

BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS

Briefing on the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in Geneva, Switzerland from 4 to 15 May 2015

Highlights

- The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (BC COP-12), the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (RC COP-7) and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention (SC COP-7) will be held back-to-back at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), from 4 to 15 May 2015;
- The meetings will include joint sessions among two or three of the conferences of the parties on joint issues but will not feature a high-level segment nor simultaneous extraordinary meetings;
- The theme for the meetings is ‘From science to action, working for a safer tomorrow’;
- Expect about 1,500 participants from up to 183 parties;
- BRS COPs meeting website: <http://synergies.pops.int/2015COPs>

Invitation and registrations

- Official invitation letters, provisional agendas and information for participants were sent out to all parties to the BRS conventions on 27 November 2014;
- Deadline for registration and requests for financial assistance: 30 January 2015;
- Nominations to be submitted by the country’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Permanent Mission to the United Nations together with an official designation letter;
- Financial assistance may be provided for one participant per Convention for which the eligible country is a party (i.e. up to three) for the full two weeks, subject to the availability of resources;
- For additional information on registrations, please contact the Secretariat at: stephanie.cadet@brsmeas.org.

Credentials

- The bureaux of the conferences of the parties, during their joint meeting held in Geneva on 11-12 November 2014, agreed on the approach they will follow when preparing the reports on credentials for the meetings;
- The bureaux agreed that when examining credentials received, they would accept original credentials in good order as well as copies of credentials in good order with the understanding that the original will be submitted as soon as possible;
- Credentials are to be submitted by Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- Submission to the Secretariat if possible no later than 24 hours after the opening of the meetings (by 10am of Tuesday 5 May);
- Credentials for all 3 meetings can be done in one document. Model for credentials in all 6 languages available at: <http://synergies.pops.int/2015COPs/RegistrationCredentials/tabid/4241/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

Organization of work

- The tentative schedule of work for the meetings agreed to by the bureaux of the conferences of the parties at their joint meeting in November 2014 is available at: <http://synergies.pops.int/2015COPs/Overview.aspx>;
- The meetings start with a day and a half of joint sessions on joint issues on organizational matters and substantial issues (see below);
- Followed by separate sessions of the SC COP-7, BC COP-12, and RC COP-7;
- Conclude with joint sessions and additional separate sessions of the COPs, as necessary;
- On the day before the start of the meetings (Sunday, 3 May), preparatory meetings will be organised (bureaux meetings, regional meetings, other preparatory meetings);

- No formal meetings will be organised on Sunday, 10 May. The Government of Switzerland may arrange some separate social events on that day.

Main issues at the agendas of the meetings

Joint issues

- Organizational matters (organization of work, election of officers, credentials);
- POPs wastes related issues under BC and SC;
- Technical assistance, including regional centres;
- Financial resources, including integrated approach/special programme;
- Non-compliance under RC and SC;
- International cooperation and coordination;
- Programmes of work and budgets;
- Review of the synergies arrangements;
- Others, i.e. venue and date of the next COPs, admission of observers and development of draft MOUs between UNEP and each COP.

SC COP-7 issues (among others)

- Listing of chemicals (chlorinated naphthalenes, hexachlorobutadiene, pentachlorophenol and its salts and esters);
- Compliance;
- Others: Specific exemptions, Process for evaluating continued for PFOS, global monitoring plan for the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention, PCBs, DDT, implementation plans, BAT and BEP, Toolkit, reporting, etc.

BC COP-12 issues (among others)

- Follow up to the Country-Led Initiative (including Ban amendment, ESM expert group, further legal clarity);
- Technical guidelines (6 POPs wastes guidelines, e-waste guidelines, mercury wastes guidelines);
- Others: Cartagena Declaration, national reporting, ICC and related outcomes (ICC programme of work, 4 draft guidance documents, review of the implementation fund), Basel Convention Partnership Programme (PACE, ENFORCE), environmentally sound dismantling of ships, operations and work programme of the Open-ended Working Group for 2016–2017, etc.

RC COP-7 issues (among others)

- Listing of chemicals (methamidophos, fenthion formulation, trichlorfon, paraquat dichloride formulation, chrysotile asbestos);
- Compliance;
- Others: increasing notifications of final regulatory actions, etc.

Provisional agendas and documents for the meetings

- Total of 80 working documents and 147 information documents will be developed for the meetings;
- Programmes of work and proposed budgets for the biennium 2016-2017 will be made available on 4 February 2015 (90 days before the meetings);
- Other documents will be made available on 4 March 2015 (6-8 weeks before the meetings);
- Joint documents to two or three COPs are being developed for joint issues (e.g. budget, technical assistance)
- Provisional agendas and documents for the meetings are available at:
<http://synergies.pops.int/2015COPs/MeetingDocuments.aspx>.

