

WASTE AND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT IN CARICOM COUNTRIES: THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION

The dramatic growth in chemical production and trade during the past three decades has raised concern about the risks posed by hazardous chemicals and pesticides. Countries without adequate infrastructure to monitor the import and use of these chemicals are particularly vulnerable. In response to these concerns, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly introduced the 1989 **Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure**.

The Rotterdam Convention

The objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment from harm, and to contribute to the environmentally sound use of certain hazardous chemicals, by promoting shared responsibility and cooperation in the international trade of said chemicals. The PIC procedure established by the Convention is an information exchange procedure that allows Parties to make informed decisions about the import and export of these hazardous chemicals. The Convention was adopted and opened for signature in Rotterdam 1998 and entered into force February 2004. Caribbean countries that are Parties to the Convention include: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Barbados and St. Lucia have signed the Convention but have not yet ratified. The Rotterdam Convention applies to banned or severely restricted chemicals and to severely hazardous pesticide formulations. Chemicals subject to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure are listed in Annex III of the Convention and include 28 Pesticides, 4 Severely Hazardous Pesticide Formulations, and 11 Industrial Chemicals.

PIC Procedure

Provides for a national decision making process on import of hazardous chemicals in Annex III and to ensure compliance with these decisions by exporting Parties.

- Summaries of proposals of severely hazardous pesticide formulations
- Export notifications
- Information to accompany export (labeling, safety datasheets)

Information exchange

The Convention requires exchange of information on a broad range of potentially hazardous chemicals. Information exchanged includes:

- Notifications of regulatory actions taken to ban or severely restrict a chemical

Designated National Authorities (DNAs)

Each Party designates National Authorities to act on its behalf regarding the administrative functions of the Convention. Parties must ensure that sufficient resources are provided for such DNAs to effectively carry out their tasks.



Adding New Chemicals to the Convention — The Chemical Review Committee (CRC) is an expert committee that reviews notifications and proposals by Parties, and makes recommendations on chemicals to be added to Annex III of the Convention. For each chemical that the CRC has decided to recommend for listing in Annex III a draft decision guidance document (DGD) must be prepared and forwarded to the Conference of the Parties (COP). The COP shall review the DGD and decide whether the chemical is to be listed in Annex III and thus made subject to the PIC procedure. Following the COP decision, the Secretariat of the Convention communicates to all parties information about the addition of new chemicals to Annex III and about the associated DGD and any other supporting information.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDING BANNED OR SEVERELY RESTRICTED CHEMICALS	PROCEDURE FOR ADDING SEVERELY HAZARDOUS PESTICIDE FORMULATIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Party shall notify the Secretariat when it has banned or severely restricted a chemical. 2. The Secretariat shall confirm that said Party has provided the required information in the notification according to the requirements outlined in Annex I. The Secretariat shall then communicate the information provided in the notification to all Parties. 3. When the Secretariat has received at least one notification from each of two different PIC regions regarding a particular chemical, they shall be forwarded to the CRC. 4. The CRC reviews the information and recommends in accordance with the criteria of Annex II to the COP on the inclusion of the chemical into Annex III. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countries that are developing countries or countries with economies in transition experiencing problems caused by severely hazardous pesticide formulations under conditions of use in their territory may propose to the Secretariat the inclusion of such chemicals into Annex III. The proposal shall contain information required by part I of Annex IV. 2. The Secretariat shall then communicate a summary of the information provided in the proposal to all Parties. 3. Additional information as stated by part 2 of Annex IV shall be collected to supplement the proposal. 4. The proposal and collated information shall then be forwarded to the CRC. The CRC shall review the information provided and, in accordance with criteria, set out in Annex IV, recommend to the COP whether the proposed severely hazardous pesticide formulation should be included in Annex III. 5. The Chemical Review Committee shall review the information provided in the proposal and the additional information collected and, in accordance with the criteria set out in part 3 of Annex IV, recommend to the Conference of the Parties whether the severely hazardous pesticide formulation in question should be made subject to the Prior Informed Consent procedure and, accordingly, be listed in Annex III.

Summary of the PIC Procedure



Advantages of the Convention for CARICOM

All Caribbean Community (CARICOM) signatories to the Rotterdam Convention have established designated national authorities and official contact points. To date, the most successful Caribbean approaches to Convention implementation have involved locating the focal points within the lead environmental agency and the subsequent delegation of authority to subsidiary bodies over which the agency exercises some control. Examples of countries where this approach has been used effectively include Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Parties to the Convention are granted membership to the Chemical Review Committee (CRC) and thus the ability to address issues pertinent to chemicals directly related to the region. Barbados has been a member of the CRC even though not Party to the Convention and has benefited from membership on the Committee through the communication of information on hazardous chemicals.

Association with the Convention also benefits CARICOM states through awareness and information provided by the Convention Secretariat on potentially toxic and hazardous chemicals and their management. Strengthened legislation, enhanced control of imports as well as improved registration procedures implemented for imports are evident as advancements within the Region as a result of the Convention.

Information exchange under the Convention also facilitates the harmonization of chemical management within CARICOM. During the Sub-regional Consultation on Ratification and Implementation of The Rotterdam Convention, Suriname noted reduced stocks of banned chemicals as another benefit evident from provisions of the Convention. Technical assistance and information dissemination of the Convention benefit CARICOM states and small island developing states (SIDS) that may not have the technical resources to manage these hazardous chemicals.

Challenges and the way forward for CARICOM waste and chemical management

Resources for finalization of hazardous substances and hazardous wastes management policies are lacking for many countries in the region and this has proven to be an important challenge. Financial constraints also impact on CARICOM countries' ability to effectively implement the Convention. Human resource limitations contribute to countries being late in making notification and meeting other information exchange obligations.

There is a need for ongoing training and awareness-raising programmes for key personnel relevant to the implementation of the Convention, including customs officers and national focal and contact points. Countries should ensure that an effective control system on the borders, in airports, at harbors and domestically is maintained, in order to prevent illegal importation and use of prohibited substances defined by developed legislation.

There is a lack of regionally specific agricultural research for the Caribbean; a mechanism for the ongoing collection of relevant data for the entire region, to assist with reporting requirements under the Convention, needs to be developed.

The prohibition of PIC pesticides in all countries in the region simultaneously is a challenge that should be addressed. A combined regional effort is the only effective approach to manage utilization of hazardous pesticides, protect farmers, consumers and the environment, and prevent transport of hazardous substances from one country, particularly in the context of free movement of goods and people. Therefore it should be a priority for all countries within the region to ratify the Rotterdam Convention.

Caribbean Rotterdam Convention Designated National Authorities/Contacts

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For further assistance on the Rotterdam Convention, you can contact the BCRC-Caribbean:

The Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean Region (BCRC-Caribbean)

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Information above is correct as of May 2012.

Additional Resources

The Rotterdam Convention: www.pic.int

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) : www.fao.org

Synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam & Stockholm Conventions: synergies.pops.int

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat: www.caricom.org

The Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean Region : bcrc-caribbean.blogspot.com/

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