

January  
2009

# MEA-REN

Multilateral Environmental Agreements Regional Environmental Network



## NEWS FLASH

### Introduction

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> MEA REN News Flash. The first MEA-REN News Flash was created in August 2008 to raise awareness on the implementation and activities of the MEA Regional Enforcement Network. The News Flash is circulated every 6 months

### What is the MEA Regional Enforcement Network?

The purpose of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Regional Enforcement Network (MEA-REN) is to enable participating countries in Northeast, South and Southeast Asia to combat illegal trade and gain better control of trans-boundary movements of harmful chemicals and hazardous waste covered by the Montreal Protocol and the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions.



Identification of suspicious refrigerant. Goods seized by Customs Office in Tanjung Balai Karimun Indonesia October 2007. Photo: Astutie Widyarissantie; April 2008, National Ozone Unit, Ministry of Environment of Republic Indonesia"

### MEA REN UPDATES 2nd MEA-REN Workshop

The 2<sup>nd</sup> MEA-Regional Enforcement Network Workshop was held in Bangkok, 24-26 September 2008. It was organized by UNEP/Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP) in cooperation with MEA-secretariats and Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

Participants to the workshop included 92 participants from 30 countries in Asia /Pacific, and Europe & Central Asia (ECA) Six ECA countries were invited because they have joined the informal Prior Informed Consent (iPIC) procedure for the Montreal Protocol. VROM Inspectorate from the Netherlands (Ministry of

Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment) was invited to foster a strengthened cooperation with Europe and the IMPEL-TFS Network to combat illegal trade of waste between Europe and Asia.

Other stakeholders that attended the meeting included a representative from the Secretariat of the Basel Convention representing the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Institute For Training and Research (UNITAR), Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) China (who represented the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on enhancing cooperation/ coordination between BC/SC/RC), Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) Indonesia, INTERPOL (Liaison Office Bangkok or LOBANG), World Customs Organisation (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILO) for the Commonwealth of Independent States ( CIS) and Asia Pacific, WCO Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P), Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, the Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia (SENSA), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), World Bank, the NGOs Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and Basel Action Network (BAN), and Earth Report-TVE.

Participants were informed about the latest trends of illegal trade in harmful chemicals and hazardous waste in Asia/Pacific, Central Asia and Europe. They also shared experiences on successful enforcement and discussed how to stimulate cooperation within the region and with other regions such as Europe and Central Asia. Bottlenecks were discussed and potential solutions to the problems were identified. The progress of the development of enforcement tools was discussed as well as the focus of a future desk-study comparing reported import and export data between two countries of chemicals and wastes under the Montreal Protocol, and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

It was agreed to strengthen iPIC in the region and expand its scope beyond Asia & the Pacific region. Countries also recognised the importance of including HCFCs fully into the iPIC system in preparation of the strengthened control measures adopted by the Parties to the Montreal Protocol.

Countries in the Mekong sub-region, including Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, discussed the merits and feasibility of a joint UNEP-UNODC programme for Regional Cooperation in the fight against trans-national Crime in Southeast

Asia. Thailand has initiated the initial steps to include control of ODS in the mandate of the BLO at the Thai-



Lao PDR border. In 2009, training of officials from the Ministry of Interior stationed in BLOs in 11 provinces along the Thai–Lao PDR border will be organised. They also plan visits of Customs officials to China and Vietnam.

It was concluded that Harmonized System Customs Codes (HS) are playing a major role as an enforcement tool for trans-boundary movements and could be used for risk profiling and for the control of quotas. Countries were encouraged to adopt national HS codes for different HCFCs, and HCFC-containing refrigerant blends consumed in their country for better monitoring and reporting. Countries were also encouraged to use the opportunity of World Customs Day on 26 January 2009, to raise awareness on MEAs, the MEA Regional Enforcement Network and the issue of illegal trafficking.

More information about the recommendations and conclusions can be found in the workshop's report.



