

The Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Environmental mandate

Institutional structure

In 2012, pursuant to decisions adopted by the respective Conference of the Parties of each convention, a joint head was appointed for the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, the Secretariat of the Stockholm conventions, as well as the UNEP-part of the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention. The Secretariat of the Basel and Stockholm conventions and the UNEP-part of the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal

The overarching objective of the Basel Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects which may result from the generation, management, transboundary movements and disposal of hazardous and other wastes.

To achieve this, the Convention is based on three pillars:

- The reduction of hazardous waste generation and the promotion of environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, wherever the place of disposal;
- The restriction of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes except where it is perceived to be in accordance with the principles of environmentally sound management; and
- A regulatory system applying to cases where transboundary movements are permissible.

The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

The objectives of the Convention are:

- To promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among Parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm;
- To contribute to the environmentally sound use of those hazardous chemicals, by facilitating information exchange about their characteristics, by providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export and by disseminating these decisions to Parties.

The Rotterdam Convention provides Parties with a first line of defence against toxic chemicals. It promotes international efforts to protect human health and the environment by enabling importing countries to decide if they wish to allow imports of hazardous chemicals and pesticides listed in the Convention.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The overarching objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment.

In response to this global problem, the Stockholm Convention requires from its Parties to:

- Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the trade, of the intentionally produced POPs listed in Annex A to the Convention;
- Restrict the production and use, as well as the trade, of the intentionally produced POPs listed in Annex B to the Convention;
- Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs listed in Annex C to the Convention;
- Take measures to ensure that POPs wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

The Convention also sets out procedures for the listing of new POPs to the Convention.

Environmental activities related to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions:

- Environmentally sound management of hazardous chemicals and wastes;
- Trade control measures and combating illegal traffic/trade of hazardous chemicals and wastes;
- National coordination, legal frameworks, institutional capacities;
- Risk assessment and management strategies;
- Technical assistance, including through a network of regional centres;
- International cooperation and partnerships;
- Information exchange, awareness-raising and education on chemicals and wastes management.

For additional information on the activities undertaken within the framework of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, please visit: <http://synergies.pops.int>