

**INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANT RELEASE AND TRANSFER REGISTERS
(PRTR) COORDINATING GROUP**

Third meeting, Paris, 11 March 2008

DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT¹

Prepared by the Bureau

I. OPENING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The third meeting of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group (Coordinating Group) was held on 11 March 2008 in Paris. Mr. Craig Boljkovac (United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) served as the meeting's Chair, substituting for Mr. Achim Halpaap (UNITAR), who had sent regrets for his absence.
2. The meeting was attended by national experts from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.
3. Representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNITAR and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) attended the meeting.
4. The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) sent its regrets. It had submitted a written report on its capacity-building activities in South Eastern Europe (see paragraph 26).
5. The Chair invited the Coordinating Group to adopt the report of the second meeting held in Copenhagen on 26 February 2007.
6. With respect to this agenda item, the meeting decided upon the following actions:

Action 1: The Coordinating Group adopted the report of its second meeting.

Action 2: Mr. Halpaap was elected to serve as Chair of the Coordinating Group for another term. Mr. Alain Chung was re-elected to serve as Vice-chair.

¹ This document has not been formally edited. It is intended for review by the Coordinating Group prior to its adoption at the fourth meeting of the Coordinating Group on 10 March 2009.

II. REPORTING ON PRTR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SAICM IMPLEMENTATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

7. The Chair reported that the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Global Plan of Action, adopted in Dubai in February 2006, contains some 300 activities to bring us toward the 2020 international goal of sound chemicals management. PRTRs are mentioned numerous times.

8. The Coordinating Group discussed its possible contribution to the second meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva from 11 to 14 May 2009. The secretariat, having consulted with the SAICM secretariat, reported there were two modalities for reporting on PRTR capacity- building for implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) to ICCM. Consistent with the Coordinating Group's mandate to promote coordination of capacity- building activities for countries with economies in transition and countries in the developing world, the Coordinating Group could report on activities collected by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and its partner organizations in the PRTR capacity- building matrix as a contribution to the SAICM baseline snapshot covering the period 2002-2007. The secretariat proposed a number of technical amendments to the matrix to bring it in line with the proposed IGO questionnaire being prepared for reporting on SAICM implementation activities. The Coordinating Group could also submit an information paper to the SAICM secretariat for circulation at ICCM. Such a document would need to be submitted no later than 1 April 2009. It could be circulated in multiple languages; however SAICM is not able to provide for translation of information documents. The two modalities of SAICM reporting could be combined, with the paper covering strategic points and an annex covering capacity- building activities within the scope of the Coordinating Group. The secretariat further reported that there is no process of formal affiliation with the ICCM.

9. The group discussed United Nations initiatives in the area of e-learning or distance learning, including the UNEP Division on Early Warning and Assessment MENTOR e-learning initiative. UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat may develop an e-learning module addressing the Kiev Protocol on PRTRs for inclusion in the Virtual Classroom during the 2009-2011 intersessional period. UNITAR reported that it is also developing e-learning courses on a variety of topics related to environmental management.

10. With respect to this agenda item, the meeting decided upon the following actions:

Action 3: The Coordinating Group agreed to submit an information paper to second meeting of the ICCM. The main body of the document would cover strategic issues, including an overview of capacity- building activities and an analysis of opportunities and gaps. An annex to the document could present the matrix of activities. The Coordinating Group will review the matrix carefully to ensure duplicative reporting would be avoided. The secretariat and UNITAR will explore how to diagram major capacity- building activities in the information document.

Action 4: The Coordinating Group set up a Working Group to prepare an outline and draft text of the information document. UNITAR, UNEP and UNECE and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) agreed to serve in the Working Group. The Chair invited Norway and Sweden to consider participating as well.

Action 5: It was agreed that a designated delegate accredited to ICCM would report out the information note prepared by the Coordinating Group to the second meeting of the ICCM.

Action 6: The secretariat was asked to re-circulate an informal paper on PRTRs' relevance to SAICM processes which UNEP had prepared in 2006. It will also post the paper to the Web pages of the Coordinating Group.

Action 7: UNEP will prepare and circulate for comment a notice about the activities of the Coordinating Group for submittal to the SAICM newsletter.

Action 8: The Coordinating Group agreed that if UNITAR or another United Nations agency were to prepare a side event at ICCM, it would contribute information on its activities, drawn from the strategic information paper, to the event. UNITAR agreed in principle to work with partners towards the goal of a side event.

Action 9: The Coordinating Group will keep under review and explore synergies between these initiatives and report back to the group at its next meeting.

Action 10: UNITAR agreed to, as appropriate, make the PRTR Virtual Classroom² as accessible as possible, including, where possible, removing password protection from all public areas.

III. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

11. The Chair invited participants to report on their activities related to PRTR capacity-building and awareness-raising.

12. UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics–Chemicals Unit reported that a methodological toolkit for Mercury, Dioxins and Furans had been developed for the Mercury Programme and Stockholm POPs Convention.³ A separate project had identified the availability of POPs laboratory capacities. Additionally, in 2007 UNEP Chemicals organized an awareness-raising meeting on PRTR in Benin as well as a regional meeting (in Uruguay) of the MERCOSUR to discuss the possibilities for using PRTRs in POPs and pesticides monitoring.

13. UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination reported that a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project proposal to assist countries to implement Stockholm POPs Convention using PRTRs was successful last year. Each GEF proposal undergoes a two-step screening process. The PRTR proposal will pass through the second and final screening at the end of March 2008. In the project, UNEP and UNITAR would assist countries with development of PRTRs under the Stockholm POPs Convention in countries from three regions:

- South America: Chile, Peru and Ecuador
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Ukraine and Kazakhstan
- Southeast Asia: Cambodia and Thailand.

Additionally, the project would conduct a regional assessment on the development of a regional reporting system for the Stockholm POPs Convention in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). UNEP would serve as the implementing agency

² See <http://prtrvc.unitar.org/>.

³ Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

and UNITAR will execute the project, which will begin in August 2008 and run for two years. One million dollars (US) had been requested from GEF. UNITAR and participating member States would provide 1.5 million dollars (US) in co-financing for the project.

14. UNECE reported that it envisages that the GEF project would play a part in the implementation of the EU TACIS project on the Aarhus Convention and was in discussion with the TACIS project managers concerning the potential input from TACIS to the GEF project.

15. The United States of America (United States) and UNITAR reported that establishment of a regional PRTR system for Dominican Republic and Central American countries is under discussion as part of the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

16. UNITAR continues its collaboration with Armenia to Design a National PRTR System to Strengthen National Capacities for the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention. In 2008 Armenia will design a pollutant release and transfer register that will focus on, but not be restricted to, persistent organic pollutants (including candidate chemicals for addition to the Stockholm Convention). It is expected that the project outcomes will contribute towards implementation of the UNECE Protocol on PRTRs and demonstrate how PRTRs can be used as a tool for Stockholm POPs Convention implementation. The financial support was kindly provided by the Government of Switzerland.

17. In 2006, Togo has taken steps to prepare a Situation Analysis and Feasibility Study for the Development of a National PRTR System. The feasibility study will assist Togo to determine the realistic goals of the national PRTR system that would address national needs and environmental priority concerns. Considering the importance of the agricultural sector in Togo, it is expected that the national register will focus on non-point sources of pollutants.

18. In the Latin American region, UNITAR initiated in 2007 a project to support Ecuador, Panama and Chile to institutionalize a Mercury Emission Inventory within a national PRTR framework. Currently, Ecuador and Panama are starting a process to develop PRTR institutionalization strategies and Chile is exploring fine-tuning of its PRTR for mercury based on inventory results.

19. In 2008, UNITAR in close collaboration with UNEP, will launch a GEF Global PRTR Project on POPs monitoring, reporting and information dissemination using PRTRs (see more detailed information in paragraphs 11 and 12).

20. On 10 October 2007, UNITAR participated in the side-event “UNECE Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers: Ready for take-off” within the Sixth Ministerial Conference ‘Environment for Europe’ (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007) organized by UNECE, with the support of the Government of Switzerland. The discussions focused on various aspects of implementation of registers under the Kiev Protocol on PRTRs and challenges to developing PRTRs. As a part of the discussion linkages between the Kiev Protocol and global and regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements were highlighted.

21. UNITAR provided an update on the activities related to national implementation of SAICM:

(a) Pilot Projects to Strengthen Governance, Civil Society Participation and Partnerships within an Integrated National Chemicals and Waste Programme. Pilot Projects on National Implementation of SAICM commenced in four project countries (Belarus, Panama, Pakistan, and

Tanzania) in September 2006. The UNITAR/Inter-Organization for MC projects are focused on governance, stakeholder participation, and partnerships within an Integrated National Chemicals and Waste Management Programme and are funded by the Government of Switzerland. Pilot countries (except for Pakistan) have developed a National SAICM capacity assessment and now finalizing an inter-ministerial co-ordinating mechanism, stakeholder involvement policy, and information exchange mechanism. National Forums on Governance and Priority Setting for SAICM Implementation took place in February and March. Next steps involve planning and implementing two partnership projects for the next 18 months.