2<sup>nd</sup> MEA REN Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, 24 - 26 September 2008

## E-Forum

The MEA-REN E-forum has been updated with new members that attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> MEA-REN Workshop. All members are encouraged to share non-confidential information via the E-forum and keep the forum active.

E-Forum: <http://groups.google.com/group/mea-ren>

## MEA-REN Website

Following a suggestion from the first MEA-REN workshop, a proposal for the layout of a website for the project was presented and evaluated at the second MEA-REN workshop. It was decided that a website with public and private access would be created to further increase the awareness on the MEA-REN project and initiatives and to enhance the participants' coordination and access to materials and information. The public website is to be reviewed by the participating countries and has now been published and is updated on a weekly basis. Consultations to enhance private access are underway (expected to be available in early 2009).

Link: <http://vn1.estis.net/sites/mea-ren>

## Environmental Crime Media Update

The weekly Environmental Crime Media Update service launched by UNEP/ROAP in August 2008 has received very good feedback from MEA REN participants and partners and from many other networks and organisations working on environmental crime related issues. The media update is a part of the MEA REN project and the Asian Partner's Forum on Combating Environmental Crime (ARPEC).

The aim of the media update is to raise awareness about this pressing issue by regularly following up on the media news about environmental crimes and links of environmental crime to other criminal activities and organised crimes. Some of the highlights so far have been illegal trade of E-waste, mafia involvement in waste disposal, corruption linked with illegal logging, illegal ivory trade, and illegal wildlife trade on Internet.

Would you like to receive the Environmental Crime Media Update? Please contact: Marcelo G. Quicho Jr.: E-mail: [QUICHO@un.org](mailto:QUICHO@un.org) UNEP/ROAP

## TOOLS

### Country Information Sheets

Countries in the MEA Regional Enforcement Network have been encouraged to liaise with concerned authorities to complete the Country Information Sheet for the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. This will be an important management tool for control of trans-boundary movements as it allows countries to promptly identify relevant national laws, regulations and rules, the national institutional enforcement structure, and the mandate of different enforcement authorities in enforcement and investigation. It will also allow identifying which agency to contact in specific situations where bilateral information exchange between enforcement agencies is needed.

The Country Information Sheets will be distributed to MEA REN participants and shared with other partners and enforcement networks that wish to encourage countries to use it.

Thus far, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Iran, Sri Lanka and Thailand have submitted the Country Information Sheet. For those countries that have not yet completed the Country Information Sheet, you are encouraged to send it at your earliest convenience to UNEP ROAP.



### Green Customs Guide to MEAs

The Green Custom Initiative has developed a Green Customs Guide to Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The Guide is intended to help Customs and border control officers in their work. It explains what MEAs are

and introduces the organisations that are partners to the Green Customs Initiative. The Guide provides an overview of the main international MEAs with trade related provisions, with details on how they regulate trade, the roles and responsibilities of Customs and other border authorities, the specialised terminology associated with MEAs and the location of additional information and guidance. It explores also the practical aspects of implementing MEA controls and offers some conclusions and describes possible next steps in obtaining more information, developing channels of communication and providing feedback.

The guide was produced by the Green Customs Initiative Secretariat, UNEP DTIE, Ozone Action Programme in Paris, France in August 2008 and can be downloaded from their internet website:  
<http://www.greencustoms.org/>

## COOPERATION

### Exchange of information between Asia – EU

As we all know it's very difficult to find the most suspicious shipments in the many millions of containers, which are being transported through your and our ports. We must realize that it's very hard (and maybe even impossible) to stop them all. To have more success in detecting and preventing illegal shipments of hazardous waste it's very much needed to exchange information about suspicious shipments but also about the methods used.

The Sky Hole Patching project showed how successful the exchange of information can be. In Europe we are very happy that we could make agreements in Brussels at the WCO office in the beginning of December 2008.

There was an agreement between RILO A/P and VROM Intelligence and Investigation Service (IOD) to start the exchange of information about suspicious or detected (illegal) shipments of hazardous waste. This information exchange started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009 and is linked to the IMPEL-TFS e-waste project. The VROM-IOD will be the contact point in Europe and takes care of the further distribution of information to the involved authorities.

