

PROGRESS IN AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION (Agenda Item 9)

1. Status of implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in Asia and Pacific

The Rotterdam Convention requires its Party to notify the Secretariat when taking a national final regulatory action to ban or severely restrict a chemical. According to the Convention Secretariat, in the Asian Region, 6 Parties and 4 Participating States have submitted notifications, while in the Pacific region two Parties and one non-Party state submitted notifications.

For each 41 chemical listed in Annex III, each Party must transmit to the secretariat a response concerning the future import of the chemical. Every six months the secretariat must inform all Parties of the responses received through the PIC Circular and the web site. Exporting party has to ensure that export do not occur in contrary to the import decision. The level of the import response rate among the Parties in Asia is 71%.

A developing country or a country with an economy in transition that is experiencing health or environment problems caused by a severely hazardous pesticide formulation under conditions of use in its territory, may propose to the Secretariat the listing of the severely hazardous pesticide formulation in Annex III of the Convention. In the reporting period there is no proposal submitted.

Furthermore, the Convention also contains provisions regarding export notification. When a Party is exporting a chemical that is banned or severely restricted in its own country, it is obliged to provide an export notification to the importing Party. As this information is provided directly from the exporting Party to the importing Party, the Secretariat does not have any information available on the status. Parties may wish to report to the APPPC on their experience with either sending or receiving export notification.

To ensure the effectiveness of the Convention, Parties have to fully implement it. Governments may wish to report to the APPPC on their experience with submitting notification, import response, export notification, proposing severely hazardous pesticide formulation that causes health or environmental problems and ensure the compliance with the Convention.

2. Technical Assistance

During the reporting period, a number of technical assistance activities have been undertaken in the region. It includes a regional training workshop to introduce to the designated national authorities on how the Convention operates; a training and awareness raising workshop with regional officers of FAO and UNEP and the regional center of the Basel Convention to discuss opportunities for the regional delivery of the technical assistance; and a consultation with the ASEAN working group on multilateral environmental agreements (AWGMEAS) to promote the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the ASEAN region. In response to requests from Governments, national meetings were held in China and Sri Lanka with the aim to develop national strategy for ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Below is a summary of the key outcomes of these activities:

2.1 Regional training workshop for the designated national authorities (DNAs) (March 2004 in China)

In response to requests for training in the implementation of the Convention, in March 2004, the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention organized the Asian Regional Training Workshop in Beijing. 47 participants from 17 countries attended the workshop. The workshop provided practical training on the key operational elements of the Convention. It included case studies and discussion in small groups on the preparation and submission of notifications of final regulatory actions, review of decision guidance documents and preparation and submission of import responses, review and completion of the incident report form for severely hazardous pesticide formulations, and an exercise on export notifications.

The participants agreed that as a result of the workshops they had gained practical experience in the implementation of the key elements of the Convention, having worked on the forms and guidance for the preparation and submission. They also understood how these forms were processed by the secretariat and their role in the operation of the Convention.

In addition, the workshops provided an opportunity for countries to share their experience in working towards ratification and implementing of the Convention and to identify national and regional priorities. Participants also considered how existing cooperative mechanisms and activities might be used in addressing those priorities. The full reports of the workshop are posted on the Rotterdam Convention web site.

2.2 Training and awareness raising workshop with regional officers of FAO and UNEP and the regional center of the Basel Convention (October 2004 in Thailand)

In September 2004, at its first meeting the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention adopted a decision (RC-1/14) on the regional delivery of technical assistance inviting regional entities and organizations to make full use of synergies.

To review options, representatives from the regional offices of FAO and UNEP, the regional centres of the Basel Convention and the Secretariat of ASEAN were invited to a meeting in Bangkok in October 2004. This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how the various offices might cooperate with the secretariat as regional partners in the delivery of technical assistance. In view of the large number of regional and subregional organizations in existence, particular attention was paid to the identification of potential partners in the regional delivery of technical assistance. It also presented an opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned in defining country needs and developing technical assistance to meet those needs.

Among others the APPPC has been considered as one of the most relevant regional partner. As follow-up the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention, partially in cooperation with APPPC have undertaken a number of activities in Asia, as reported below.

