

Contribution of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/144 of 12 December 2024

1. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants contribute to protect the marine environment against the adverse effects which may result from hazardous chemicals and wastes.
2. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions are part of the international action being taken to promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle in ways that lead to the prevention and minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, including oceans and marine biodiversity. The conventions contribute to making consumption and production patterns and waste management more sustainable and hence reduce direct discharge or land runoff of hazardous pollutants or wastes into the marine and coastal environments.
3. Below are the main developments which have occurred in the framework of the Conventions since the last submission of the Secretariat in June 2024 in relation to relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 79/144.

Paragraph 35: Capacity-building for developing States to address the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea; Paragraph 143: Enhanced international cooperation to combat transnational organized criminal activities at sea

4. Parties to the Basel Convention are required to prevent and punish illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and other wastes. A manual for law enforcement entities on management of hazardous chemicals and wastes is being updated to reflect key milestones over the past decade. In addition, capacity building activities for developing States to address the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea included:
 - a) Organization of the regional workshop on enforcement of the Plastic Waste Amendments under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal in Dakar, Senegal, from 9 to 10 July 2024. The objective of the workshop was to support Parties in their efforts to strengthen their national legal frameworks for the enforcement of the Plastic Waste Amendments, promote the effective control of transboundary movement of plastic waste, and build capacity for enforcement operations, prevention, and combatting illegal traffic. The training targeted Basel Convention Focal Points and Competent Authorities, and Customs in the following French-speaking African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia.
 - b) Pre-operational workshop on Demeter X, in Dakar, Senegal, on 11 July 2024. The objective of the workshop was to promote effective control of transboundary movement of plastic waste, and build capacity for enforcement operations, prevention, and combatting illegal traffic. The training targeted Basel Convention Focal Points and Competent Authorities, and Customs in the following French-speaking African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia
 - c) Several projects that aim to strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders to prevent plastic waste pollution also had a capacity building component to strengthen countries' capacity to control the transboundary movement of plastic wastes. Customs and Basel Convention Focal Points in Armenia, Malawi, Cambodia and Sri Lanka have benefited from these trainings.

5. The Basel Convention continues to provide a framework for the development of guidance documents to assist Parties in preventing and combatting illegal traffic,¹ as well as for a network to promote compliance with the Convention's provisions on preventing and combating illegal traffic through a better implementation and enforcement of national law: the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE). ENFORCE brings together Parties to the Basel Convention, Basel Convention regional centres, and relevant entities with a mandate to assist Parties to prevent and combat illegal traffic and thereby contributes to a more efficient delivery of support to Parties. In November 2024 the Basel Convention Secretariat launched the publication "ENFORCEment: A Decade of Global Action Against Illegal Traffic of Waste" that raises awareness about ENFORCE and highlights case studies, good practices and success stories implemented in support of the ENFORCE's mission. In response to the decision BC-15/17 on the Committee Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance, the Secretariat created a network of expertise among the members of the ENFORCE on the enforcement of the Convention.² On 1 May 2025, during the seventeenth meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, ENFORCE and UNODC jointly organised a side-event named "Preventing and Punishing Illegal Traffic in Hazardous and Other Wastes: Global, Regional, and National Actions". In February 2025 the Secretariat of the Basel Convention organized a study tour on the prevention and combatting of illegal traffic of hazardous and other wastes under the Basel Convention in Dublin, Ireland and in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The objectives of the study tour were to enhance the knowledge and skills for the implementation of the Basel Convention through the exchange of experiences and expertise and sharing best practices among ENFORCE members and other stakeholders. The study tour targeted members of ENFORCE representing governments, Basel Convention Regional Centers, intergovernmental organizations, and representatives of relevant national authorities, such as Focal Points, Competent Authorities to the Basel Convention, customs, prosecutors, and police. The ninth meeting of ENFORCE took place on 17-18 February 2025 in the Hague, Netherlands (Kingdom of the).

