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**GLOBAL NETWORK FOR THE MONITORING OF PERSISTENT ORGANIC
CHEMICALS (POPS) IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

Paper by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Chemicals¹

1. Adequate environmental monitoring data on POPs and other hazardous substances is presently lacking with the exception of a relative few locales in industrialized regions. The lack of environmental monitoring data seriously impairs the analysis, evaluation and assessment of the potential threat of these substances to man and the environment. Monitoring data will also be necessary in order to establish practical measures to evaluate and monitor the success of any implemented strategies under international agreements, e.g. the effectiveness evaluation required in Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on POPs.
2. A concerted effort to harmonize and/or develop monitoring and local/regional effects data for POPs is therefore needed to provide the tools for countries to establish scientifically sound priorities for the future management of POPs within the scope of the Stockholm Convention as well as similar regional instruments. Such an effort should include the establishment of a network of individuals and/or institutions using or producing data on measurements of POPs in the environment in a broad sense. The aim of the network would be to encourage increased co-operation, compatibility and consistency between chemicals monitoring programmes measuring POPs and to improve accessibility of the produced data to the widest possible audience. The network should build on and utilize to the fullest extent possible the GEF Regionally Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances as well as activities and programmes in other international and regional organizations. As an additional activity discussion groups would be established on individual items related to monitoring e.g. sampling, matrices, analytical methods, statistical treatment etc.

¹This document was not formally edited.

3. UNEP/Chemicals has recently taken the first steps towards creating a network that would link together programmes and institutions responsible for or taking part in monitoring activities. During 2002 the plans are to establish agreements with a core set of programmes and to establish up a core group of organizations, including UNECE, to advice on the further development of the network. A website will be launched in early 2002, together with electronic discussion groups to promote the exchange of views among experts on issues e.g. analytical methods, sampling, matrices etc. The discussion groups will be moderated by an internationally recognized expert in the field.

4. At the global level the present situation is characterized by a few well developed monitoring programmes with a strong focus on the Arctic, Northern Europe and North America. Large parts of the world are not covered at all or only represented by scattered data from individual scientific studies. There is therefore also a need to initiate new monitoring programmes on POPs in parts of the world not covered at present. In order to get a better coverage of POPs at the global level steps will be taken during 2002 and 2003 to identify potential participating institutions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and to attract donors that might be interested in providing proper equipment, training and operational support until self-sufficiency has been achieved.

5. The sampling and analysing of all twelve POPs under the Stockholm Convention would entail large costs for all countries. There is a need for setting priorities between the POPs substances, as well as between matrices and media, number of samples, sampling intervals etc. UNEP/Chemicals plans to hold a meeting for interested organizations and institutions in late 2002 to explore possibilities for a broad consensus on a base set of media, matrices, samples and substances to be included in a programme that might establish a base line for the effectiveness evaluation required by Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on POPs four years after its entry into force. Such a consensus might also provide a basis for further harmonization between monitoring programmes.

6. To the fullest extent possible, activities in other international organizations would be taken into account in the planning and execution of the Global POPs Network. The activities planned under the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring are highly relevant to the plans of UNEP/Chemicals and co-operation will be sought at all levels. In particular, the Working Group might facilitate the participation of countries with economies in transition from the UNECE region in the global network.

7. UNEP/Chemicals has received a contribution of \$350,000 from the United States Environment Protection Agency for this activity. In addition, UNEP/Chemicals is committing substantial in-kind resources to the establishment of the network and would solicit similar contributions from other interested parties.

8. The working programme of the Global Network for the next years includes a meeting with a core group of programmes to be held in Geneva during Spring 2002. In this meeting, the programmes would discuss a global strategy and terms of agreements for a profitable collaboration with UNEP/Chemicals. UNEP would invite each institution within the core group to take the responsibility for the project design of a part of the monitoring activity on POPs. At this stage, the project designed by the different programmes would be as broad as possible both in terms of matrices, number of samples and sites analysed. The programmes/institutions would

be invited to submit a draft of the project design to the discussion groups where a public discussion on the drafts will be held. After some rounds of public discussion-inclusion of the comments-resubmission of the drafts, the different components of the monitoring programme would be grouped into a general guideline for the establishment regional monitoring activity on POPs.

9. UNEP/Chemicals is also planning a workshop on environmental monitoring and assessment of POPs towards the end of 2002, where all countries and interested institutions would discuss the work developed by the core group. People and institutions convened at the workshop would be requested to set priorities in terms of matrices, number of samples, etc. in order to resize the general guideline on regional monitoring of POPs. Moreover, each region would set different priorities taking into consideration existing knowledge gaps and the regional ecosystem. During the following year, appropriate working groups (defined during the workshop) would be charged with designing national guidelines for POPs monitoring and assessment based on regional guidelines. National guidelines would reflect necessary adjustments and should include a high level of detail in terms of infrastructure as well as human resources needed to realise the national monitoring programme. The national and regional guidelines would serve as tools for fund raising during the following years (2003-2004).

10. The first measures according to the guidelines would be taken before and after the first Conference of the Parties, planned not later than one year after the entry into force of the Convention. The interim secretariat of the Stockholm Convention would coordinate the activities, support the working groups and the discussion groups as well as the workshop. During the preparation of the guidelines the secretariat would develop a reporting system to store the data collected on POPs and make appropriate arrangements to make them public.

Provisional work plan of the Global Network for the Monitoring of Chemicals in the Environment	
Meeting of a core group of programmes/Institutions	Spring 2002
Discussion of the draft project design for monitoring and assessment of POPs in the environment	Spring-Winter 2002
Workshop on environmental monitoring and assessment of POPs	End of 2002
Definition of National Guidelines for environmental monitoring and assessment of POPs	Spring 2003
Fund rising and performance of the firsts measurements	2003-2004