2025 Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Political Forum

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Input by the Presidents of the Conferences of the Parties, and the Executive Secretary, to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Background

Resolution 70/1 by the United Nations General Assembly identifies the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as a platform to carry out thematic reviews of the progress on sustainable development goals (SDGs), including cross-cutting issues. The General Assembly further reiterates, in resolution 75/290 B, that the HLPF should consider inputs from intergovernmental bodies and forums and incorporate findings, research, data and recommendations from the United Nations system in its annual synthesis report.

This year's HLPF is expected to take place under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 14 to 23 July at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. A Ministerial Segment will also be convened from 21 to 23 July 2025, as part of the High-level Segment of the Council. The theme of the 2025 HLPF is, "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind." The 2025 HLPF will review Goals 3 on good health and well-being, 5 on gender equality, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 14 on life below water and 17 on partnerships for the goals. In addition, the forum will support the implementation of the Political Declaration of the 2023 SDGs Summit and follow up to the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future.

Introduction

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted on 22 March 1989 and entered into force on 5 May 1992. The Convention has 191 Parties, thus near universal coverage. The overarching objective of the Basel Convention is to protect human health and the environment against adverse effects that may result from the generation and management of wastes. Its scope covers a wide range of wastes defined as "hazardous wastes," based on their origin and/or composition and their characteristics or so defined by domestic legislation and notified to the Secretariat, as well as wastes defined as "other wastes" requiring special consideration such as household waste and incinerator ash.

The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade was adopted on 10 September 1998 and entered into force on 24 February 2004. The Convention has 167 Parties and global coverage. The objective of the Convention is 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 and to contribute to the environmentally sound use of those chemicals. The Convention does this by facilitating information exchange about the hazardous chemicals' characteristics, providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export, and disseminating these decisions to Parties.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) was adopted on 22 May 2001 and entered into force on 17 May 2004. It has 186 Parties and global coverage. The objective of the Stockholm Convention is, mindful of the precautionary approach as set forth in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are 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 and on the environment.

I. Impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17

The ongoing multiple and interconnected global crises have exacerbated existing challenges in managing hazardous wastes and chemicals while also creating new ones. The pollution crisis itself threatens numerous SDGs, including those currently under review. Regarding SDG 3, mismanaged waste contributes to the annual deaths of about 400,000 to 1 million people due to related diseases such as diarrhea, malaria, heart disease and cancer.[1] The informal sector further presents risks to SDGs 3, 5 and 8 as workers in this sector often face high exposure to hazardous wastes and chemicals, leading to injuries and infections. In 2023, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that nearly 40 per cent of informal workers are in roles related to waste management and sanitation, with 45 per cent being women and 38 per cent men.[2] Notably, women waste pickers experience worse health outcomes than their male counterparts. Illegal waste trafficking further compounds the situation through dumping of hazardous wastes to countries with weaker labor protections, thereby undermining decent work opportunities, diverting tax revenues and reducing the competitive advantage for lawful businesses.

Additionally, hazardous chemicals and other pollutants have become widespread in both humans and the environment, further impending progress on the SDGs under review.[3] In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 2 million lives and 53 million disability-adjusted life-years were lost in 2019 due to exposure to selected chemicals.[4] Certain chemicals on review for listing under the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, such as mercury and chlorpyrifos, present significant health risks, in particular for exposed workers and pregnant women.[5] Chrysotile asbestos can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma for persons that are repeatedly exposed. Paraquat is an additional example for a pesticide being extremely toxic to human health if ingested or inhaled[6] and acetochlor[7], carbosulfan[8], and fenthion[9] are persistent in the environment and toxic to human health and aquatic organisms. Long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids, their salts and related compounds, can also be toxic to aquatic life.[10]

II. Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively

[1] See Williams, M., Gower, R., Green, J., Whitebread, E., Lenkiewicz, Z. and Schröder, P. (2019). *No Time to Waste: Tackling the Plastic Pollution Crisis Before It's Too Late*. Teddington, United Kingdom: Tearfund. https://learn.tearfund.org/en/ resources/policy-reports/no-time-to-waste as referred to in United Nations Environment Programme (2024). *Global Waste Management Outlook 2024: Beyond an age of waste – Turning rubbish into a resource.* Nairobi. https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44939

[2] "Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical update," International Labour Organization, available at https://www.ilo.org/publications/women-and-men-informal-economy-statistical-update

[3] "Global Chemicals Outlook II from Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," United Nations Environment Programme, available at https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/global-chemicals-outlook