Paragraph 12: Capacity-building to improve waste management practices

6. Actions taken under the Basel Convention to build capacities for improved waste management practices include the following:

(a) Environmentally sound management of waste

7. After the development of ESM guidance included in the ESM toolkit³, the Secretariat is providing technical assistance to Parties, upon request, on priority waste streams, such as e-waste, waste lead-acid batteries and other batteries (e.g. Lithium-ion batteries), on waste including or contaminated with PCBs and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs), on Mercury wastes, waste containing nanomaterials, plastic wastes, household waste, and other waste streams under the Convention.

(b) Plastic Waste Partnership

8. Established in 2019 by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, the Plastic Waste Partnership⁴ (PWP) aims to improve and promote the environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic waste and to prevent and minimize its generation. The Partnership delivers its activities through 4 project groups: plastic waste prevention and minimization; plastic waste collection, recycling and other recovery including financing and related markets; transboundary movements of plastic waste; outreach,

¹ See the Guide for the implementation of the Basel Convention provisions dealing with illegal traffic (paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Article 9), the Guidance Elements for Detection, Prevention and Control of Illegal Traffic in Hazardous Waste, the Instruction Manual on the Prosecution of Illegal Traffic of Hazardous Wastes or Other Wastes, and the Basel Convention Training Manual on Illegal Traffic for Customs and Enforcement Agencies, available at: <http://basel.int/Implementation/LegalMatters/IllegalTraffic/Guidance/tabid/3423/Default.aspx>.

² <https://www.basel.int/Implementation/TechnicalAssistance/Partnerships/ENFORCE/Rosterofexperts/tabid/10064/Default.aspx>

³ See the Environmental sound management (ESM) toolkit at <https://www.basel.int/Implementation/CountryLedInitiative/EnvironmentallySoundManagement/ESMToolkit/Overview/tabid/5839/Default.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.basel.int/tabid/8096>.

education and awareness-raising. Reports and factsheets developed by the project groups are available on the PWP publications page at:

<https://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/PlasticWastePartnership/PWPpublications/tabid/9909/Default.aspx>. In addition, 40 projects in over 20 countries are being implemented globally under the PWP pilot project programme, to promote practical, replicable and scalable approaches to environmentally sound plastic waste management.

(c) Household Waste Partnership

9. Established by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention in 2017, the Household Waste Partnership aims at promoting the ESM of household waste, including its prevention and minimization, through the development of guidance, tools and manuals for governments, regional and local authorities and other stakeholders on, among other things, best practices, business models, policies and innovative solutions for the ESM of household waste.

10. The Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting welcomed an overall guidance document on the environmentally sound management of household waste developed by the Partnership and requested the Partnership working group to continue to implement its workplan on awareness raising.

(d) Partnership for Action on Challenges relating to E-waste (PACEII)

11. PACEII is a public-private partnership established in 2019, as a follow-up partnership to the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment. The Partnership focuses on the ESM of mobile phones, computing equipment, TV screens, audio and video equipment, refrigerators, cooling and heating equipment as well as policies for the ESM of e-waste. The Partnership is currently developing guidance documents on ESM of used and waste TV screens, audio and video equipment and on ESM of used and wastes refrigerators, cooling and heating equipment. The partnership members implement a programme of activities aiming at raising awareness of the ESM of e-waste, at training governments and other stakeholders and at implementing pilot projects. The partnership supported seven pilot projects in all UN regions and organized several events and training activities in all UN regions.

(e) Regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

12. The Basel Convention benefits from a network of 14 regional and coordinating centres for capacity building and technology transfer. The centres' focus is on training and technology transfer regarding the management of hazardous and other wastes and the minimization of their generation.⁵

13. The Stockholm Convention has established a network of 17 regional and subregional centres to provide technical assistance and to promote the transfer of technology to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition regarding the implementation of their obligations under the Convention.⁶

14. Several regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions are actively working on addressing the issue of marine plastic litter and microplastics, through their technical assistance and information exchange activities. The Regional Centres have also been implementing a series of projects addressing plastic waste under the BRS conventions Small Grants Programme (SGP), funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Germany and Sweden.

