

**Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under
International Agreements addressing Chemicals and Wastes
Management
30 March-2 April 2004**

**Welcome remarks by Mr. Nelson Sabogal, Senior Programme Officer, Capacity
Building and Training, Secretariat of the Basel Convention**

Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished participants,

The Basel Convention has been working for more than 10 years since it entered into force on 5 May 1992. The main objectives of the Convention are to treat and dispose of hazardous wastes as close as possible to their source of generation, to reduce transboundary movements of hazardous and other wastes to a minimum consistent with their environmentally sound management (ESM) and to minimize their generation at its source and the hazardousness of wastes.

One of the main pillars in the implementation of the Basel Convention is capacity building and training. The Basel Convention according to Article 14 established the Regional Centres for Capacity Building and Training. At present there are 13 Centres in operation in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and Caribbean regions.

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in Geneva in December 2002 adopted the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Basel Convention and within this plan the Regional Centres will be the key delivery mechanism for promoting the implementation of the Strategic Plan at the regional level.

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention has been working together with UNEP and the Interim Secretariats of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as well as with the Secretariat of the Montreal Protocol in the following workshops:

- Pacific Regional Workshop on the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plan in parallel with Basel and Waigani Conventions Workshop for competent Authorities on the Use of the Control System and NGO POPs Awareness – Raising Workshop held in Nadi, Fiji in May 2003;
- Third Joint Meeting of Senior Officials and MEA Legal Experts, Tulcea, Romania in the Danube Delta in June 2003;
- Sub-regional Workshop on the coordinated implementation of MEAs (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions) on Chemicals and Wastes in English –speaking African countries, Pretoria. The Workshop was organized by the BCRC – South Africa and the UNEP/Geneva Environmental Network (GEN) in September 2003;

- Regional Workshop on the coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Montevideo. This workshop was organized by the BCRC in Uruguay and UNEP/GEN in January 2004;
- Workshop on Strengthening the Co-operation among the Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes Conventions, organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Slovakia and the Czech Republic in Prague in March 2004.
- Regional Workshop on the coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in Central and Eastern Europe, Riga, Latvia, 6-8 April 2004. The workshop is being organized by UNEP/GEN and the Swiss mission in Latvia.
- Regional training Seminars for Customs, Port and Law Enforcement Officers, Dar-Es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, September 2002 and Port Said, Egypt, 15-19 September 2003.

The Basel Convention Regional Centres are playing an important role in the implementation of the Basel Convention. They elaborated the Business Plans which contain the main activities to be carried out by the Regional Centres for 2003-2004. Presently they are carrying out more than 20 projects for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Some of them show the coordination among the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

- Preparation of national inventories, and national plans for the environmentally sound management of PCB and PCB containing equipments in Central America and Panama (coordinated by BCRC-El Salvador).
- Preparation of a regional approach for the environmentally sound management of POPs as wastes in selected Central and Eastern European countries (coordinated by BCRC-Slovak Republic).

The Basel Convention has several linkages to other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. For example, in the Montreal Protocol it is mentioned in the following decisions:

- Recovery, recycling and reclamation (Decision IV/24)
- Trade in controlled substances and the Basel Convention (Decision V/24)
- Status of recycled CFCs and halons under the Basel Convention (Decision VII/31)
- Destruction technologies and procedures (Decisions I/12F, II/11, III/10, IV/11, V/26, VII/35, XIV/6)
- Disposal of controlled substances (Decision XII/8).

There are some similarities between the Non-Compliance Procedures of the Montreal Protocol and the mechanism for promoting implementation and compliance of the

Basel Convention, in the work to prevent illegal trade and in the relationship with WTO.

With the Rotterdam Convention, the obligations in relation to imports and exports of chemicals listed in Annex III are very close to Basel Convention obligations.

Similarly, Article 6 of the Stockholm Convention on measures to reduce or eliminate releases from stockpiles and wastes, in the identification of stockpiles, management of stockpiles and wastes in an environmentally sound manner and the disposal of in such a way that the POP content is destroyed or irreversibly transformed. No transport of POPs waste across international boundaries shall take place without taking into account the Basel Convention. The Stockholm Convention requested the Conference of the Parties to cooperate closely with the appropriate bodies of the Basel Convention on the level of destruction and irreversible transformation, on methods that constitute environmentally sound management (ESM) and on the levels of POPs that are considered low.

We are very pleased to work together with UNITAR and other stakeholders in this important workshop, and I hope that we can come to conclusions and recommendations in order to carry out our work better, for a better planet.

Thank you.