4 https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-FWC-PHE-EPE-16-01

[5] For more information on impacts of mercury exposure to women, please see https://minamataconvention.org/en/resources/minamata-convention-publication-gender-and-mercury; Regulations.gov https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2014.3640

[6] For more information on the latest chemicals considered by the Chemical review Committee for listing under the Rotterdam Convention, see https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/ChemicalReviewCommittee/Meetings/CRC20/Overview/tabid/9840/language/en-US/Default.aspx; For more information on the latest chemicals considered by the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee for listing under the Stockholm Convention, see https://www.pops.int/TheConvention/POPsReviewCommittee/Meetings/POPRC20/tabid/9849/Default.aspx

[7]https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Chemicals/Recommendedforlisting/Acetochlor/tabid/7596/language/en-US/Default.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[8]https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Chemicals/Recommendedforlisting/Carbosulfan/tabid/5393/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[9] https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Chemicals/Recommendedforlisting/Fenthion/tabid/4339/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[10] Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs) | UNEP - UN Environment Programme

delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets

A common pillar of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions is the promotion of environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and chemicals. To achieve this, a range of sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions are being delivered through, among others:

i. Science-policy interface

Science is a fundamental component of the three conventions as it underpins the evaluation of thematic issues, identification of wastes and chemicals for control, development of tools and guidance, technical and policy recommendations and technical assistance activities.[11] Through these processes, scientific findings are translated into effective policies, regulations, and practices that contribute to the objectives of the conventions and the SDGs. For instance, the 2023 effective evaluation process under the Stockholm Convention has been an important tool in contributing towards SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 by identifying measures that have succeeded in reducing levels of harmful POPs in the environment.[12] Under the Basel Convention, experts are discussing revisions of the hazard characteristics that define a waste as hazardous under the Convention. This process is bringing in new scientific evidence on existing hazards for consideration and is meant to lead to legal clarity on the Convention's provisions.

In regard to SDG 17, in 2024 under a science-to-action initiative[13], the Secretariat promoted greater stakeholder involvement, including industry actors, in decision-making on chemicals in plastics, through a series of capacity building events.[14]

ii. **Facilitative compliance mechanisms**

Following an assessment of challenges faced by Parties, the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Basel Convention has developed draft guidance on how the Parties can integrate actions to address their needs under the Basel Convention into their United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The guidance highlights the linkage between the proper control of transboundary movements of wastes and the environmentally sound management of wastes and various SDGs, including SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17. The Rotterdam Convention Compliance Committee has similarly been monitoring developments related to the integration by Parties of their information submission needs and is considering the possibility of developing guidance. Notably, the Compliance Committee of the Stockholm Convention was established in the eleventh meeting of the conferences of the Parties to the Convention and begun its work in 2025 following the twelfth meeting of the conferences of the Parties.

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[11] For example, processes under subsidiary bodies of the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to assess severely hazardous pesticide formulations, pesticides, industrial chemicals and persistent organic pollutants for respective control are backed by science and evidence through analysis, risk profiling, risk management and involvement of experts from the UN regions. For more information, see the work of the Chemical Review Committee under the Rotterdam Convention: https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/ChemicalReviewCommittee/OverviewandMandate/tabid/1059/language/en-US/Default.aspx, and the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee under the Stockholm Convention: https://chm.pops.int/TheConvention/POPsReviewCommittee/OverviewandMandate/tabid/2806/Default.aspx

[12] For more information on the outcomes of the 2023 effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, see https://chm.pops.int/Implementation/EffectivenessEvaluation/Outcomes/2023Outcomes/tabid/9559/Default.aspx

[13] For more information see the information brochure and other related documents: http://www.brsmeas.org/Implementation/FromSciencetoAction/Overview/tabid/4749/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[14] For more information on the workshops, see www.brsmeas.org/tabid/8318.

iii. Development of technical guidelines and guidance

For the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, guidance for the environmentally sound management of wastes and chemicals is regularly developed, updated and promoted to align to developments in science and emergence of new threats. Currently, under the Basel Convention, several technical guidelines are at various phases of being revised, updated, or piloted, related to the environmentally sound management of: wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs; waste lead-acid batteries and other waste batteries; used and waste pneumatic tyres; wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds; as well as on transboundary movements of electrical and electronic waste and used electrical and electronic equipment. Guidance documents on environmentally sound repair and recycling of TVs screens, audio and video equipment and on environmentally sound repair, refurbishment and management of refrigerators, cooling and heating equipment and their wastes are also being developed. Previously adopted technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes have been rolled out through technical assistance activities by the Secretariat and the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres.

