

Illegal Trade and International Chemicals Management

The Way Forward by Building Bridges

International Chemical Management through the effective cooperation under the four chemical agreements (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions and the Montreal Protocol) was the main focus of the discussion in the workshop convened by the Czech Republic and the Basel Convention Bratislava Regional Centre in March 2004 in Prague. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen co-operation among the National Focal Points and other stakeholders (environmental inspectors and customs officers) involved in the process of implementation and enforcement of these instruments. Illegal trade in chemicals was identified as common area for such cooperation.

Illegal trade in chemicals severely undermines the protection of human health and the environment and it is considered as an environmental crime. Like other international crimes this subject is extremely complex to address as it is closely related to development and enforcement of national laws including quota and licensing systems. International cooperation and capacity building of the border police and the judiciary system are also required.

The Government of the Czech Republic supported by the United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (UNEP DTIE) organized a Ministerial roundtable to discuss illegal chemical trade in the context of international chemical management which was held in the margins of the 16th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in Prague on 26 November 2004. Executive Director of UNEP



Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Director of UNEP DTIE Mrs. Monique Barbut, representatives of the above named Conventions Secretariats, Ministers and Deputy Ministers representing countries from all UN regions, the business sector, non-governmental organizations and international agencies participated actively in roundtable discussions.

The discussions highlighted the need for coordinated capacity building to prevent the illegal trade. The participants also drew linkages between the corruption and poverty on the one hand, and the illegal trade on the other.

The database on Trade Names of chemicals containing ozone depleting substances and their alternatives developed by UNEP DTIE was launched on this occasion.

The conclusions can be summarized as follows:

There is a need to:

- cooperate between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) dealing with chemicals to create a strategic approach to international chemicals management, specifically integrated licensing, tracking system and training (such as the Green Customs Initiative);
- provide assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in order to promote the implementation of the sound chemicals management related MEAs in these countries;
- re-emphasize that countries should introduce and enforce appropriate legal framework to control traffic and trade in environmentally harmful commodities, and help ensure global environmental security;
- exchange information and strengthen transboundary cooperation. This is the key for successful prevention of illegal trade i.e. the establishment of the Central Enforcement Network;
- introduce regional mechanisms for tracking of movements of goods and commodities. Regional Networks of MEAs focal points can be an effective tool to set up preventive policies against the illegal trade;
- involve all key stakeholders including the industry sector in the process of control of transboundary movements of chemical substances;
- provide adequate deterrents. This is vital to curb illegal trade in chemicals.

Based on the outcomes of the roundtable discussions the delegation of the Czech Republic presented to the 16th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol the Prague Declaration. The Declaration was supported by more than 60 countries:



Prague Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation among Chemical Related Multilateral Environmental Agreements

We, the ministers of the environment and heads of delegation of the following Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer attending the Sixteenth Meeting of the Parties of the Montreal Protocol in the city of Prague:

Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, European Community, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam, Zambia

Recognising the need to continue the momentum of unique and successful cooperation among the world communities in negotiating and implementing the Montreal Protocol,

Aware of the need to maintain the integrity of the Montreal Protocol to continue on the road to the recovery of the ozone layer and to its subsequent sustainable preservation,

Conscious of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the need to successfully implement the Montreal Protocol in order to attain sustainable development objective,

Cognisant of the findings of the Scientific Assessment Panel of the Montreal Protocol and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on interlinkages between ozone layer depletion and climate change,

