the identification of any issues and options for addressing them

4. The objective of the meeting of the Presidents was to prepare for the joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on 15 and 16 November 2018, as well as the upcoming 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the three conventions. The Presidents discussed the items on the agenda of the joint meeting of the bureaux.

Organization of the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

Elections

5. The Secretariat introduced the document on information on the election of officers and subsidiary body members to take place during the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2019 (document 2/Rev.1) prepared for the joint meeting of the bureaux. On 17 August 2018, the Secretariat had sent a letter to Parties to facilitate those elections. Document 2/Rev.1 furthermore provided information on arrears in assessed contributions to the general trust funds of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, as at 31 October 2018 given their impact on eligibility requirements.

6. The Presidents discussed the importance for regions to prepare possible candidates for all positions to be filled in advance of the regional preparatory meetings in order to facilitate elections during the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. They also reflected on concerns that had been raised about the low level of attendance and participation of some members in subsidiary body meetings.

Organization of work

Briefing by the Secretariat on the intersessional work under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including a summary of the outcomes of the subsidiary bodies' meetings

7. The Secretariat introduced the sub-item indicating that a full briefing on the intersessional work under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including a summary of the outcomes of the subsidiary bodies' meetings and major intersessional working groups, proposals received to amend the conventions and their implications on the tentative schedule of work of the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties would be provided to the joint meeting of the bureaux.

8. The Presidents discussed in particular the amendment proposals under the three conventions and their implications, reflecting on the importance for all Parties to be well informed and prepared for these discussions during the 2019 conferences of the Parties given the complexities of the matters.

Tentative schedule of work and draft schedule of possible contact and other groups

9. For this sub-item, the Secretariat introduced the document on a revised draft tentative schedule of work of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2019 prepared for the joint meeting of the bureaux (document 3). As suggested by the bureaux at their individual meetings in June and July 2018, the revised version was based on a similar model as for the 2015 and 2017 meetings. The Secretariat recalled that the Rotterdam Convention Bureau had suggested that while the agenda item on compliance be introduced in a joint session, followed by a general discussion, further consideration, including on how to proceed on the matter, would be postponed to Convention-specific sessions. In addition, the Stockholm Convention Bureau had proposed that the listing of chemicals under the Stockholm Convention be introduced on Monday, 29 April 2019. The revised version of the schedule also reflected a few adjustments linked to the outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention.

10. In the ensuing discussion, the Presidents expressed support for the revised version of the tentative schedule, reflecting however on the possibility to take up perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride¹ under the Stockholm Convention on Tuesday, 30 April 2019, rather than on Wednesday, 1 May, as the technical issues related to the definition of acceptable purposes and specific exemptions could require considerable time in contact group.

11. The Presidents then shared views on possible contact and other groups set out in annex III to document 3 and the number of contact groups that could run in parallel. The Secretariat drew attention of the Presidents to the need to identify potential chairs for the various groups and invited discussion on this matter during the regional preparatory meetings. The identification of possible chairs could commence once the provisional list of participants to the conferences of the Parties was available. Special attention would be given to regional and gender balance. The Presidents took note of a global training workshop on chairing meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions which was to be held from 12 to 14 February 2019 in Bratislava to train potential new chairs.

12. The Presidents then deliberated on the arrangements for the opening of the meetings. They agreed to discuss during the joint meeting of the bureaux a proposal to limit regional and other opening statements to 5 minutes. Longer statements, as well as national statements could be made available on the intranet site. The Presidents furthermore expressed support for starting the meetings in a timely manner.

Credentials

13. With respect to the approach on credentials, the Secretariat reported that for the past two meetings of the conferences of the Parties, the bureaux had agreed that when examining credentials received, they would accept original credentials in good order as well as copies of credentials in good order with the understanding that the original would be submitted as soon as possible.

14. In the ensuing discussion, the Presidents reflected on the deadline for submission of credentials and on the rationale for the bureaux and the conferences of the Parties having taken this approach in the past.