We are hoping for a fruitful cooperation and we are very grateful for the support and efforts in these by people from UNEP ROAP.

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### Initiating regional cooperation to enforce ODS trade controls in ECA network countries

UNEP's Regional Ozone Network for Europe & Central Asia has prepared the above project proposal to be submitted to the 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive

Committee in 2009. Czech Republic is actively supporting this activity and willing to provide bilateral funding as part of their contribution to the Multilateral Fund.

The proposal is inspired by similar projects already approved for other regions like South Asia, South-East Asia & Pacific as well as Latin America & Caribbean, Africa and West Asia.

The project will utilise the framework of the ECA network for initiating regional cooperation between customs and ozone officers in ECA network countries in order to prevent illegal trade with ODS. The project aims to enable the participating countries to gain better control over their import and export of ODS including HCFCs. Desk studies will analyse discrepancies in trade statistics and industry data to detect possible illegal trade of ODS similar to the desk studies recently done by the European Commission. The project will improve communication channels for informal information exchange and develop common tools for data management and collaboration within the regional network. The activity will also promote the participation of ECA network countries in the informal Prior Informed Consent (iPIC) mechanism and raise awareness on the Montreal Protocol and illegal trade in ODS and ODS-based equipment.

Halvart Koeppen, Regional Officer UNEP (ECA),  
Email: [hkoppen@unep.fr](mailto:hkoppen@unep.fr)

### Industry Tackling Illegal Trade in ODS

In December 2008, the European Commission, CEFIC (the European Chemical Industry Council) and the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) organised the "Summit on the Role of Industry in Tackling Illegal Trade in Ozone Depleting Substances" in Brussels. The meeting discussed the current and expected trends in illegal trade in ODS and particularly HCFCs and concluded with recommendations on actions that could be taken by industry (and others) to combat illegal trade and try to prevent illegal trade in HCFCs becoming a big problem.

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### Discrepancies between exports and imports of ODS reported by EU member countries

In November 2008, the European Commission analysed discrepancies between exports and imports of ODS as reported by member countries of the European Union for the year 2006 to the Ozone Secretariat. The Commission detected discrepancies of more than 1000 ODP tons and at least one of the suspicious cases relates to trade between a EU country and an ECA network country. The proposed project would extend the desk study to all ECA

network countries. You may contact European commission, DG Environment Unit C4 at E-mail: [env-ods@ec.europa.eu](mailto:env-ods@ec.europa.eu) if you need more information.

## INTERPOL

### 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Environmental Crime

The 6<sup>th</sup> International Environmental Crime Conference was organized by the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Committee at INTERPOL General Secretariat Lyon, France 13-17 October 2008. Almost 140 delegates from 53 countries and 19 organizations attended the meetings.

Three meetings were organised during the week. The first was an open meeting for stakeholders and the working groups for Pollution and Wildlife Crimes with an aim to inform about INTERPOL's activities in the field of environmental crime and to seek assistance from stakeholders, including foundations, NGOs, and academicians. The aim of the two-day Pollution Crime Working Group meeting was to allow participants to exchange information on environmental crime issues, to report the outcomes from Interpol projects and to initiate new projects.

The focus of the Environmental Crime Conference was on innovative investigative and forensics techniques in environmental investigation, illegal logging, and links of environmental crime with other crimes including organised crime, money laundering and asset forfeiture, corruption, crimes associated with climate change and training by international organizations.

UNEP/ROAP informed the members of INTERPOL Pollution Crime Working Group about the MEA-REN project and the cooperation through the Regional Partner's Forum on combating environmental crime in Asia/Pacific.

It was mentioned that there is a need of representation from the police in Asia in the next INTERPOL pollution crime working group.

