

BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS

4 September 2019

Subject: Draft Outline for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the next Environment Assembly

Excellency,

I am writing with reference to your letter dated 8 August 2018, inviting inputs in writing from member States and stakeholders on the Draft Outline for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the fourth Environment Assembly, by 4 September 2018.

Please find attached the contribution of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

We understand the inputs received on the draft outline will be discussed at the 2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of UNEA and of CPR on 6 to 7 September 2018.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for involving our organization in this important process.

Yours sincerely,



Rolph Payet
Executive Secretary

Siim Kiisler
Minister of Environment of Estonia
President of the UN Environment Assembly
Ministers responsible for the Environment
Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Major Groups and Stakeholders

Contribution of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to the draft Outline for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the next Environment Assembly

Main priority 1: Ensure the transparency, accountability and comparability of global environmental data and develop science-policy-business partnerships on innovative data technologies and digital solutions

Further considerations could be given under this priority to the aspects related to the assessment of the data and the formulations of policy solutions so as to stimulate the uptake of solutions. It seems that practices of science-policy interfaces have evolved and moved away from highlighting the nature of problems towards providing solutions and assessing their implications. A stronger emphasis on the policy dimension could thus be taken into account into a redefined priority 1. The need to promote and engage in science-policy interfaces promoting sustainable consumption and production, such as scientific bodies under chemicals and wastes multilateral environmental agreements, could be recognized so as to support policy solutions and accelerate the uptake of solutions at all levels.

Main priority 2: Foster sustainable and efficient resource management by promoting decarbonization, detoxification and decoupling of resource use, to enhance ecosystem resilience and protection of the planet's natural systems

Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) addressing chemicals and wastes, in particular the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, are relevant global instruments to achieve priority 2. While those conventions entered into force around 20 years ago, their provisions, technical/legal work and priorities evolve over time according to emerging issues. For instance, the eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (3-6 September 2018, Geneva) will consider relevant options available under the Convention to further address marine plastic litter and microplastics. In addition to the more regulatory work carried out under the conventions, multi-stakeholder partnerships are established as innovative solutions to advance concrete policy or technical outcomes, through global information exchange, sharing of best practices, development and provision of technical guidance, and the active engagement of the private sector, the civil society and citizens for impactful actions at all levels.

We think that it would be beneficial to refer to the need to accelerate the implementation of chemicals and wastes MEAs and the innovative solutions established under their frameworks, such as the Basel Convention's household wastes partnership. A note on this partnership is enclosed herewith. Please note that the Basel Convention's Open-ended Working Group, at its eleventh meeting, will be discussing a proposal to establish a new multi-stakeholder partnership on plastic wastes to support action aiming primarily at improving plastic waste management as a means to prevent its release into the environment and contribute in the global combat against marine litter and microplastics.

Main priority 3: Support robust engagement of civil society, citizens and academia in promoting innovative approaches for meeting global environmental challenges and SCP

It would also be beneficial to consider further highlighting the benefit of promoting tools and technologies that inform civil society and citizens of their environmental footprints and the impacts of their consumption choices.



Household Waste Partnership

Basel Convention

on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal

Key challenges faced by municipalities in developing/transition countries:

Escalating challenges in household waste management across the globe are widely acknowledged and draw attention to the importance of its environmentally sound management. While most developed countries already introduced complex household waste management practices, many developing and transition countries are still struggling with sound management of the ever-increasing volume of household waste.

The problems related to household waste may be attributed to many causes such as:

- Poverty and high rate of population growth;
- Unplanned urbanization;
- Increase in quantities and volumes of household waste;
- Increase in waste management costs/lack of financial resources;
- Inefficient institutional arrangements;
- Inappropriate technology and equipment;
- Inadequate legislation;
- Low awareness of the public and informal sector;
- Enforcement.

Environmental impacts of household waste:

A significant part of household waste in developing and transition countries is burnt in open air in the back yards or at uncontrolled dumping sites and poorly managed landfills. Overflowing landfills are often intentionally set on fire to reduce the total volume of deposited waste. Open burning releases POPs and other hazardous chemicals into air. Leachate from landfills and dumpsites contaminates surrounding soil and water. Plastic waste comprises a large portion of household waste and plastic pollution in oceans, rivers and lakes is a great concern globally.

Household Waste and the Basel Convention:

The environmentally sound management of household wastes includes source separation, collection, transportation, storage, recycling, energy recovery and final disposal. Based on their origin, composition and characteristics, household waste may contain hazardous materials co-mingled with non-hazardous materials. Because of the potential for contamination with hazardous substances, the Basel Convention classifies waste collected from households as requiring special consideration (Basel Convention, Annex II, Y46).



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What is the Household Waste Partnership?

The Household Waste Partnership was established by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention in 2017 to address this important issue and to provide technical assistance worldwide, supporting all countries to benefit from already available solutions for environmentally sound management, including issues such as separation at source, collection, transport, storage, recycling, energy recovery and final disposal.

Objectives of the Partnership:

- To promote the environmentally sound management of household waste including its prevention and minimization
- To enable the decoupling of economic growth and environmental impacts associated with the generation of household waste and its initial handling by the public in their households

Benefits of the Partnership:

Through global information exchange, sharing of best practices by key stakeholders in the field, development and provision of technical guidance based on the latest science available, active engagement of the private sector for enhanced action to promote environmental sound management of wastes, including issues such as extended producer responsibility, active engagement of the civil society and the general public through targeted awareness raising, the Partnership provides the necessary infrastructure to address this global challenge in an efficient and innovative way.

Technical assistance through the Partnership:

These technical assistance activities will be based on scientific assessments undertaken through rigorous review of scientific data in the frame of the Partnership involving a wide variety of stakeholders, including namely academia, industry and civil society. The Partnership provides an efficient platform for information exchange linking scientific findings, technical solutions, and concrete on-ground actions.

Strengthen policy, legal and institutional framework:

To ensure the progress in environmentally sound management of household waste and the improvement of social conditions in communities that are dependent on waste as a source of revenue (i.e. informal sector), it is crucial to strengthen policy, legal and institutional framework at both national and local levels.

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Guidance to be developed:

The guidance to be developed by the Partnership will address the prevention and minimization of household waste, waste characterization and data collection for the traceability of waste throughout its life-cycle, separation at source, recycling, use of waste for energy recovery as well as final disposal, including the sound handling of hazardous substances and objects contained in household wastes.

These are key aspects of environmentally sound management that will assist countries to work towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

Enhance public awareness and participation:

The Partnership also aims to enhance awareness-raising through education and training on the environmentally sound management of household waste, and enhance participation by the public in household waste management activities and decision-making at the national level.

Membership:

The membership of the Partnership is open to all Parties and observers of the Basel Convention. Governments, regional and local authorities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations including private sector, academia, civil society and regional/ coordinating centers of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions are all welcome to join the Partnership.



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