

Report of the meeting of the presidents of the conference of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Geneva, Switzerland, 10 November 2014

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Mr. Andrzej Jagusiewicz (Poland, Basel Convention), Mr. Mohammed Oglah Hussein Khashashneh (Jordan, Rotterdam Convention), Ms. Johanna Lissinger Peitz (Sweden, Stockholm Convention) met on Monday, 10 November 2014, afternoon at the International Environment House in Geneva. The meeting opened at 1:30 p.m.

2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The agenda was adopted on the basis of a provisional agenda circulated in advance of the meeting and is included in the annex to the present report.

3. Chairing of the joint meeting of the bureaux on 11-12 November 2014.

3. The presidents discussed the running of the joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, taking place on 11-12 November 2014. At their first joint meeting in March 2011, the bureaux had decided to rotate the chairmanship of joint bureaux meetings among the presidents in alphabetical order, starting with the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. The President of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, Ms. Lissinger Peitz, would thus chair the present third joint bureaux meeting.

4. Walk-through of the provisional agenda of the joint meeting of the bureaux on 11-12 November 2014, 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 upcoming joint meeting of the bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, taking place on 11 and 12 November 2014, as well as the upcoming meetings of the conferences of the parties to the three conventions. The presidents discussed the items on the agenda of the joint bureaux meeting.

Matters related to the organization of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to be held back-to-back in 2015

Organization of work of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

5. The Secretariat introduced two documents for this item on a draft tentative schedule of work and on elements of a scenario note for the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in May 2015, outlining the items to be covered during each session, including those proposed to be dealt with in joint sessions. The Secretariat also provided an overview of the different contact and other groups that could be set up. The Secretariat underlined that the bureaux, during their joint meeting on 11 and 12 November 2014, would need to reach an agreement on the schedule of work.

6. The presidents took note of the information provided and reflected on the time needed for convention-specific sessions and joint sessions of the meetings of the conferences of the parties. They also considered those issues proposed to be dealt with in joint sessions, and agreed that the bureaux, at their joint meeting, could consider whether these adequately cover all relevant topics or whether some changes might be needed. For example, one additional proposal for consideration by the bureaux could be to cover the technical guidelines on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) wastes in a joint session among the Basel and Stockholm conventions which would enable the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to set up a contact group on the POPs wastes technical guidelines early in the two-week period and thus provide more time to the contact group to discuss those issues.

7. The presidents also reflected on possible contact and other groups that might be established during the meetings of the conferences of the parties, as well as their scheduling, and how progress on specific items under one Conference of the Parties might influence the work of another. They concluded that an overall schedule of meetings of contact groups for the use of the Presidents and the Secretariat would help in planning the efficient use of time by the groups.

8. The presidents then discussed the topic of compliance and took note of a brief on compliance under the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions prepared by the Secretariat. They noted that the section on possible lessons learned from compliance mechanisms under other multilateral environmental agreements would be updated following recent developments under the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The presidents also discussed the luncheon briefing with representatives of Permanent Missions in Geneva, initially envisaged to be held in autumn 2014, that would cover compliance under both conventions and which would be postponed to 2015 to be closer to the meetings of the conferences of the parties. They agreed that the joint bureaux meeting would provide a good opportunity to get the views from the bureaux on this matter.

Credentials

9. The presidents considered the matter of credentials noting that the bureaux at their individual meetings had expressed different views on the matter. The presidents concluded that agreement on the form and deadline for submitting credentials needed to be reached during the joint bureaux meeting and that that agreement should be widely communicated ahead of the meetings of the conferences of the parties.

Election of officers and subsidiary body members

10. The Secretariat introduced the matter and indicated that for this item the main issue for consideration by the bureaux at their joint meeting was the rotation of presidents and rapporteurs of the meetings of the conferences of the parties. The discussion would include consideration of a proposal to alter past practice of rotation to lead to a more regionally balanced group of presidents at the 2017 meetings of the conferences of the parties.

11. The presidents agreed that it would be good to hear the views of parties on the topic during the joint bureaux meeting.

Theme of the meetings and the science fair

12. On this item, the Secretariat indicated that it would provide an update at the joint bureaux meeting on the current status of preparations of the fair, scheduled to take place from Thursday, 7 May 2015, to Saturday, 9 May 2015, and on the development of its communication plan and visual identity for the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in May 2015.