Paragraphs 213 to 221: Actions to address marine pollution, including marine debris, especially plastics, microplastics, and persistent organic pollutants.

15. The Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions is involved in a broad range of international cooperation and technical assistance activities to address plastic waste, including marine plastic litter and microplastics.

⁵ <http://www.basel.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/Overview/tabid/2334/Default.aspx>

⁶ <http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/Overview/tabid/425/Default.aspx>

16. The European Union, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Norwegian Retailers' Environment Fund and the United States are providing financial support to the activities related to plastic waste. The project in Ghana and Sri Lanka funded by Norad⁷ has been successfully completed in December 2023, and follow-up projects are taking place to build on its outcomes and expand implementation in other countries.

17. The following technical assistance projects are currently being implemented:

- (a) The project '*Further actions to address plastic waste under the Basel Convention*' aims to assist partner countries to improve their management of plastic waste and ultimately contribute to Sustainable Development Goal target 14.1.⁸ Under this project, 23 project proposals by regional centres have been implemented during the three rounds of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) on Plastic Waste (2021-2025). The project is funded by the Norad, with additional funding from the governments of Germany and Sweden and is benefiting 41 countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Central and Eastern Europe;
- (b) The project '*Plastic Waste in Remote and Mountainous Areas*' aims to strengthen capacity and awareness in remote and mountainous areas to reduce the amounts of plastic waste and to ensure its environmentally sound management. In the first state of this project, a report on plastic waste in remote and mountainous areas, covering sources, hotspots, waste management, and success stories, has guided the subsequent stages including the selection of pilot countries and the development of outreach materials like posters, fact sheets, videos, and briefs. Furthermore, small-scale funding agreements (SSFAs) have so far been established in 11 countries to collaborate with diverse stakeholders and governments in addressing plastic waste in mountainous and remote areas. Project implementation has completed in Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Peru, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. New pilot activities have commenced in Argentina, Chile, Eswatini, Lesotho, Rwanda and Seychelles. The pilot initiatives in these countries encompass an assessment of national legal, policy, and institutional frameworks for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic waste, pilot projects in mountainous or remote areas, and the creation of educational and awareness-raising materials in local languages. These funded projects are enabled through generous contributions made by the governments of Germany, France, Netherlands and Norway, as well as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Norwegian Retailer's Environment Fund;
- (c) The project '*Strengthening knowledge and capacity to prevent and reduce releases of plastic waste in Malawi and Zimbabwe*' financed by the Norwegian Retailers' Environment Fund, with additional funding from the Governments of Norway and Sweden, aims to protect human health and the environment from plastic waste by strengthening knowledge and capacity among decision makers in these two countries. The project is scheduled to be completed in December 2025, focusing on strengthening the pilot projects in the fishery sector with the collection and recycling of plastic fishing nets, as well as setting up collection and recycling schemes to boost environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic waste in both countries;
- (d) The project '*Environmentally sound plastic management*', financed by the Norwegian Retailers Environment Fund, commenced in April 2022 and is scheduled for completion in December 2025. It targets up to 10 countries and it is structured in three main components: (i) Capacity building to support the implementation of the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments, including national plastic waste inventories, (ii) Pilot projects to test and replicate solutions on ESM of plastic waste, and (iii) Outreach and awareness raising on the issue of plastic pollution. Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) have been signed between the Secretariat and the government of Cambodia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Zambia. In addition, within this project, dedicated pilot projects on *Plastic*

⁷ <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/Technicalassistance/Projects/BRSNorad1/tabid/8343/Default.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/Technicalassistance/Projects/BRSNorad2/tabid/8344/Default.aspx>

Waste in Remote and Mountainous Areas (see point b above) are being implemented in Argentina, Chile, Eswatini, Lesotho, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