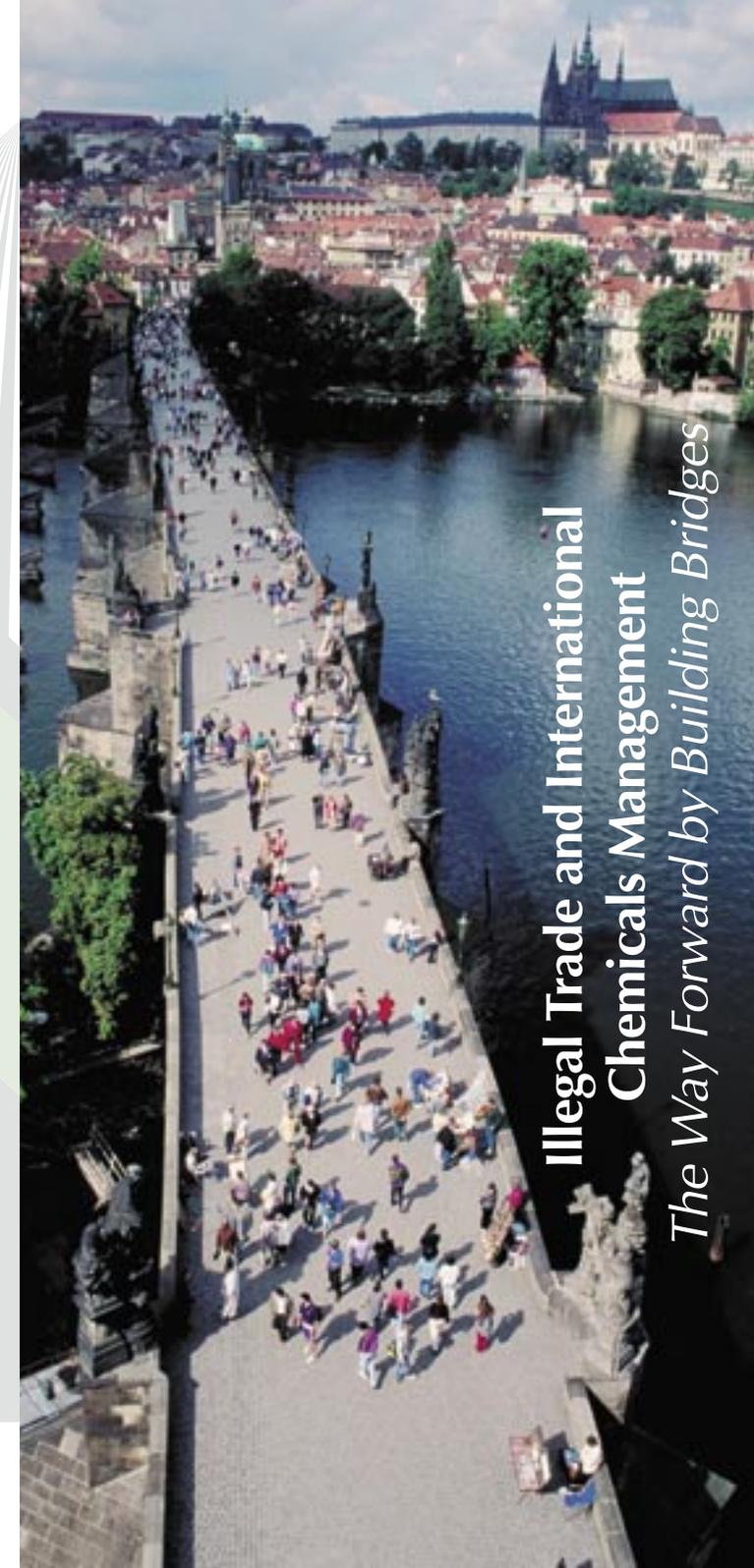
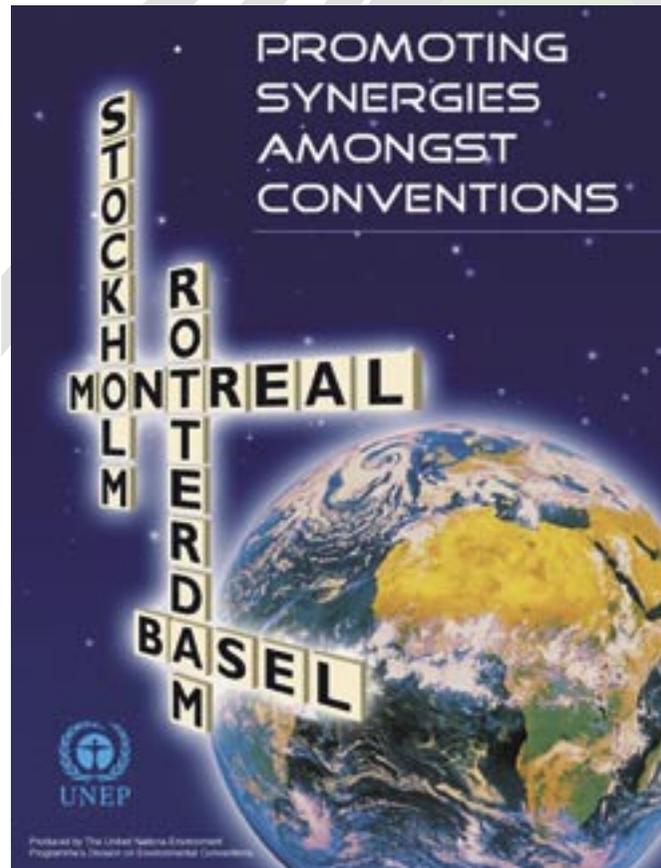
Recognising also that the mainstreaming of the environmental dimension into national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction remains an important challenge to all countries,

Aware of the efforts of the world community to develop a strategic approach to international chemicals management,

1. *Reaffirm* their commitment to continue their efforts to protect the global environment and the ozone layer, bearing in mind in particular the Rio Principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
2. *Stress* the need in particular, to implement the relevant elements of the WSSD Plan of Implementation concerning the sound management of chemicals, including the prevention of international illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances, hazardous chemicals and hazardous wastes;
3. *Emphasise* the need for developing countries to implement multilateral environmental agreements and mainstream environmental considerations in their sustainable development and poverty reductions strategies to maximise the efficiency of the technical and financial support provided;
4. *Reiterate* the need to help provide support for the implementation of chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, for the Montreal Protocol including through an adequate replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol and the Global Environment Facility and enhanced cooperation between these funds;
5. *Enhance* the collaborative efforts towards technological development, in particular those related to the protection of the ozone layer and the mitigation of climate change, and transfer technology to the countries that need it;

6. *Seek* alliance with other multilateral instruments like the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to contribute to an effective strategic approach to international chemicals management; and
7. *Declare* the willingness of the Parties assembled in this City of Bridges to contribute to building bridges between the relevant multilateral environmental agreements and to help them draw inspiration from the success of the Montreal Protocol while, in turn, drawing inspiration from them in meeting future challenges.

Prague, 26 November 2004



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