Theme of the COPs and the Science Fair

- The theme '*From science to action, working for a safer tomorrow*' highlights the importance of the science-policy interface for the effective functioning and implementation of the conventions;
- To reinforce the theme of the COPs, a three-day Science Fair will take place from 7 to 9 May 2015;
- The Science Fair aims at:
 - Increase understanding of the scientific basis of the three conventions;
 - Clarify the scientific processes established under the conventions for their effective functioning and implementation;

- Increase awareness and understanding of the in-depth scientific considerations relating to decision-making under the three conventions.
- The detailed programme and content of the Science Fair is being elaborated in cooperation with various partners;
- Further information on the Science Fair is available on the BRS COPs meeting webpage or please contact the Secretariat at: katarina.magulova@brsmeas.org.

Side events and exhibitions

- Up to two side events can be held in parallel during lunch breaks and in the evenings following plenary sessions.
- Requests for side events can be submitted to the Secretariat at marylene.beau@brsmeas.org no later than 28 March 2015.
- The draft schedule of side events will be published approximately three weeks prior to the meetings.
- Requests for exhibition booths can be submitted to the Secretariat at: christophe.marchat@brsmeas.org no later than 28 March 2015.

Regional preparatory meetings

- Mandated by 2013 COPs in order to support preparations for the back-to-back COPs in 2015.
- Provide parties with an opportunity to undertake regional consultations in advance of the meetings, identify regional priorities and challenges, and facilitate the preparation of regional positions.
- The meetings will be held back to back with workshops to support the ratification and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention, as follows:
 - Asian and Pacific Region: Jakarta, 17-20 March 2015, in cooperation with the regional centre in Indonesia;
 - African Region: Gigiri, Nairobi, 24-27 March 2015, in cooperation with the regional centre in Kenya (ICIPE) and UNEP Regional Office for Africa;
 - Central and Eastern European Region: Bratislava, 7-10 April 2015, in cooperation with the regional centre in Slovakia;
 - Latin American and Caribbean Region: Montevideo, 14-17 April 2015, in cooperation with the regional centre in Uruguay.
- Provisional programmes for the meetings developed in consultation with bureaux members in each region.
- Financial support by Switzerland and the European Union.
- Governments are invited to nominate one representative for the regional Minamata workshop and two representatives for the BRS meeting if the country is a party to two or three of the BRS conventions, or one representative if the country is a party to one of the BRS conventions. All designated representatives are invited to attend both meetings for the four-day duration.
- Nominations to be transmitted to the Secretariat through an official letter from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Permanent Mission to the United Nations.
- Subject to the availability of financial resources, financial assistance will be provided to the designated representatives to attend both meetings for the four-day duration.
- Registration deadlines:
 - Asia and the Pacific: 10 February 2015
 - Africa: 17 February 2015
 - Central and Eastern Europe: 27 February 2015
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: 6 March 2015
- More information on the meetings webpage at <http://synergies.pops.int/2015COPs/RegionalPreparatoryMeetings.aspx>.

Additional briefings on the COPs

- Permanent Mission Briefings:
 - A second briefing in Geneva will be held in the second half of April 2015. (Date to be confirmed);
 - Briefing to the CPRs in Nairobi: 12 February 2015
 - Rome briefing: Date to be determined.

- Permanent Mission Briefing Lunch on compliance under the RC and SC:
 - Objective: Raise awareness of parties on the unresolved issues in the RC and SC compliance texts under negotiation, and assist in making progress during the 2015 COPs. Part of a broader set of intersessional efforts led by the RC and SC Presidents (development of a RC and SC compliance brief by the Secretariat, dissemination of the brief, including through webinars and during the regional preparatory meetings).
 - 11 February 2015, Geneva
 - About 25 representatives of Permanent Missions + SC and RC COPs Presidents.
 - Invitations sent out on Friday 16 January 2015.

- Webinars:
 - Online briefings in English, French, Spanish and Russian will be organized between 10 and 19 March 2015, as follows:
 - Tuesday, 10 March 2015, 10:00-11:00 (English)
 - Thursday, 12 March 2015, 10:00-11:00 (French)
 - Thursday, 12 March 2015, 16:00-17:00 (English)
 - Tuesday, 17 March 2015, 10:00-11:00 (Russian)
 - Thursday, 19 March 2015, 16:00-17:00 (Spanish)
 - The programme and registration links are available on the conventions websites at <http://synergies.pops.int>.