18. The amendments to Annex A to the Stockholm Convention adopted at the Stockholm Convention's Conference of the Parties in 2023, listing three persistent organic pollutants (POPs), methoxychlor, Dechlorane Plus and UV-328, entered into force for most Parties on 26 February 2025. Methoxychlor (SC-11/9) is a pesticide used against a variety of pests. It is highly toxic to invertebrates and fish, has endocrine-disrupting properties, and has been detected in the environment and biota in remote regions such as the Arctic and in Antarctica. It has also been found in human serum, adipose tissues, umbilical cord blood and breast milk. Dechlorane plus (SC-11/10) is a flame retardant, and UV-328 (SC-11/11) is a UV absorbent. Both have been extensively used as plastic additives in products such as motor vehicles, industrial machinery, and medical devices.

19. At its twelfth meeting in 2025, the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention agreed to list three additional POPs in its Annex A for elimination: chlorpyrifos (pesticide), medium-chain chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs); and long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs), their salts and related compounds (industrial chemicals).

20. The Conference of the Parties also agreed to amend the listing of UV-328 to include additional specific exemptions for its use in water sealant tape, adhesives, and coatings on aircraft.

21. The POPs Review Committee has developed a paper exploring options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products and articles in use, and in wastes, as well as issues related to the production, import and export of products and articles containing POPs. These efforts are critical to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention and the protection of human health and the environment from the harmful effects of POPs.

Paragraph 237: Continued cooperation between the Parties to the Basel Convention and the International Maritime Organization on regulations on the prevention of pollution from ships

22. The Secretariat continued its cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on matters relating to ship recycling. The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (Hong Kong Convention) entered into force on 26 June 2025.

23. At the eighty-second session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 82) in October 2024, the Committee approved provisional guidance on the implementation of the Hong Kong and Basel conventions with respect to the transboundary movement of ships intended for recycling, drafted by the IMO secretariat, and noted that additional work would be required to improve the guidance in order to provide further legal clarity and certainty, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention. At its seventeenth meeting in 2025, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, through its decision BC-17/23, took note of the provisional guidance and invited Parties and observers to submit comments thereon by 15 November 2025 and requested the Secretariat, resources permitting, to compile these inputs for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group at its fifteenth meeting (OEWG-15) in 2026. OEWG-15 is expected to consider the provisional guidance on the implementation of the Hong Kong and Basel conventions reflecting the comments received from Parties and observers thereon and to prepare a draft decision with recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth meeting.

24. The Secretariat of the Basel Convention remained committed to strengthening the cooperation with the IMO Secretariat and to continued engagement on this issue, including through participation in the relevant sessions of MEPC.

Paragraph 238: The role of the Basel Convention in ensuring that the management of hazardous wastes and other wastes, under the scope of that Convention, including their transboundary movement and disposal, is consistent with the protection of the marine environment

(a) Further actions to address plastic waste

25. The Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its seventeenth meeting in May 2025, adopted a decision on further consideration of plastic waste. The decision acknowledged ongoing scientific and policy developments and invited Parties and stakeholders to provide input on the implementation and impacts of the plastic waste amendments adopted in 2019 (decision BC-14/12). It requested the Secretariat to compile this input and prepare a draft report for consideration at the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The decision also called for enhanced capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly for developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and small island developing

(b) Cooperation with the World Customs Organization on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System

26. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision BC-14/9, the Secretariat submitted to the World Customs Organization proposals for amending the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System to allow for the identification of waste mineral oils unfit for their originally intended use (A3020), at a concentration level of 50mg/kg or more, plastic waste and waste pneumatic tyres. The Harmonized System Committee has provisionally adopted amendments to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System with respect to these three types of wastes.

27. In its final decision (UNEP/CHW.17/6), the BC COP requested the Secretariat to submit to the WCO a proposal for amending the HS with respect to slag, ash and residues containing selenium and tellurium for consideration by the World Customs Organization during the eighth review cycle of the HS which starts in the second half of 2025.

