

Report of the Workshop on “Controlling newly listed Stockholm Convention POPs”



**Safir Mazafran Hotel, Zéralda, Algiers
27 - 28 june 2012**

Background

The Basel, Rotterdam and the Stockholm Conventions pursue a common objective, which is the protection of the human health and the environment. The three Conventions are covering the Life Cycle Approach of chemicals substances; indeed, most of the so called Persistent Organic Pollutants are included in the conventions.

In 2011, the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions adopted substantively identical decisions to further cooperation and coordination ([BC-10/29](#), [RC-5/12](#) and [SC-5/27](#)). Among others, these decisions approved an interim organization of the secretariats, cross-cutting and joint activities for inclusion in the programmes of work, detailed terms of reference for the review of the synergies process and holding simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties in 2013.

Parties, Regional Centres and Secretariats among other stakeholders have been asked to strengthen the implementation of the three conventions at national, regional and global levels.

Trade related issues have been identified as a key issue covered by the three chemicals conventions in which efforts should be focused in the cooperation among them.

From the other hand, the import/export of POPs is an issue of concern of many countries since in most of the cases they found difficulties in combating illegal traffic.

Introduction

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, under the Small Grant Project Proposal, supported the proposal submitted by the CPRAC for the organization of a training on Import/export of POPs in Algeria.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March 2012 between the two institutions in order to carry out the activity.

The CPRAC, in collaboration with the CNTPP and UNITAR organized the “Controlling newly listed Stockholm Convention POPs” from 27th to 28th June 2012 in the Safir Mazafran Hotel in Algiers. 50 local participants, two International experts and two CPRAC representatives attended to the workshop. Participants were from ministries of environment, trade, transport, energy, health, industry and agriculture, from the Police, and the Customs headquarters, from medico legal laboratories and from the national companies of petrol and electricity and gas.

The working languages of the workshop were English and French.



The training workshop was very interactive; participants were very interested in the guidance presented. Customs agents were especially keen on sharing their personal experience of the control of POPs.

Objectives

The specific objectives were:

- To tailor the existing training materials on POPs and other hazardous chemicals for custom officials and develop new materials where necessary.
- To raise the awareness of the officers involved in the Custom services about the provisions of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions.
- To improve knowledge of the customs officers on POPs and provisions of the Conventions concerning trade by providing them with the tools to combat illegal trafficking of POPs.
- To promote the information sharing and discussion among the government, custom officers, and other stakeholders

Development of the workshop

The workshop was opened by Mr. Bououdina, director of CNTPP, who welcomed participants and international experts to the workshop. Mr Garcia, deputy director of CP/RAC also said a word of acknowledgment to the local organisation. Mr. Akli from the Algerian Ministry of Environment and Mr. Arndt, chairman of the POPRC, also had a word of welcome and introduction to the participant.

The 27th session's objective was for the international experts to set the scene for the workshop, presenting to the participants the international convention regulating the production, transport and trade chemicals, the newly listed POPs to the Stockholm convention, and guidance for the updating of the National Implementation Plan with the newly listed POPs.

An overview of the Algeria situation regarding POPs was also established by the representative from the Ministry of Environment, Ms. Ouramdane, and a quick presentation of the customs work in Algeria, in controlling the POPs was given by the representative from the customs headquarters, Mr Rouissi Belkacem. Ms. Fazia Dahlab from CNTPP and Mr. Garcia from CP/RAC made a presentation on their centre's activities, which are Stockholm Convention Regional Centers for assisting Parties in the implementation of the Convention providing capacity building and technology transfer.



From this session, most noted comments stressed the fact that the Algerian NIP is being updated since September 2011 with the assistance of UNIDO. POPs are considered by Algerian regulation special waste and the PCBs are very important issue for the country.

Also, it was mentioned that Algeria has legislation for pesticides but not for dioxins and furans.

The 28th session was dedicated to presenting tools and methodologies to manage POPs in the customs agents' everyday work.

Guidance was given in order to tackle the control, monitoring and labelling of POPs and new POPs. International experts also presented the GHS, the XRF method and the WTO e-learning tool for customs agents training.

Dr. Weber also introduced the African E-waste project of the Basel Secretariat and the Basel regional coordination centre for Africa in Nigeria, as well as the IMPEL manual for the e waste inspection and enforcement and explained the synergy approach for controlling the import of new listed brominated diphenyl ethers (POP-PBDE) by import control of used electrical and electronic equipment EEE/WEEE.

From this second session, and about tools and methods of analysis, Algerian customs agents stressed that they don't have access to analytical methods for dioxins and furans or for new listed POPs such as PFOS or PBDEs and that such analysis is not available in Algeria. In addition, regarding the control of articles entering the country, customs agents informed that documentation of chemicals does not have a standard format so customs officers do not know how to proceed with it. As control system, they use the Sigal system and some databases developed by the Mining Ministry (having a specific role for chemical registration in Algeria).

As for the Green Custom Initiative, it is not known in Algeria and customs agents don't have access to its platform of e-learning.

Regarding the E waste related presentations, the main comment was that the import of second hand items is forbidden in Algeria therefore they are not aware on problems with E-waste imports. They foresee however problems when it comes to manage their own e-waste. Also, new articles are complying with European regulations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The new POPs were first time addressed in a workshop by this time. While the information was highly interested for participants, the two days were too short for a detailed overview on new POPs issues. Also some relevant stakeholders were not present in this workshop (such as E-waste recyclers or potential PFOS users) aimed in particular for customs. Therefore further workshop activities will be needed.
- Algeria has developed with UNIDO the GEF application for NIP update. After approval of the project new POPs activities can be further progressed under this umbrella.
- The country does not have destruction capacity for POPs. While cement industry is present in the country they use mainly the relative cheap natural gas and are currently not interested in secondary fuels or wastes that the facilities could be used for waste management. Currently a project on PCB destruction is planned aiming for the establishment of destruction capacity in Algeria. It could be assessed if new POPs containing wastes can also be addressed by this facilities or by other means.
- For polymers from E-waste also recycling of the plastics is possible with appropriate separation approaches.
- An E-waste inventory has not been developed in Algeria. This is an upcoming task and the Basel regional center could discuss with the BRS Secretariat (in particular Basel Secretariat staff) on options and steps.
- E-waste and related POP-PBDEs is a particular. Although the import of E-waste is not allowed an assessment on Ewaste import practice in Algeria has not been performed and might be an upcoming task.
- The custom e-learning tool was introduced. Algerian customs will assess it's possible use. It has been noted that there is a fee for using it.
- The XRF methodology has been introduced as a useful screening approach for competent authorities (including customs) to screen elements in articles (including bromine in e.g. electronics but also the wider use for screening of other restricted substances of the RoHS directive considered in Algeria to the extent they consider EU regulations). The usefulness of such a screening in Algeria could be assessed.
- During the workshop the need to organize awareness campaigns for citizens and other relevant stakeholders on new listed Persistent Organic Pollutants was mentioned. It could be assessed if such activities could be linked with upcoming SWITCHMED activities from the CPRAC on sustainable production and consumption.