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UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/20

Distr.: General
25 July 2007

Original: English

**Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention
on the Control of Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal**
Sixth session
Geneva, 3–7 September 2007
Item 10 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Strategic partnerships: e-waste

Implementation of decisions VIII/2 and VIII/5 on strategic partnerships for electrical and electronic wastes and used and end-of-life computing equipment

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. By decision VIII/2 the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting mandated the Open-ended Working Group, beginning at its sixth meeting, to develop a work plan on the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic wastes (“e-wastes”) for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting; requested the Secretariat to initiate work on that and other activities referred to in the decision; and strongly encouraged Parties to develop further strategic partnerships targeting e-wastes. By decision VIII/5, the Conference adopted the work plan of the Basel Convention Partnership Programme for 2007–2008, which included initiating activities for a “global partnership on used and end-of-life computing equipment”. In the Nairobi declaration on the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic waste, the Parties declared that they would “encourage and support strategic partnerships initiated within the context of the Basel Convention targeting e-waste with a view to improving the environmentally sound management of e-products worldwide”.

II. Implementation

2. The decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting provide a basis for the initiation of two new partnerships: a global partnership on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment; and a global partnership on the environmentally sound management of e-wastes. These two partnerships will form an integral part of the Basel Convention work plan on e-wastes. Further information on the work plan is contained in document UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/21. The two partnerships will build upon previous decisions of the Conference

* UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/1/Rev.1.

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of the Parties on partnerships, principally decision VI/32, and its appendix entitled Draft Elements for a Framework to Work with Industry, and decision VII/4.

A. E-wastes partnership (e2e)

3. A partnership on e-wastes is proposed to serve as a forum for, among other things, facilitating the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and decision VIII/2 on creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the environmentally sound management of e-wastes; facilitating information exchange; coordinating results and activities undertaken to advance and strengthen the environmentally sound management of e-wastes; promoting a level playing field for the environmentally sound management of e-wastes; maintaining an overview of global activities and developments in e-wastes; and raising awareness of regional programmes in which partnerships are already in operation or being developed in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Africa.¹ Strategic partnership coalitions could be formed to undertake projects or pilot projects aimed at awareness raising, training and exchange of technical know-how and information between countries and regions on managing e-wastes. Currently, there is no mechanism under the Convention for carrying out such functions.

4. Consultations on the establishment of the partnership on e-wastes and the development of its work plan could begin in November 2007, through the establishment of a provisional partnership by the Open-ended Working Group. This interim body could be tasked with developing recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting.

1. Bringing together activities on e-wastes

5. At its ninth meeting the Conference of the Parties could consider establishing a panel, to operate under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group, as the e2e partnership. The e2e partnership panel could, among other things:

- (a) Guide the work of partnership working groups addressing sub-categories of e-wastes to ensure coherence and help avoid duplication of activities;
- (b) Identify obstacles to and solutions for the environmentally sound management of e-wastes;
- (c) Serve as a forum for information exchange;
- (d) Monitor e-waste developments;
- (e) Provide strategic advice, as appropriate, on e-wastes to the Open-ended Working Group;
- (f) Coordinate results and activities undertaken to advance the environmentally sound management of e-wastes;
- (g) Maintain an overview of global activities and developments regarding e-wastes;
- (h) Raise awareness of the three regional programmes in which partnerships are already in operation or being developed in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Africa;
- (i) Assist in resource mobilization for e-waste activities.

6. It is proposed that the e2e partnership panel consist of a limited number of partners, for instance three representatives from each region of the United Nations; six representatives from three key sectors, manufacturing, refurbishment and recycling; six representatives from civil society, including academia and local and regional non-governmental organizations and labour and business organizations; and three representatives from other international organizations. In addition, representatives from provincial and local governments and technology and development funding institutions and other stakeholders, while they would not be members, could be encouraged to participate as observers. The Basel Convention Secretariat could be asked to support the panel in its work.

¹ Details on the regional programmes under way or proposed can be found in document UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/21.

7. The panel would conduct its work primarily through teleconferences, electronic mail and other electronic means. A physical meeting could take place once each year in conjunction with another meeting of the convention in order to reduce costs. A membership fee and/or extra-budgetary contribution would be needed to contribute to defraying the cost of this effort, primarily to cover travel costs and costs for teleconference service for participants from developing countries or countries with economies in transition.

B. Partnership for the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment

8. On the basis of informal stakeholder consultations undertaken during the second quarter of 2006,² the Secretariat is launching the partnership on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment with Parties and representatives from industry, nongovernmental organizations, academia, international organizations and the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres. A stakeholder preparatory meeting was held in Geneva on 28 and 29 June 2007.³ The participants at this meeting proposed, among other things, that the mission of the partnership could be to promote the environmentally sound management of computing equipment, taking into account life-cycle thinking and sustainable development. One discussion item at this meeting was the name of the partnership. The suggestion widely accepted was the “partnership for action on computing equipment (PACE).”

9. The Open-ended Working Group could consider establishing an interim body, or more precisely, a provisional partnership, comprising the group of experts who already have been involved in the preparatory meetings on used and end-of-life computing equipment, to be tasked with the development of a work plan and terms of reference for the partnership and beginning other intersessional work as requested by the Open-ended Working Group. The provisional partnership could also be asked to develop recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting. This partnership could be established as a working group operating under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment could, among other things, serve as a forum for information exchange, facilitate the implementation of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment, raise awareness and build capacities to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition handle used and end-of-life computing equipment and promote product stewardship.