Under the Rotterdam Convention, the Chemical Review Committee during the last four years has developed draft decision guidance documents for 10 chemicals proposed for listing.[15] Previously adopted guidance on chemicals listed during the eleventh meeting of the conferences of the Parties to the Convention, including terbufos, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds and decabromodiphenyl ether are readily available for use by Parties in informed decision-making. Guidance on the best available techniques and best environmental practices relevant to the polybrominated diphenyl ethers, Dechlorane Plus, short-chain chlorinated paraffins and UV-328 listed under the Stockholm Convention, as well as guidance for the management of sites contaminated with persistent organic pollutants have also been developed.

These guidelines and guidance provide Parties with sufficient technical knowledge on how to address regulated commodities, simultaneously contributing to implementation of the SDGs, including SDGs 3,5,8, 14 and 17.

III. Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

Several measures are being carried out under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions. Below is a sample of such measures:

i. International cooperation and coordination

The increasingly global nature of chemicals and waste management calls for heightened international cooperation to build national capacity for the safe management of hazardous chemicals and waste and to

[15] These include: acetochlor; carbosulfan, chlorpyrifos, chrysotile asbestos, Fenthion (ultra-low-volume (ULV) formulations at or above 640 g active ingredient/L), iprodione, Liquid formulations (emulsifiable concentrate and soluble concentrate) containing paraquat dichloride at or above 276 g/L, corresponding to paraquat ion at or above 200 g/L, mercury, methyl bromide, paraquat.

prevent illegal trafficking and trade.[16] The BRS Secretariat continues to foster cooperation and coordination with a range of other organizations and bodies[17] within and beyond the chemicals and wastes cluster in an effort to contribute to the SDGs.

Most of the ongoing cooperation is relevant for the SDGs under review, but to provide specific examples, on SDG 3, the Secretariat has been collaborating with WHO on health aspects related to e-waste and mercury waste under the Basel Convention, implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, and on production, use and alternatives to dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane under the Stockholm Convention. Regarding SDG 5, the Secretariat is working with the Food and Agriculture Organization on several gender related activities, including development of a publication, "Addressing gender issues in pesticide management," focusing on the role of women in handling hazardous pesticides in agriculture and health risks. On SDG 8, the Secretariat cooperates with the ILO, WHO, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and private sector and non-governmental organizations, in the context of the Partnership for Action on Challenges related to E-waste. Further, in an endeavor to foster partnerships as envisaged under SDG 17, the Secretariat has continued to collaborate with a range of diverse actors, including under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Management Group.

Notably, a draft renewed strategic framework for the implementation of the Basel Convention, for the period 2025–2031, has been developed with some overarching goals and objectives pertaining to international cooperation and coordination.

ii. Technical assistance and capacity building

Technical assistance and capacity building activities constitute an integral part of the programmes of work of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and are invariably informed by needs assessments and capacity gaps identified by Parties. Within the reporting period, over a hundred training and capacity-building activities were organized through projects, workshops and webinars on a variety of issues touching upon the SDGs under review. For instance, relevant to SDGs 3,5, 8 and 17, the Secretariat initiated a project, supported by the Norwegian Retailers' Environment Fund, to be implemented in Rwanda and Zambia on highlighting the important role of women and vulnerable populations, including informal sector workers, in the management of plastic waste at the national level. In addition, an e-learning course on national reporting under the Basel and Stockholm conventions, which includes a module on the SDGs, was developed. Further, the Secretariat cooperates with universities to provide training to students and to the public, through online courses developed in cooperation with universities on implementation of the conventions and on thematic matters such as plastic waste and e-waste, thus contributing to international environmental law university and vocational training

Under the Rotterdam Convention, a wide range of technical assistance activities have been delivered to strengthen national capacities related to hazard and risk evaluation of hazardous industrial chemicals and pesticides, strengthen national coordination mechanisms, and reinforce national capacities for informed decision-making and the identification of alternatives, among others.