13. The presidents agreed that a discussion on these matters during the joint bureaux meeting would provide a good opportunity to share information, collect views on both topics and collect inputs for the organization of the science fair.

Review of the synergies arrangements

14. The Deputy Executive Secretary introduced the matter making reference to the document prepared by the Secretariat on the elements of draft terms of reference for the review of the synergies arrangements. She clarified that the Bureau of the Stockholm Convention, during its meeting on 14 and 15 May 2014, in order to make progress on the matter ahead of the meetings of the 2015, had requested the Secretariat to prepare elements of the draft terms of reference for discussion at the joint bureaux meeting in November 2014.

15. The presidents took note of the information provided, and agreed that a discussion on the topic during the joint bureaux meeting would offer a good opportunity to provide feedback to the Secretariat on the document it had prepared and share views on the matter in advance of the meetings of the conferences of the parties in order to avoid lengthy discussions at the meetings.

Overview of the budget preparations

16. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed the presidents that the Secretariat was currently finalizing the two scenarios for the programmes of work and budgets for the conventions. The format and presentation of the budgets would be similar to the ones adopted in 2013, including convention-specific and joint activities.

17. The presidents took note of the information provided.

Wider Cooperation

Outcomes of the first United Nations Environment Assembly of relevance to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

Other developments of relevance to the conventions, including with regards to the broader sustainable development agenda, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

18. On this agenda item, the Secretariat informed the presidents that it would report on this matter during the joint bureaux meeting and that Ms. Fatoumata Keita-Ouane, Head of the Chemicals Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), would be invited to provide an update on the special programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level, and that Mr. Jacob Duer, Team Coordinator of the interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and Coordinator of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management would be invited to brief the bureaux on the outcomes of the sixth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury, held in Bangkok, Thailand on 3-7 November 2014.

19. The presidents reflected on what guidance could be given by the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to the Minamata Convention, and signalled their hope that parties may use this opportunity to reflect on synergies among the Basel, Minamata, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

Regional meetings to assist preparatory processes for the 2015 back-to-back meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

20. The Executive Secretary highlighted that the joint bureaux meeting provided a good opportunity to collect the views of members on the arrangements being made for the regional preparatory meetings, noting that draft programmes had been sent to the bureaux members of each region for review and comments.

21. The presidents noted that each region should identify its priorities and that the agendas for those meetings would be tailored to each region.

Arrears in assessed contributions to the three conventions

22. The presidents reflected on the matter and agreed that a discussion on the topic during the joint bureaux meeting would provide a good opportunity to share information on the matter and highlight this issue.

Other matters

Memorandums of understanding

23. The Executive Secretary explained that all three memorandums would be bilateral, between each Conference of the Parties and the Executive Director of UNEP. In the case of the Rotterdam Convention, the legal department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had indicated that there was already a memorandum of understanding between the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of UNEP on the performance of secretariat functions and that there was thus no need to further clarify by means of another memorandum. The Executive Secretary added that the Secretariat was currently waiting for feedback on the draft memorandums from UNEP in order to present them as meeting documents to the meetings of the conferences of the parties in 2015 for adoption.

24. The presidents agreed to discuss with the bureaux the need to send a strong signal to the Executive Director of UNEP on the urgency of having a version of the memorandums incorporating UNEP's comments submitted to the Secretariat by 27 November 2014. This would allow the Secretariat to make the document available in all 6 official languages of the United Nations and to enable the conferences of the parties to adopt the memorandums at their meetings in 2015.

5. Other matters.

25. The presidents discussed possible dates for a joint presidents meeting ahead of the 2015 meetings of the conferences of the parties to finalize arrangements for chairing the meetings of the conferences of the parties and to discuss the presidents' notes. As per past practice, the Secretariat would prepare draft notes and send them to the presidents one month before the meetings for their review. The presidents would

consider whether they wanted to hold also separate meetings with the Secretariat to go through the president's notes of the separate sessions of the conferences of the parties.

26. The presidents agreed that these meeting should take place after the regional preparatory meeting held in the Latin America and the Caribbean region from 14 to17 April 2015, and that they would consult and get back to the Secretariat with proposed dates.

6. Closure of the meeting.

27. The meeting was declared closed at 6 p.m.

Annex

Meeting of the presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

**10 November 2014
Geneva, Switzerland
International Environment House I
Room: A-314
1:30-5:30 p.m.**

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
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 5. Other matters.
 6. Closure of the meeting.
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