

WASTE AND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT IN CARICOM COUNTRIES: THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION



The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from harm caused by persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are dangerous chemicals which linger in the environment for long periods. They accumulate in the bodies of living creatures and can have serious adverse health effects. The Stockholm Convention aims to restrict and ultimately eliminate the production, trade, release, storage and use of POPs.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants entered into force in May 2004. As at October 2012, there were 178 Parties to the Convention. Most Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states are Parties to the Stockholm Convention, with Grenada and Haiti being the exceptions. Cuba and the Dominican Republic are also Parties.



The Stockholm Convention requires Parties to take action to:

- Eliminate production and use of most intentionally produced POPs;
- Restrict produce and use of selected POPs (e.g. DDT, for which limited, careful use in malaria control may be permitted), while also seeking alternatives;
- Reduce, and aim to eliminate, unintentional production of POPs;
- Ensure safe and environmentally sound management of wastes that contain POPs.

In addition to controlling the currently listed chemicals, the Convention also aims to identify and take action on new and additional POPs.

POPs listed in the Stockholm Convention

Aldrin
Chlordane
Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)
Dieldrin
Endrin
Heptachlor
Hexachlorobenzene (HCB)
Mirex
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
Polychlorinated dibenzo-pdioxins (PCDD)
Polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDF)
Toxaphene
Alpha hexachlorocyclohexane
Beta hexachlorocyclohexane
Chlordecone
Commercial octabromodiphenyl ether (hexabromodiphenyl ether and heptabromodiphenyl ether)
Hexabromobiphenyl
Lindane
Pentachlorobenzene
Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), its salts perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride (PFOS-F).
Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and pentabromodiphenyl ether (commercial pentabromodiphenyl ether)
Endosulfan (Technical endosulfan and its related isomers)

National Focal Points and National Reporting

Each Party to the Convention is required to designate a national focal point for information exchange, as well as an official contact point for formal communications.

The Convention also requires Parties to report to the Conference of the Parties (COP), every four years, on efforts and effectiveness of implementation of the Convention. To date, the Stockholm Convention's online database lists Antigua and Barbuda as the only CARICOM Member State to have submitted a national report.

The Convention Secretariat has implemented an online electronic reporting to make reporting easier. The Secretariat also provides countries with assistance in preparation and submission of national reports.

National Implementation Plans

Each Party to the Stockholm Convention is required to prepare, and work to put into action, a National Implementation Plan (NIP) for meeting their obligations under the Convention. These NIPs should be reviewed and updated regularly to respond to new obligations under the Convention

Regional Parties to the Stockholm Convention

- Antigua & Barbuda
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname

Regional Parties which have submitted a NIP

- Antigua & Barbuda
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Jamaica
- St. Lucia
- Suriname

and to changes in the national circumstances. Most, but not all, CARICOM Parties to the Convention have prepared a NIP and transmitted it to the Conference of the Parties (COP) as required.

Adding new POPs to the Convention

The COP established and authorised the Persistent Organics Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) to review chemicals proposed for listing in the Annexes of the Convention. The process for listing a chemical may be summarised as follows:

- Any Party may submit a proposal to the Secretariat for listing a chemical. Proposals should contain adequate supporting information as specified in Annex D of the Convention.
- The proposal is screened by the POPRC.
- If the screening criteria are satisfied, the POPRC develops a risk profile and conducts a risk management evaluation based on information submitted by Parties and observers.
- Based on the profile and evaluation, the POPRC makes a recommendation to the COP about whether the chemical should be considered for listing in the Convention Annexes.
- The COP takes the POPRC recommendation into consideration and issues a decision about listing the chemical.

Few Caribbean countries have the capacity to carry out the analysis and monitoring necessary to provide supporting data for a proposal to list a new chemical. However, the region provides input to the review process through membership on the POPRC. The Caribbean has been represented on the Committee by Trinidad and Tobago (2006-2008) and is currently represented by Cuba (2012-2016).

Stockholm Convention Regional Centres

The objective of Stockholm Convention regional and sub-regional centres (SCRCs) is to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to fulfil obligations under the Convention by providing capacity-building and promoting the transfer of technology. Globally there are 15 SCRCs for capacity-building and the transfer of technology. There are no SCRCs in the Caribbean. As part of the Latin American and Caribbean regional grouping, Caribbean countries are served by a network of SCRCs in Mexico, Panama, Brazil and Uruguay.



Capacity building and awareness raising

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat and the Latin America and Caribbean network of regional SCRCs have held several capacity building and awareness raising workshops which have been of benefit to Caribbean countries. These have included:

- A workshop for effective participation on the POPRC (2008)
- A training workshop for the English-speaking Caribbean on PCBs and POPs waste
- A Caribbean regional training workshop on new POPs and the process of reviewing and updating NIPs
- An awareness-raising workshop for environment cooperation and coordination between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

In 2012, developing countries, including those in the Caribbean, were given the opportunity to inform the Secretariat about their technical assistance and technology transfer needs and challenges. The results of this exercise will be presented at the 6th meeting of the COP in 2013.

Synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

The respective Conferences of the Parties to the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions have taken decisions to enhance coordination and cooperation between the three agreements, recognising the common goal of protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes.

Benefits of the synergistic approach to implementation include:

- Improved and more efficient use of available resources, including for providing necessary support to developing countries;
- Better coordinated technical assistance activities;
- A stronger integrated approach to chemicals and wastes management.

Parties to the Conventions should also make efforts to implement them synergistically at the national and regional levels. To support synergies regionally, it would be beneficial for CARICOM member states that have not already done to take steps to ratify all three Conventions.



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(Information correct as of October 2012)

Additional Resources

The Stockholm Convention: www.pops.int

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

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

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat:

Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana
www.caricom.org

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