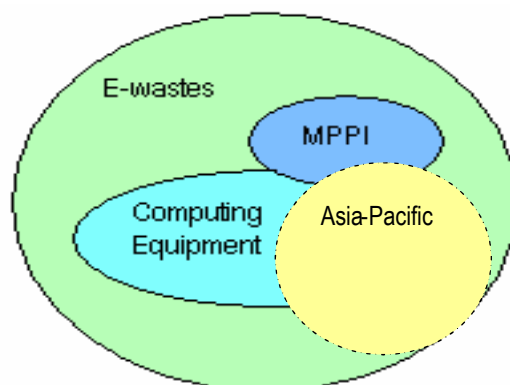
C. E-wastes: partnerships, projects and programmes

10. The following diagram provides an overview of the development of strategic partnerships on e-wastes within the framework of the Basel Convention, illustrating the larger waste stream of e-wastes and the subsets of computing equipment and mobile phones and demonstrating how an ongoing regional programme on e-wastes could interact with the partnerships.⁴ The diagram provides a visual basis for the organizational structure proposed in the present document.

² Documents UNEP/CHW.8/INF/3 and UNEP/CHW.8/INF/3/Add.1 were presented at the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties as a source of information to assist in identifying the activities raised through the informal consultations and their potential scope.

³ The summary record of the stakeholder preparatory meeting can be found on the Basel Convention website at <http://www.basel.int>.

⁴ The diagram is not based on specific global or regional statistics or data. It is a visual aid and should be regarded as such.

Diagram 1: Coverage of the e-waste and subsets of waste streams and regions

III. Proposed action

11. A decision along the following lines could be considered by the Open-ended Working Group:

The Open-ended Working Group,

Welcoming the ongoing discussions among all stakeholders who have expressed interest in and are willing to enter into partnerships under the auspices of the Basel Convention on the environmentally sound management of electronic and electrical-wastes (“e-wastes”), including used and end-of-life computing equipment,

1. *Decides* to establish two provisional partnerships to develop, in the period between the sixth session of the Open-ended Working Group and the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting on a proposed partnership on the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic wastes (the “e2e Partnership”) and a proposed partnership on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment (“the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment (PACE)”);

2. *Requests* the provisional partnerships referred to in paragraph 1 above, in developing their recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting:

- (a) To develop a draft work programme for each partnership;
- (b) To develop terms of reference for each partnership, including an outline for the proposed structure of each partnership;
- (c) To develop a declaration of commitment for partners, containing a limited time frame of membership, as agreed by partners;
- (d) To collect information and data available on the volume and movements of e-wastes globally and to identify activities under way relevant to the work of the proposed partnerships;
- (e) To identify private sector and other stakeholders to participate in the partnerships;
- (f) To explore mechanisms for providing sustainable and predictable financial support for each partnership and its work;

3. *Requests* the Secretariat:

(a) To facilitate the work of the provisional partnerships referred to in the preceding paragraphs, including through the provision of relevant information and data and in the organization of their consultations either through electronic media or in physical meetings;

(b) To report to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting on the progress made by the provisional partnership and to present its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration;

4. *Requests* the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres to support the work of the two provisional partnerships, as appropriate;

5. *Urges* Parties, signatories and all stakeholders (including manufacturers, recyclers, academia, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations) in a position to do so to provide financial and in-kind support for the work of the provisional partnerships;

6. *Invites* Parties and others to transmit nominations for membership of each provisional partnership to the Secretariat no later than 19 October 2007, having regard to the specific expertise and experience required for each provisional partnership.

12. The Open-ended Working Group may wish to prepare a decision along the following lines for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting:

The Conference of the Parties,

Acknowledging the increase in the volume of electrical and electronic equipment used and purchased globally, particularly computing equipment, and the increasing amounts of end-of-life electrical and electronic waste (“e-wastes”) destined for disposal,

Recognizing the challenges of bringing together interested stakeholders and the financial resources needed to operate a partnership programme,

Mindful of the Basel Declaration on Environmentally Sound Management, the Ministerial Statement on Partnerships for Meeting the Global Waste Challenge and the Nairobi Declaration on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste,

1. *Decides* to establish a partnership, as a panel that will operate under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group, on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life electrical and electronic wastes (the “e2e Partnership”), to serve as a forum for, among other things, facilitating information exchange, facilitating the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and decision VIII/2, identifying obstacles and solutions to implementing the Nairobi Declaration and decision VIII/2, coordinating results and activities undertaken to advance the environmentally sound management of e-wastes, maintaining an overview of global activities and developments in e-wastes, broadening awareness of regional programmes and promoting and strengthening the environmentally sound management of e-wastes;

2. *Decides* to establish a second partnership, on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life computing equipment, which will take into account life-cycle thinking and sustainable development (“the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment (PACE)”), as a working group that will operate under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group;

3. *Adopts* the work programmes and terms of reference for each of the above-mentioned partnerships contained in the annex to the present decision [*to be inserted*];

4. *Requests* the Open-ended Working Group to provide guidance to, and monitor the progress of, the partnerships established under the present decision and to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of those bodies, including by mandating the establishment of any contact or intersessional working groups that it may consider necessary;

5. *Encourages* Parties, signatories and stakeholders in a position to do so to provide financial and in-kind support to the project work and activities of the two partnerships in order to promote further the environmentally sound management of e-wastes;

6. *Requests* the Secretariat:

(a) To support the work of the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment (“PACE”) and of the e2e Partnership;

(b) To report to the Open-ended Working Group at its next meeting and to the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting on the progress made under both partnerships.