15. The Presidents agreed to suggest to the joint meeting of the bureaux that the bureaux continue to follow the same approach.

Other matters related to the organization of the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

Update on document preparation, including preparation of the budgets for the biennium 2020-2021

16. Under this sub-item, the Secretariat provided an overview of the deadlines for posting documents for the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties, as well as the current status of document preparations, including for the budget documents.

¹ Agenda item 5 (a) (i) on the agenda of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention.

17. The Presidents took note of the information provided and underscored the importance of documents being made available in time to be considered during the regional preparatory meetings.

Theme and related events

18. The Secretariat recalled that the theme of the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties would be *Clean Planet, Healthy People: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste*. During the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties, side events and other events would be organized to draw attention of the public to the chemicals and wastes issues being discussed. In addition, the Secretariat was organizing an information fair from 2 to 4 May 2019 to highlight the importance of the role of external partners such as industry and the private sector in the successful implementation of the conventions.

19. The Presidents took note of the information provided.

Regional preparatory meetings

20. The Secretariat introduced the sub-item on the regional preparatory meetings indicating that, the regional preparatory meetings for the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2019 would be held in a similar manner as the 2017 meetings. The Secretariat mentioned that dates and venues for the four meetings had been set in consultation with bureaux members from the respective regions.² Thanks to the generous financial contribution provided by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, one delegate per eligible Party would receive financial support to attend the meetings. The meetings would be followed by various back-to-back sessions.³ The Secretariat had prepared draft programmes for review and input by the bureaux members, which would need to be finalized shortly after the joint meeting of the bureaux.

21. In the ensuing discussion, the Presidents shared views on the chairing arrangements during the regional preparatory meetings. Such arrangements might vary between regions: for some, the President of a conference of the Parties from that region might take up this role, while for others, this role might be taken up by the regional coordinator or one or more members of the bureaux. The Presidents further agreed that these meetings provided an opportunity for regions to seek the interest and availability of delegates to take up chairing roles of contact and other groups during the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties.

Fund-raising

22. The Secretariat provided information on the funding situation on participants' travel to the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. With the current amount of funding available, the Secretariat would only be able to provide financial support for two delegates per eligible Party for the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties.

23. The Executive Secretary added that although the deadline for providing contributions for participants' travel to the 2019 meetings of the conferences of the Parties had passed, fundraising efforts were ongoing with the hope to raise the additional funds necessary to cover for one additional participant per eligible Party. The invitation letters to the meetings would mention that if additional funds were received, the Secretariat would contact Parties to invite nominations for one additional participant.

24. The Presidents took note of the information provided and reflected on the implications of the situation for eligible Parties when selecting the two delegates to receive funding to participate in meetings.

² Asia-Pacific region: 4–6 March 2019, China, in cooperation with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions Regional Centre in China; African region: 18–20 March 2019, Nairobi, Kenya, in cooperation with the Stockholm Convention regional centre in Kenya; Central and Eastern European region: 26–28 March 2019, Brno, Czechia, in cooperation with the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre in Czechia; Latin American and the Caribbean region: 27–29 March 2019, Montevideo, Uruguay, in cooperation with the Basel and Stockholm conventions Regional Centre in Uruguay.

³ In the case of the Asia-Pacific and African meetings the meetings would be followed by a session on gender organized by the Secretariat, a session on the Minamata Convention on Mercury organized by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention; and by a session on the SAICM organized by the SAICM Secretariat. The three-day meeting in the Central and Eastern Europe region would include a short session on gender, and half a day would be dedicated to a session on the Minamata Convention. The meeting in the Latin American and the Caribbean region would be followed by a session on gender and on the Minamata Convention and it would be back to back with preparatory meetings for the third meeting of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group, taking place in Montevideo, Uruguay, the following week.