(c) E-waste amendments

28. The Parties to the Basel Convention, taking into consideration the growing concern regarding the challenges in the environmentally sound management of e-waste, at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in 2022, adopted a decision to amend annexes II, VIII and IX of the Convention, listing both hazardous and non-hazardous e-wastes in the Annexes of the Convention (BC-15/18). The amendments require that all e-wastes, hazardous and non-hazardous are subject to transboundary movement, and follow the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) of the Basel Convention. The decision intends to enhance the environmentally sound management of e-waste and to prevent their illegal traffic. These amendments entered into force for most Parties on 1 January 2025.

29. At its seventeenth meeting the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare reflect adjustments consequential to the adoption of the e-waste amendments in the technical guidelines on: the ESM of wastes containing or contaminated with unintentionally produced POPs; the full and partial dismantling of ships; and mercury or mercury compounds (UNEP/CHW.17/CRP.18); and decided to expand the mandate of the expert working group on the development of technical guidelines on e-waste to also include the development of a guidance document. The secretariat has organized workshops in all UN regions to inform and discuss with the Parties the implementation of the e-waste amendments during the biennium 2024 - 2025.

Paragraph 242: Cooperation in the fields of protection of the marine environment, human health and safety, prevention, emergency response and mitigation to better understand the consequences of marine oil spills or marine spills involving hazardous or noxious substances

30. The Secretariat continues to cooperate with the Joint Environment Unit (JEU) of UNEP/OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and with the International Maritime Organization to provide technical assistance to emergency prevention and response civil protection officers, port authorities and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions focal points to prevent and respond to environmental emergencies caused by hazardous chemicals and wastes in the scope of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions. The BRS Secretariat renewed its cooperation with the JEU of UNEP and OCHA with the signature of a Letter of Agreement in March 2024. The BRS Secretariat,

the JEU of UNEP and OCHA organized a training for South-East Asian countries, in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 14 to 17 October 2024. More than 120 persons were trained including national BRS focal points from the region and public private stakeholders working in the East Jakarta Industrial Park.

Paragraph 287: Cooperation and coordination in research efforts to reduce harmful impacts on marine life; Paragraph 314: Regular scientific assessments of the state of the marine environment to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking

31. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, in coordination with their scientific subsidiary bodies, the prior informed consent procedure, and national reporting obligations, continued to play a crucial role in compiling comprehensive global data on chemicals and waste management. This collective effort has ensured that relevant data remains accessible and useful to Parties and stakeholders, supporting informed decision-making and policy development.

32. The fourth phase of the global monitoring plan for POPs (GMP-4) is now well underway, making a significant milestone in the long-term global effort to monitor and assess trends in chemical pollutants. This progress has been made possible through generous contributions from donors, including the European Union, Germany, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as support from regional monitoring programmes such as the Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling (GAPS) Network, the MONET network, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), and the Antarctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AnMAP).

33. Under the Stockholm Convention's Global Monitoring Plan, a wide range of activities has been implemented to generate long-term, comparable data on POPs levels in various environmental matrices, including ambient air, surface water, and human blood. Recent data collection campaigns and capacity-building activities in all five United Nations regional have contributed to the production of the next round of regional and global monitoring reports.⁹ Additionally, the POPs data warehouse¹⁰ continues to serve as a central platform for assessing monitoring results.

34. The Secretariat has also strengthened its engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to advance international research on the sources, fate, and impacts of marine plastics and microplastics. This includes active participation in the work of the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), particularly through Working Groups 40, 43, and 45, which address plastic pollution, chemical contaminants, and related emerging issues in the marine environment.

⁹ <http://chm.pops.int/Implementation/GlobalMonitoringPlan/MonitoringReports/tabid/525/Default.aspx>.

¹⁰ <https://www.pops-gmp.org>.