(b) Projects to Update National Profiles, Develop a National SAICM Capacity Assessment, and Hold a National SAICM Priority-Setting Workshop. A total of 37 additional projects related to SAICM enabling activities have now been approved by the SAICM Quick Start Programme (QSP), with UNITAR as the executing agency. The projects on “Updating National Profiles, Development of a National SAICM Capacity Assessment, and Holding a National SAICM Priority-Setting Workshop” aim to assist countries to undertake enabling activities as recommended by paragraph 22 of the Overarching Policy Strategy. As part of these two-year projects, the Profiles will be updated in light of the outcomes of ICCM. As a next step, countries undertake a second enabling activity - the development of a comprehensive National SAICM Capacity Assessment. The third activity is the holding of a National SAICM Priority-Setting Workshop. This workshop will determine, based on the Capacity Assessment, National Profile and additional deliberations, priority issues related to SAICM implementation. Some country projects include additional elements.

22. UNECE reported that a European Commission TACIS⁴ project had been initiated on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Central Asia in 2007. Four of the five national project committees had asked a PRTR component be included among the project’s priority activities. An amendment to the project design is therefore being prepared and will be submitted in April 2008. UNECE also reported that it had assisted in preparation of a national PRTR capacity-building workshop held in Armenia through the support of the Ministry of Nature Protection and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) within the context of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC).

23. UNECE, working with the REC, had finalized the ENVSEC proposal, “Building Capacity for Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises and Public Authorities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and Western Balkan countries”, and invited applicants to submit it in conjunction with project fiche to the ENVSEC Management Committee, for possible consideration for funding PRTR activities. The proposal had also been posted to the Aarhus Convention/PRTR Capacity-building webpage.⁵ ENVSEC Committee had informed UNECE that the portfolio of potentially fundable projects was currently oversubscribed and that the projects submitted to date under the concept proposal had not been recommended for inclusion in the portfolio. The Committee had further recommended that PRTR projects be targeted quite specifically to priority ENVSEC sub-regions. UNECE understood this to mean that national PRTR capacity-building proposals would be entertained by ENVSEC exceptionally in future.

24. UNECE further reported that a proposal for conducting two PRTR workshops in Central Asia had been submitted to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in

⁴ The “Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States” programme of the European Commission, commonly known as TACIS.

⁵ See <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.cb.htm>.

the framework of the UNECE review of OSCE member States' compliance with the Organization's environmental commitments in May 2007.

25. Canada mentioned its project to assist Mexico in the improvement of its national emissions inventory and PRTR program in partnership with the United States and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

26. The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe's PRTR capacity-building activities in 2007-2008 included:

(a) Preparation and submission of a South East Europe (SEE) proposal to the ENVSEC Initiative for funding. Based on the results of the project "Improving Practices of Public Participation: Next Steps in Implementing the Aarhus Convention in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo (under interim United Nations administration)", implemented between 2004 and 2006, and in line with the capacity-building concept proposal developed within the framework of the Aarhus Convention Working Group on PRTRs, The proposal is supported by the ministries of five SEE countries.

(b) In 2007 and 2008 spring, two trainings have been held on "Developing and Operating European Pollutant Emissions Register (EPER) and European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR) Systems" for officials responsible for building and operating EPER and future E-PRTR systems in SEE countries and in selected new EU member states, within the EU funded project "Support for the Implementation of the Multi-Annual Work Programme of the Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession for the period 2006-2009" (ECENA). The first training was held on 15-17 October 2007 in Szentendre, Hungary, and addressed issues related to building and operating the EPER system, the planned transition to E-PRTR system, as well as the preparations for the implementation of the PRTR Protocol, and shared experiences among different countries from EU member states and the region. The two-day training was completed with a one-day field visit to the Hungarian EPER register in the Ministry of Environment and Water in Budapest.

(c) The second EPER and E-PRTR training would be held on 17-21 March 2008 in Bristol, United Kingdom, in cooperation with the Agency of England and Wales, for the SEE ECENA member countries, which will focus on the new activities under E-PRTR and the PRTR Protocol. The training will include sessions on E-PRTR as well as a visit to the UK Pollution Inventory and a site visit to an LCP plant where participants can also gain some practical experiences.⁷

(d) A proposal was developed and submitted to the Norwegian Fund in Hungary on assisting in using the Hungarian PRTR system for more efficient environmental health information to the public and making it more user friendly. The proposal is under consideration.

27. With respect to this agenda item, the meeting decided upon the following action:

⁷ Further information on the trainings can be obtained at:
www.rec.org/REC/Programs/environmental_policy/ecena/training_programmes/2007_10_szentendre/default.html.

Action 11: The Coordinating Group requested the secretariat to update the capacity-building matrix⁸ with information on opportunities for coordination between the new international PRTR projects.