Pia Jonsson E-mail: [jonssonp@un.org](mailto:jonssonp@un.org) UNEP/ROAP  
<http://www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/Default.asp>

### Successes of Environmental Enforcement

#### Initiative for an International White Paper

The Police Academy of the Netherlands, meanwhile supported by the members of the Pollution Working Group of Interpol, proposed to prepare a so-called *White Paper on the Successes of Environmental Enforcement*.

The core of this White Paper will comprise a collection of (fairly recent) documented and substantive

successful cases ('pearls') of environmental enforcement taken from different parts of the world. Such cases would originate from local, (sub)-national or international environmental enforcement practices. Since the scope of environmental enforcement topics could be very broad, the choice is made to focus the paper on pearls of enforcement in connection to the area of environmental pollution.

By presenting successful examples in an attractive narrative format, the White Paper would be a document that informs important (strategic) stakeholders, inspires, motivates and helps professional colleagues and, ultimately, strengthens the profile of environmental enforcement. To make the White Paper a comprehensive document on successful environmental enforcement practice, it is envisaged that it additionally will contain relevant additional (background) material. For example, a condensed description of the most notable environmental pollution issues currently at stake could be part of it. This could be complemented with an outlook of the upcoming and future challenges with respect to environmental enforcement. The White Paper could gain added value, if it would also include a section that analyses the main factors that are decisive for a successful approach to environmental enforcement. Such section could also be of relevance for purposes of training and education.

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The author of this contribution, who is the leader of the Interpol team indicated, is very much interested in the comments, ideas, views and potential material of readers.

December 2008 Dr. Henk Ruessink Principal lecturer/researcher  
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## UPDATES

### Pesticide Tributyltin Added to Trade 'watch list'

#### No consensus on chrysotile asbestos, indosulfan

Rome, 31 October 2008 - Over 120 countries Party to the Rotterdam Convention agreed to add the pesticide tributyltin to a global trade "watch list", but were unable to reach consensus on the inclusion of

chrysotile asbestos and the pesticide endosulfan during negotiations here this week.

The conference reaffirmed that governments have an obligation to use the Convention's information-sharing mechanism to inform others about their national decisions on the import and management of hazardous chemicals.

"Trade comes with rights and responsibilities, and the discussions this week have shown the strong commitment of many countries to this spirit of reciprocity," said Bakary Kanté, Director of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, United Nations Environment Programme. UNEP, along with FAO, jointly manages the Convention secretariat.

The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade promotes transparency and information sharing about potential risks to human health and the environment. Its so-called PIC list currently contains 39 hazardous substances, including all other forms of asbestos.

"International instruments such as the Rotterdam Convention are tools to assist countries in sound chemicals management; they are not an end in themselves but a means to an end," said James Butler, FAO Deputy Director-General at the opening of the high-level segment of the meeting.

Under the Convention, exports of chemicals and pesticides on the PIC list require the prior informed consent of the importing country. This gives developing countries in particular the power to decide which potentially hazardous chemicals they want to receive and to exclude those they cannot manage safely.

Exporting countries are responsible for ensuring that no exports leave their territory when an importing country has made the decision not to accept the chemical or pesticide in question.

"Clearly the chemical footprint of our modern economies is expanding exponentially today," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

"The transition towards a greener economy touches upon the responsibilities that we have as societies, as governments and as international institutions to look at how the use of chemicals empowers development and not undermines it, not least through the impact it has on the health of our societies."

During the conference, many governments expressed serious concern about the failure to list chrysotile asbestos. The World Health Organization made a statement reminding participants that chrysotile is a human carcinogen and that at least 90,000 people die every year of asbestos-related diseases such as lung cancer and mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer directly linked to asbestos.

Chrysotile asbestos is the most commonly used form of asbestos, accounting for around 94 percent of

global asbestos production. It is widely used in building materials, such as asbestos cement, pipe and sheet, and in the manufacture of friction products, gaskets and paper.

Tributyltin (TBT) compounds are pesticides used in antifouling paints for ship hulls and are toxic to fish, molluscs and other aquatic organisms. The International Maritime Organization has moved to ban the use of antifouling paints containing TBT compounds.