Other arrangements

25. Under this agenda sub-item, the Secretariat informed the Presidents of other logistical preparations for the meetings of the conferences of the Parties in 2019. Detailed information for participants to the meetings would be made available on the meetings website⁴.

26. The Presidents took note of the information provided.

Other matters

27. The Secretariat provided information on four other matters it would raise during the joint meeting of the bureaux: guidelines on preventing and addressing all forms of harassment at meetings of the BRS COPs and their subsidiary bodies; further development of partnerships; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) policy regarding Programme Support Costs; and cooperation between the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

28. On the first issue, the Secretariat introduced the guidelines on preventing and addressing all forms of harassment at meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (document 4), indicating that these had been developed in line with the UN's zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment and approaches taken by other multilateral environmental agreements. The guidelines would be presented for information under "Other matters" of the provisional agendas of the three conventions.

29. The Presidents took note of the information provided.

30. On the second issue, the Secretariat explained that under the Basel Convention, two types of partnerships exist; those established by the Conference of the Parties and those relating to partnerships where the Secretariat collaborated directly with non-State stakeholders to implement its work programme. By decision OEWG-11/13, the Open-ended Working Group had requested the Secretariat to prepare a report for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting evaluating past and ongoing partnerships, and setting out recommendations on opportunities to further develop partnerships and on opportunities for stakeholders that are observers to the Convention to contribute to the objectives of the Basel Convention through other means of programmatic cooperation. The conferences of the Parties to the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions might also be interested in this development and the Secretariat thus would suggest that they consider including this item under other matters at their 2019 meetings.

31. In the ensuing discussion, the Presidents reflected on opportunities for enlarging and strengthening partnerships under the conventions. They agreed that developing new partnerships would need to be considered carefully taking into account the scope and mandate of each convention. The Presidents discussed opportunities for expanding partnerships with multilateral environmental agreements beyond the chemicals and waste cluster.

32. On the third issue, the Executive Secretary provided information on ongoing cooperation with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention. This cooperation was taking place both on programmatic and operational matters. Discussions were ongoing regarding services the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions could provide to the Minamata Convention on a cost recovery basis. Pursuant to arrangements between the two secretariats, support would be provided for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Information on possible services that the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention could purchase from or share with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions would be presented to the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties in document UNEP/MC/COP.2/INF/7.

33. In the ensuing discussion, the Presidents reflected on the ongoing cooperation between both secretariats, and discussed the different services that such secretariats require for the efficient running of operations and how these might be best shared with the view to maximize efficiency in delivery of secretariat functions for the conventions.

34. On the fourth issue, the Deputy Executive Secretary informed the Presidents that the Secretariat had received an indication from UNEP that its policy on the use of programme support costs was changing, regarding the services UNEP provided from the programme support costs levied on the voluntary contributions received by the Secretariat. These changes could impact the budgets of the three conventions as services that were formerly paid by UNEP through programme support costs might need to be included in the budgets of the three conventions. The Secretariat had raised a number of issues on this matter with

⁴ <http://www.brsmeas.org/2019COPs>.

UNEP and was waiting for answers. Information on which services were covered by the programme support costs was to be clarified in the memorandums of understanding between UNEP and the conferences of the Parties that would be considered by the conferences of the Parties in 2019 for adoption.

35. The Presidents took note of the information provided.

5. Other matters.

36. The Presidents agreed to schedule a meeting of the three Presidents in Geneva during the week of 8 to 12 April 2019 to finalize arrangements for chairing the meetings of the conferences of the Parties and to discuss the Presidents' notes.

6. Closure of the meeting.

37. The meeting was declared closed at 18.40 p.m.

Annex

Meeting of the Presidents of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

**14 November 2018
Geneva, Switzerland
International Environment House I
Room A-314, 2:00-6:00 p.m.**

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
 2. Chairing of the joint meeting of the Presidents and the joint meeting of the bureaux on 15-16 November 2018.
 3. Adoption of the agenda.
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