

**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 78/69 of 5 December 2023**

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 protecting 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 actions 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 2023 in relation to relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 78/69.

**Paragraph 34: Capacity-building for developing States to address the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea; Paragraph 151: Enhanced international cooperation to combat transnational organized criminal activities at sea**

4. Parties to the Basel Convention are required to prevent and combat illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and other wastes. Capacity building activities for developing States to address the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea included:
  - (a) Support to the Regional Training for the prevention and prosecution of illicit trafficking in chemicals and hazardous waste in the Latin America and the Caribbean region jointly organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the South American Region in Argentina (BCRC-Argentina) and Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Central America Sub-region including Mexico in Panama (BCRC Panama) in March 2023;
  - (b) Contribution to the project Unwaste on tackling waste trafficking to support a circular economy, implemented by United Nations Organization Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
  - (c) Support provided to the World Customs Organization led Operation Demeter IX, in October 2023;
  - (d) Contribution to the Training of Trainers on Strengthening the Capacity of National Authorities in Addressing the Challenges of trafficking in hazardous waste in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The training was organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, from 24 to 25 October 2023;
  - (e) Contribution to Regional hazardous waste training for Customs, Police and Environmental officers from countries in the Balkan region organized by the WCO-UNODC Container Control Programme, on 23 November 2023;
  - (f) Contribution to the Training on Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization Programme for Sub-Sahara Africa 2020–2024 held under the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the WCO Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernisation Programme (SIDA-WCO TFCM), from 20 to 23 November 2023;
  - (g) Participation in the 2023 Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards led by UNEP in November 2023 in partnership with UNODC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the

Secretariat of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) and the WCO;

- (h) Co-organization of the side-event on International regulations and national policies driving waste management and circularity. The event was co-organized with UNODC, in cooperation with Finland, the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) and the French Solid Waste Partnership, at the twenty-eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on 3 December 2023;
  - (i) Co-organization of the side-event Unmanaged waste: the hidden cause of climate change. The side event was jointly organized by the BRS Secretariat, UNODC and UNEP, at the twenty-eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on 3 December 2023;
  - (j) Training on controlling transboundary movements of plastic waste and preventing and combatting illegal traffic in Accra, Ghana, on 23 June 2023.
5. The Basel Convention continues to provide a framework for the development of guidance documents to assist Parties in preventing and combatting illegal traffic,<sup>1</sup> 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. On 8 May 2023, during the sixteenth meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, ENFORCE and UNODC jointly organised a side-event on Joining forces to stop illegal traffic in hazardous and other wastes. The eighth meeting of ENFORCE took place on 5-6 February 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. The ongoing activities under ENFORCE include the preparation of a publication on ENFORCE, the development of a roster of experts to support capacity building activities on prevention and combatting illegal traffic for ENFORCE members.

### **Paragraph 35: 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 toolkit<sup>2</sup>, 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 Partnership<sup>3</sup> (PWP) is delivering its activities through 4 project groups: plastic waste prevention and minimization; plastic waste collection, recycling and other recovery including financing and related

<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> See the Environmental sound management (ESM) toolkit at <https://www.basel.int/Implementation/CountryLedInitiative/EnvironmentallySoundManagement/ESMToolkit/Overview/tabid/5839/Default.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.basel.int/tabid/8096>.

markets; transboundary movements of plastic waste; outreach, education and awareness-raising. 40 pilot projects are being implemented. Recent progress includes the approval of reports on best practices and lessons learned on measures taken by key stakeholders to prevent and reduce single use plastic waste and packaging waste, and approval of a compilation of national and international specifications related to the Basel Convention plastic waste amendments aimed at assisting Parties in their implementation. Further information is available on the PWP webpages.<sup>4</sup>

### **(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 to the Basel Convention, by decision BC-13/14, requested the working group of the Partnership to develop an overall guidance document on the environmentally sound management of household waste. The sixteenth meeting of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel Convention invited Parties and others to provide comments on the revised draft overall guidance document to the Secretariat by 30 September 2023; and for the working group to prepare a further draft for possible adoption by the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In addition, the working group was requested to continue to implement its workplan including activities on awareness raising and cooperation with other entities.

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

11. PACE II 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 and 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 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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 Small Grants Programme (SGP), funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Germany and Sweden.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.basel.int/tabid/8096>.