Endosulfan is a pesticide widely used around the world, particularly in cotton production. It is hazardous to the environment and detrimental to human health, particularly in those countries where safeguards are not adequate.

Some 70,000 different chemicals are available on the market today, and around 1,500 new ones are introduced every year. This can pose a major challenge to regulators charged with monitoring and managing these potentially dangerous substances.

Many pesticides that have been banned or whose use has been severely restricted in industrialized countries are still marketed and used in developing countries.

Press release from the Conference of the Parties (COP 4)  
Further information is available at <http://www.pic.int> or by email [pic@pic.int](mailto:pic@pic.int)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### World Customs Organization to Highlight Environment at its International Customs Day Celebrations on 26 January 2009

It is now internationally recognised that the illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities is a universal problem with serious global consequences. Customs has done a lot of work in this area over the years and our latest initiative, the WCO recommendation concerning actions against cross-border environmental offences which was approved by the WCO Council during its June 2008 annual sessions, encourages all WCO Members to continue their efforts to combat environmental offences and to ensure that the environment remains a priority issue for Customs Administrations across the globe.

Given the importance now attached to environmental issues by the entire international community, the WCO Secretariat will dedicate International Customs Day on 26 January 2009 to the environment with the theme: *Customs and the environment: Protecting our natural heritage*.

This will provide Customs Administrations with an ideal opportunity to highlight the role they play in protecting the environment. The celebration at WCO Headquarters will include speeches by the WCO Secretary General Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, and a senior

representative from UNEP. It will also include an exhibition of seizures of endangered species by Belgium Customs and a demonstration by German Customs of sniffer dogs detecting concealed contraband. Customs administrations across the globe will celebrate this day with the same theme. The celebration will be followed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Green Customs Initiative (GCI) partners meeting at WCO headquarters.

For further information, please contact [communication@wcoomd.org](mailto:communication@wcoomd.org)

## Workshop 2009 of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes

The Ministry of the Environment Japan and BCRC-SEA co-hosted the Workshop 2009 of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, on 20 – 22 January 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This workshop was organised in cooperation with the Department of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Government of Malaysia.

The workshop focused on: Update on Enforcement Activities of the Basel Convention, Good Practices for Effective Implementation, Asian Situation in Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes, Toward Environmentally Sound Management of Second-hand EEE and E-wastes.

For more information please contact Ministry of the Environment of Japan, [env-basel@env.go.jp](mailto:env-basel@env.go.jp) at the Secretariat of the Asian Network.

## TEAM MOVEMENTS

Marcelo G. Quicho. Jr. is the new Team Assistant at UNEP/ROAP for the MEA-REN Project. Contact information:

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## Farewell

As this is the last MEA-REN News Flash that I'm preparing I would like to take the opportunity to thank all participants in the MEA REN project for a good cooperation and nice memories during my time working on this project. I'm leaving UNEP Regional Office for Asia/Pacific by the end of January 2009.

It has been a big pleasure for me to work together with so many wonderful colleagues in Asia and the Pacific on the fight against illegal trade of hazardous waste and harmful chemicals, an issue that is so important and sometimes quite difficult to combat.

Best wishes for the future and good luck with further work in the project. I hope to cooperate with you also in the future.

Keep networking!

Pia Jonsson  
Associate Project Officer, UNEP/ROAP

Until a replacement is found, please contact Atul Bagai: [BAGAI@un.org](mailto:BAGAI@un.org) or Ludgarde Coppens: [COPPENSL@un.org](mailto:COPPENSL@un.org) or Marcelo G. Quicho Jr.: [QUICHO@un.org](mailto:QUICHO@un.org)

Donata Rugarabamu has left the Secretariat of the Basel Convention. Juliette Voinov Kohler will be the contact person for the MEA REN project at the SBC, for more detailed contact information see below.

## MEA Secretariats: Contact Information

### Basel Convention

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Date : January 2009