Most of the technical assistance and capacity building activities by the Secretariat were delivered in cooperation with the Basel Convention and Stockholm Convention regional centres, UNEP, FAO, and

[16] Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44939
[17] UNEP/CHW.17/INF/55 - UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.12/INF/26 - UNEP/POPS/COP.12/INF/45 https://www.brsmeas.org/2025COPs/Meetingsdocuments/tabid/10057/language/en-US/Default.aspx

other partners[18]. Key initiatives such as the Partnerships Programme under the Basel Convention and the work of the compliance committees under the conventions also significantly contributed to capacity building.

iii. Coordinated action to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

The conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions recognize the need for coordinated action to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. For example, the 2025 meeting of the conferences of the Parties considered possible additional actions based on a report on the interlinkages between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, a report prepared in cooperation with the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals - For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Wastes, on how the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions might contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and a report on how the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions might contribute to the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals. [19]

The Secretariat further supports the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, and the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, through documents preparation, provision of substantive inputs and organization and participation in meetings.

On climate change, the Secretariat contributed to several thematic areas, including by participating in the 28th meeting of the UNFCCC and taking part in more than 10 side events aimed at highlighting the contributions of the sound management of chemicals and wastes to climate action.[20] The Secretariat, in cooperation with UNEP and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also provided training on emergency preparedness and response to hazardous chemicals and waste incidents and climate change, and disseminated tools for decision making.

iv. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

There are several actions being undertaken under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration. For example, to bridge digital divides and spread the benefits of digitalization, there is ongoing work under the Basel Convention on advancing electronic approaches to notification and movement documents. So far, a report has been prepared with recommendations aimed at improving and simplifying the implementation of the prior

[18] UNEP/CHW.17/INF/41–UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.12/INF/20–UNEP/POPS/COP.12/INF/28 https://www.brsmeas.org/2025COPs/Meetingsdocuments/tabid/10057/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[19] See decisions BC-15/25, RC-10/14, SC-10/21, BC 16/22, RC 11/9 and SC 11/21. The three reports are available at: https://www.brsmeas.org/2025COPs/Meetingsdocuments/tabid/10057/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[20] For a full list of side events, please consult the conventions' website, www.brsmeas.org/tabid/9713.

informed consent procedure.[21] The Secretariat has also been cooperating with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to support digitalization in environmental policies for climate change, circular economy and the protection of the environment, including the promotion of policies on digital product passports for e-waste.

Additionally, in an effort to ensure the full, equal and effective participation of women in decision making processes and in the Secretariat's activities, projects and programmes, the BRS Secretariat has undertaken an internal review of its Gender Action Plan for the period 2013 to 2023 and based on the results, as well as consideration of the experiences of other MEAs, developed a new draft gender action plan setting out opportunities for greater inclusion and mainstreaming of gender.

On endeavors to encourage changes in consumption and production patterns and to promote sustainable economic models, the BRS Secretariat has engaged in implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), including co-organizing an event with the 10YFP Secretariat on circular economy, waste management and just transition as well as developing a report addressing how consumer protection policies can support the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, among others.

Most of the actions outlined in the present report further contribute to several actions under the 2024 Summit for the Future outcome document, including action 8 on gender equality, action 10 on restoration, protection, conservation and sustainable use of the environment, action 28 on science, technology and innovation, action 29 on scaling up means of implementation to developing countries, and action 29 on strengthening partnerships, amongst others.

v. Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF

a. To recognize the importance of multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous chemicals and wastes, including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and their role in the overarching architecture of environmental governance, in building a resilient path to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the context of multiple crises.

b. To accelerate the efforts of Parties to implement their obligations under the multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous chemicals and wastes to protect human health and the environment from adverse impacts of chemicals and hazardous and other wastes.

c. To continue mainstreaming the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions into plans and strategies on sustainable development, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, sectors such as health, agriculture and the economy, with the aim of raising the profile and visibility of chemicals and wastes on the national level, thereby facilitating the integration of information and national reporting needs into such national processes and supporting implementation of the conventions.

[21] For more information, please see https://www.basel.int/Implementation/Controllingtransboundarymovements/eapproachesfornotificationandmovement/Overview/tabid/7375/Default.aspx

d. To increase efforts of governments and stakeholders towards the coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions including through multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms.

e. To provide priority attention to developing, enforcing and/or strengthening national legislation and/or regulations implementing the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

f. To emphasize the importance of data transmission in accordance with the obligations under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to avoid non-reporting, incomplete reporting or late reporting and to add value to the global indicator framework for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

g. To promote knowledge building and information sharing on hazardous chemicals and wastes for better management and risk reduction throughout their lifecycle.

h. To mainstream gender considerations in policies and strategies that promote the sound management of chemicals and wastes.