IV. FUTURE BUSINESS

28. OECD informed the meeting of that Israel, Slovenia and South Africa are observers to the OECD PRTR Task Force. In addition, Chile, Estonia and Russian Federation would be invited to participate as ad-hoc observers in future meetings of the OECD Task Force on PRTRs. The next meeting of the Task Force will take place in March 2009 at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris. OECD invited the Coordinating Group to consider scheduling its fourth meeting back-to-back with the meeting of the Task Force. Several participants expressed support for this proposal.

29. The secretariat informed the meeting of the request from the Stockholm POPs Convention secretariat that representatives of the Basel⁹, Rotterdam¹⁰ and Stockholm POPs Conventions be invited to the next meeting of the Coordinating Group.

30. The Coordinating Group requested the secretariat revise the terms of reference to reflect the agreement that officers of the Bureau would serve for a term of two-years beginning in 2009.

31. With respect to this agenda item, the meeting decided upon the following actions:

Action 12: The Coordinating Group agreed to hold its next meeting one day prior to the opening of the next OECD Task Force on PRTR meeting.¹²

Action 13: The Coordinating Group requested the Bureau to extend invitations to its fourth meeting also to representatives of the six OECD observer countries. It further agreed to extend invitations to the three UNEP chemical conventions secretariats and to the SAICM secretariat.

Action 14: The secretariat will circulate electronically to the Coordinating Group a revised terms of reference reflecting the extension to two years of the term of service of its officers.

⁸ Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Capacity-building Activities (ECE/MP.PP/AC.1/2007/L.8). See www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/pp/ece_mp_pp_ac_1_2007_L_8_e.pdf.

⁹ The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

¹⁰ The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

¹² Subsequently, the OECD Task Force on PRTRs scheduled its next meeting to be held on 11-13 March 2009 in Paris. The fourth meeting of the International PRTR Coordinating Group will therefore take place on 10 March 2009.

ANNEX I. SUMMARY LIST OF ACTIONS ITEMS

1. The Coordinating Group adopted the report of its second meeting.
2. Mr. Halpaap was elected to serve as Chair of the Coordinating Group for another term. Mr. Alain Chung was re-elected to serve as Vice-chair.
3. The Coordinating Group agreed to submit an information paper to second meeting of the ICCM. The main body of the document would cover strategic issues, including an overview of capacity-building activities and an analysis of opportunities and gaps. An annex to the document could present the matrix of activities. The Coordinating Group will review the matrix carefully to ensure duplicative reporting would be avoided. The secretariat and UNITAR will explore how to diagram major capacity-building activities in the information document.
4. The Coordinating Group set up a Working Group to prepare an outline and draft text of the information document. UNITAR, UNEP and UNECE and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) agreed to serve in the Working Group. The Chair invited Norway and Sweden to consider participating as well.
5. It was agreed that a designated delegate accredited to ICCM would report out the information note prepared by the Coordinating Group to the second meeting of the ICCM.
6. The secretariat was asked to re-circulate an informal paper on PRTRs' relevance to SAICM processes which UNEP had prepared in 2006. It will also post the paper to the Web pages of the Coordinating Group.
7. UNEP will prepare and circulate for comment a notice about the activities of the Coordinating Group for submittal to the SAICM newsletter.
8. The Coordinating Group agreed that if UNITAR or another United Nations agency were to prepare a side event at ICCM, it would contribute information on its activities, drawn from the strategic information paper, to the event. UNITAR agreed in principle to work with partners towards the goal of a side event.
9. The Coordinating Group will keep under review and explore synergies between these initiatives and report back to the group at its next meeting.
10. UNITAR agreed to, as appropriate, make the PRTR Virtual Classroom¹³ as accessible as possible, including, where possible, removing password protection from all public areas.
11. The Coordinating Group requested the secretariat to update the capacity-building matrix¹⁴ with information on opportunities for coordination between the new international PRTR projects.
12. The Coordinating Group agreed to hold its next meeting one day prior to the opening of the next OECD Task Force on PRTR meeting.¹⁵

¹³ See <http://prtrvc.unitar.org/>.

¹⁴ Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Capacity-building Activities (ECE/MP.PP/AC.1/2007/L.8). See www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/pp/ece_mp_pp_ac_1_2007_L_8_e.pdf.

13. The Coordinating Group requested the Bureau to extend invitations to its fourth meeting also to representatives of the six OECD observer countries. It further agreed to extend invitations to the three UNEP chemical conventions secretariats and to the SAICM secretariat.

14. The secretariat will circulate electronically to the Coordinating Group a revised terms of reference reflecting the extension to two years of the term of service of its officers.

¹⁵ Subsequently, the OECD Task Force on PRTRs scheduled its next meeting to be held on 11-13 March 2009 in Paris. The fourth meeting of the International PRTR Coordinating Group will therefore take place on 10 March 2009.