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

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

**Paragraphs 216 to 223: 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.
16. The European Union, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Norwegian Retailers' Environment Fund are providing financial support to the activities related to plastic waste. The project in Ghana and Sri Lanka funded by Norad<sup>7</sup> has been successfully completed in December 2023.
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.<sup>8</sup> 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 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. A report addressing plastic waste in remote and mountainous regions, which consolidates data on the sources and pathways of plastic waste, identifies hotspots, assesses waste management capabilities (Part I), and highlights success stories (Part II), has been produced. This report has served as a foundation for identification of pilot countries as well as informational, outreach, and awareness materials, including posters, fact sheets, educational videos, and briefs. Furthermore, small-scale funding agreements (SSFAs) are established in nine countries to collaborate with diverse stakeholders and governments in addressing plastic waste in mountainous and remote areas. Project implementation has commenced in Kazakhstan, Peru, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Simultaneously, the Secretariat is finalizing agreements with the governments of Lesotho, Nepal, Rwanda and Seychelles. The initiatives outlined under these SSFAs in nine countries encompass the development of national inventories of plastic waste, 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. A successful pilot project in North Macedonia, concluded in December 2023, demonstrated the project's efficacy, with a focus on education, stakeholder engagement, and extensive cleanup operations. The project is funded by the governments of France and Norway, and Norad and scheduled to be completed in December 2024;
  - (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 2024;

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

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

(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 12 countries.

18. The amendments to Annex A to the Stockholm Convention, listing three new persistent organic pollutants (POPs), methoxychlor, Dechlorane Plus and UV-328, will enter into force for most Parties to the Stockholm Convention on 26 February 2025. Methoxychlor (SC-11/9) is a pesticide used as a substitute for DDT against various pests. It is highly toxic to invertebrates and fish, known for its endocrine-disrupting effects, and has been found in the environment and biota in distant regions like the Arctic and in Antarctica. Methoxychlor has also been detected in human serum, adipose tissues, umbilical cord blood and breast milk.

19. 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 machines and medical devices.

20. Regarding the chemicals under review, at its twentieth meeting from 23 to 27 September 2024, the POPs Review Committee will consider the draft risk management evaluation for chlorpyrifos, and the draft addendums to the risk management evaluations for chlorinated paraffins with carbon chain lengths in the range C14-17 and chlorination levels at or exceeding 45 per cent chlorine by weight, as well as long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (PFCAs), their salts and related compounds.

21. The Committee is also working on a paper to explore options for identifying POPs in stockpiles, products and articles in use and in wastes and issues related to the production, import and export of products and articles containing POPs. The Committee's recommendations for listing chlorpyrifos, chlorinated paraffins and long-chain PFCAs in Annex A to the Convention will be considered by the Conference of the Parties in May 2025.

**Paragraph 240: 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 continues to cooperate with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to implement decisions BC-12/15 on ship dismantling and BC-13/15 related to wastes generated on board ships and works with organizations such as the International Labour Organization and International Maritime Organization, as appropriate, on policy and capacity-building issues related to sustainable ship recycling.

**Paragraph 241: 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**

23. Building on the decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its sixteenth meeting in May 2023, the Basel Convention Open-ended Working Group, set to convene its fourteenth meeting from 25 to 28 June 2024, will consider further activities that could be conducted under the Basel Convention. These activities aim to address advancements in scientific understanding and environmental insights concerning plastic waste. The Working Group will consider the consideration by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, referred to in paragraph 1 of resolution 5/14 of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

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

24. 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.

### **(c) E-waste amendments**

25. 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 the Convention's provisions on the control of transboundary movements through its Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC). The decision intends to enhance the environmentally sound management of e-waste and to prevent their illegal traffic.

26. At its sixteenth meeting the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare draft updates of a list of documents to reflect adjustments consequential to the adoption of the amendments to Annexes II, VIII and IX to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, set out in decision BC-15/18 and known as the "e-waste amendments". The mentioned amendments were submitted for consideration of the fourteenth meeting of the Open-ended working group of the Basel Convention in document UNEP/CHW/OEWG.14/9. The secretariat will organize 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**

27. 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 Convention focal points to prevent and respond to environmental emergencies caused by hazardous chemicals and wastes in the scope of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The Secretariat renewed its cooperation with the JEU of UNEP and OCHA with the signature of a Letter of Agreement in March 2024. The Secretariat, the JEU of UNEP and OCHA are planning a joint training in Asia in the second semester of 2024.

### **Paragraph 290: 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**

28. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, in coordination with their scientific subsidiary bodies, the prior informed consent procedure, and national reporting obligations, play a crucial role in compiling comprehensive global data on chemicals and waste management. This collective effort ensures that such data remains accessible to Parties and stakeholders.

29. Notably, the fourth phase of the global monitoring plan for POPs has commenced, marking a significant milestone in monitoring and analyzing chemical pollutants. This initiative has been made possible through generous donor contributions including the EU and the preparatory efforts of UNEP/GEF projects.

30. Under the Stockholm Convention's Global Monitoring Plan, diverse activities are undertaken to generate long-term and comparable data on the POPs levels in various environmental matrices such as ambient air, surface water and human blood. This data is subsequently synthesized and disseminated through regional and global monitoring reports within the framework of the global monitoring plan.<sup>9</sup>

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

Moreover, the global monitoring plan data warehouse<sup>10</sup> serves as a valuable resource, facilitating widespread access to information on POPs monitoring.

31. Furthermore, the Secretariat actively engages with the broad spectrum of stakeholders to advance international research efforts concerning the fate and impacts of marine plastics and microplastics. This collaboration includes participation in Working Groups 40, 43, and 45 of the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.pops-gmp.org>