

Possible approach for the organization of work of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2015

(Thought starter, version 25 March 2014)

During their teleconferences held respectively on 23 January, 3 February and 19 February 2014, the respective bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions agreed on the process pertaining to the preparation of a possible approach for the organization of work of the 2015 COPs (see annex II). The process involves the development of the present thought starter.

The present thought starter provides a possible approach on how the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions could be organized back-to-back in Geneva over a two-week period in 2015. It is intended as a starting point for further consideration and possible elaboration by the bureaux of the three conferences of the parties.

By decisions BC-11/20, RC-6/12 and SC-6/25, the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions decided to:

“convene in 2015 back-to-back ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (without a high-level segment or simultaneous extraordinary meetings) in Geneva that include joint sessions, where appropriate, on joint issues and that prioritize an agenda and schedule that focus on substantive matters related to implementation of the conventions and provide sufficient time for their consideration”.

As reflected in the reports of their meetings in 2013, the conferences of the parties further decided that the meetings would take place from 4 to 15 May 2015 in Geneva unless the bureaux, meeting jointly, decided otherwise. The bureaux of the three conferences of the parties would decide, in consultation with the Secretariat, whether the meetings should feature joint sessions.

The draft schedule of work for the two weeks of meetings in 2015, presented in annex I, builds on the guidance provided by the conferences of the parties, at their meetings in 2013, including the request to allocate sufficient time to substantive matters.¹ As called for in the decisions referred to above, the meetings do not comprise a high-level segment nor simultaneous extraordinary meetings.

The main features of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2015 could include the following:

1. Pre-meetings on Sunday, 3 May 2015, such as a joint meeting of the bureaux and regional group meetings;

¹ The Presidents of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions have taken note of the wish expressed by many parties to allocate sufficient time to substantive matters during the meetings of the conferences of the parties in 2015.

2. Sequential openings of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties and adoptions of the agendas on Monday, 4 May 2015;
3. Joint sessions of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties on joint issues:
 - Joint sessions would tentatively be scheduled on the first day and a half and on the morning of the last day of the meetings;
 - The conferences of the parties could establish joint contact groups which would meet as needed throughout the two weeks.
4. Sequential sessions of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties:
 - The sequential sessions would follow the same order as during the ordinary meetings of the conference of the parties in 2013 and address the agenda items of each of the individual meetings of conferences of the parties not covered during the joint sessions;
 - The conferences of the parties could establish convention-specific contact groups which would meet during the timeframe allocated to each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - Draft decisions will be considered by plenary during the ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties to which they apply. Formal adoption of decisions can only be made after the budget contact group has confirmed that sufficient resources are included in the budget to implement the decision or that the decision does not have financial implications. If such confirmation has not yet been received, it is possible for plenary to agree to the text of the decision (so-called “virtual adoption”) and postpone formal adoption of the decision until after the confirmation has been given later in the meeting.
5. Every morning, the three ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties would meet jointly to hear reports of contact groups;
6. On the afternoon of the last day, sequential sessions of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties would be convened to adopt their respective budget decisions and any other pending decisions. Each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties would be closed.

Aspects to consider when identifying issues for the joint sessions of the meetings of the conferences of the parties in 2015 could include:

- Benefits expected from dealing with issues jointly in terms of cross-fertilization of ideas, sharing of best practices, and identification of future synergies among the three conventions;
- Advantages of taking harmonized decisions across the three conventions on similar issues and of taking into account each others' decisions;
- Gains expected in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of the meetings when dealing with similar issues once instead of three times.

Annex I contains an outline of a tentative schedule of work for the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions from 4 to 15 May 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Annex I

Outline of a tentative schedule of work for the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties (COPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions from 4 to 15 May 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland

	Mon, 4 May 2015	Tue, 5 May 2015	Wed, 6 May 2015	Thu, 7 May 2015	Fri, 8 May 2015	Sat, 9 May 2015
Morning session 10 a.m.– 1 p.m.	Opening of the meeting Adoption of the agenda	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>
	Opening of the meeting Adoption of the agenda	Joint session the three COPs: Agenda items to be determined	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined
	Opening of the meeting Adoption of the agenda					
	Joint session of the three COPs: Agenda items to be determined					
Afternoon session 3–6 p.m.	Joint session of the three COPs: Agenda items to be determined	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined	Session of SC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined	Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined

	Sun, 10 May 2015	Mon, 11 May 2015	Tue, 12 May 2015	Wed, 13 May	Thu, 14 May 2015	Fri, 15 May 2015
<i>Morning session 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.</i>	No formal meetings	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>	<i>Reports of contact groups</i>
		Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of RC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined	Session of RC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Joint session of the three COPs: <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the joint contact groups and discussions of outstanding joint issues</i>
<i>Afternoon session 3–6 p.m.</i>	No formal meetings	Session of BC COP-12: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of RC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined	Session of RC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Session of RC COP-7: Agenda items to be determined <i>Consideration of the outcomes of the contact groups and draft decisions</i>	Adoption of budget and any pending SC COP decisions
						Adoption of budget and any pending BC COP decisions
						Adoption of budget and any pending RC COP decisions
						Closure of the meetings

Stockholm Convention Conference of the Parties (SC COP)	
Basel Convention Conference of the Parties (BC COP)	
Rotterdam Convention Conference of the Parties (RC COP)	
Joint sessions of the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties	
Report of joint and convention-specific contact groups	

Annex II

Process for preparing the organization of work of the 2015 COPs (version of 19 February 2014)

Agreement on the process and initial discussions on the thought starter:

2 Dec. 2013: During their joint teleconference, Presidents agree on the process for preparing the organization of work of the 2015 COPs and have initial discussions on a draft thought starter on a possible approach for the organization of work of the 2015 COPs.

Jan.-Feb. 2014: Presidents inform their respective Bureau on the process for preparing the organization of work of the 2015 COPs during the individual Bureau teleconferences.

Development / approval of the thought starter:

3 Mar. 2014: Secretariat sends to Presidents for written comments a revised version of the draft thought starter incorporating the comments made during the joint presidents' teleconference.

End Mar. 2014: Secretariat amends the thought starter based on the comments made by the Presidents and submits it to the Presidents for approval.

Consultation with each individual Bureau on the thought starter:

7 Apr. 2014: Secretariat sends the thought starter to the three bureaux, requesting comments by 21 April 2014 and indicating that all three bureaux will have a chance to discuss the organization of work, at their individual bureau meetings.

14-15 May 2014: SC Bureau meeting;

22-23 May 2014: BC Bureau meeting;

4-5 June 2014: RC Bureau meeting.

A compilation of comments received will be made available to the three bureaux.

Development / approval of the tentative schedule of work:

1 Oct. 2014: Secretariat circulates a draft tentative schedule of work for 2015 COPs, which incorporates the feedback received from three bureaux, to the Presidents for their consideration.

10 Oct. 2014: Presidents agree on the draft tentative schedule of work to be considered by the bureaux at their joint meeting.

13 Oct. 2014: Secretariat sends out to the bureaux the draft tentative schedule of work for 2015 COPs, as background document for their joint meeting.

10 Nov. 2014: Joint Presidents meeting (any issues arising from the consultations on the tentative schedule of work could be discussed in preparation for the joint bureaux meeting).

11-12 Nov. 2014: During their joint meeting, bureaux consider and approve the tentative schedule of work for 2015 COPs, which is then annexed to the report of the joint meeting and made available on the website of the conventions as soon as possible following the joint bureaux meeting. It will also be made available as an information document for the 2015 COPs.