

## PRESS ADVISORY

### Basel Convention meeting finalizes guidance on combating illegal trade and managing POPs wastes

Geneva, 7 April 2006 – The Open-Ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Control is concluding a one-week meeting here today after finalizing a set of tools to help governments address some of their most pressing hazardous-wastes challenges.

The meeting adopted a new training manual on the illegal traffic of hazardous and other wastes that is designed to assist customs and other enforcement agencies to better understand the provisions of the Basel Convention and their critical role in its implementation.

“The Basel Convention was originally adopted in 1989 in response to growing international concern about the illegal transport and dumping of hazardous wastes,” said Executive Secretary Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto. “Recent studies have shown that, while important progress has been made on many fronts, a significant amount of illegal trade persists. This manual will contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of border controls.”

The meeting also finalized three new sets of guidelines for the environmentally sound management of certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Many of these pollutants are amongst the most hazardous substances known to humanity. Guidelines on POPs wastes and on PCBs were finalized in 2004. The newly agreed guidelines focus specifically on DDT, on other obsolete pesticides, and on dioxins and furans.

Progress was also made on obsolete ships. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), which has launched negotiations on an instrument that would clarify the legal requirements for scrapping obsolete ships, has acknowledged that the Basel Convention has a role to play in this issue.

This week’s meeting considered the interim environmental measures that will be needed until an eventual IMO agreement enters into effect. It also analyzed data on the abandonment of ships (for example on the size and type of ships involved) in order to determine what action will be needed by the IMO, the Basel Convention and other actors.

The draft texts on ship scrapping together with the various decisions agreed here in Geneva are being forwarded for adoption to the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which will be held in Nairobi from 27 November to 1 December 2006.

**Note to journalists:** For more information, please contact Michael Williams at +41-22-917-8242, +41-79-4091528 (cell), or michael.williams@unep.ch, or Nicole Dawe at +41-22-917-8220 or nicole.dawe@unep.ch. See also [www.basel.int](http://www.basel.int).