2.3 Consultation between the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention and the ASEAN working group on multilateral environmental agreements (AWGMEAS) on promoting the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the ASEAN region (May 2005, Cambodia)

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has established a working group on multilateral environmental agreements, which meets annually. In cooperation with the ASEAN secretariat, a day was added to the working group meeting held in May 2005 with the objective of considering the status of implementation of the Rotterdam Convention and identifying opportunities for further cooperation.

The working group agreed that its primary role and the role of the ASEAN secretariat in connection relation to the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention would consist of providing a mechanism for the exchange of information on the status of ratification and implementation among ASEAN members. It was also agreed that further efforts should be made to raise awareness of the importance of ratification of the Rotterdam Convention at more senior levels in ASEAN (for example, among ASEAN senior officials on the environment and participants in the ASEAN ministerial meeting on the environment). Countries should approach the Rotterdam Convention secretariat directly regarding assistance with the ratification or implementation of the Convention. A copy of the meeting report was posted on the Rotterdam Convention website.

2.4 Inter-Agency Workshop on China's Ratification and Implementation of Rotterdam Convention, December 2004

Organized by State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), the above workshop was held in Sanya, Hainan Province of China, from 13-15 December 2004. Thirty-four participants from eight ministries or commissions under the State Council and provincial government agencies including officials from the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, Australian experts and the FAO were present.

The workshop recognized that by enhancing the information exchange on hazardous chemicals among countries in international trade, Rotterdam Convention plays an important role in improving environmental management on chemicals. Its ratification and implementation is significant to China, progressively meeting international standards and setting up an example to other Asian countries. It helps China to understand restriction of use of chemicals and pesticides and how to protect public health and ecological environment. Importantly, it facilitates the adjustment of product structure of Chinese pesticide industry and accelerates the development of high potent pesticides with minimum residue. The workshop recognized the importance of the establishment of an organic system in implementing Rotterdam Convention, which was essential to the obligation in the implementation work of China. The country had made great efforts in establishing and developing the management infrastructure for chemicals.

To meet both national and international requirements for plant protection, the Agriculture Ministry has already conducted institutional restructuring activities and established the Plant Protection & Quarantine Division in charge of various activities related to plant protection. The capacity building set a good example for other developing countries.

Having clearer understanding of the basic framework and components of the Convention, the participants reached agreement on the necessity of ratifying the Convention. They also deemed it necessary to establish the implementation mechanism in China to enhance inter-agency coordination, facilitate information exchange, mobilize resources and respond to potential problems. Accordingly, they agreed to promote the formulation of the country's NIP and looked forward to the issuance of NIP Guidance of the Rotterdam Convention.

The above efforts partially facilitated the ratification of the Convention by China, in March 2005. The summary report of the consultation is available on the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat web site.

2.5 National Consultation on the Ratification and Implementation of Rotterdam Convention in Sri Lanka, April 2005

Sri Lanka has yet to ratify the Rotterdam Convention. However, since 1998 the country has implemented the interim Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure, on voluntary basis with a view to improve chemicals management. The procedure was implemented through the Designated National Authorities (DNAs) namely the Registrar of Pesticides (ROP) of the Department of Agriculture and the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) representing pesticides and industrial chemicals respectively.

In the context that the voluntary PIC procedure cease to operate from 24 February 2006 a National Consultation Forum on Ratification and Implementation of the Rotterdam Convention was held in Sri Lanka from 18-21 April 2005. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Lands & Irrigation, the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources, the Ministry of Healthcare & Sanitation, the Ministry of Industries & Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Customs Department, the Import & Export Control Department, the National Planning Department, the Central Environmental Authority, and leading chemicals importers and public interest groups attended the meeting.

They discussed the development of a national strategy for the ratification and implementation of the Convention, which would complement the implementation of Basel and Stockholm Conventions as well as the recommendations of UNITAR-assisted action plan on integrated chemicals management.

The forum recognized that the ratification and implementation of the convention was of great benefit to the country for efficient management of chemicals. A Cabinet Memorandum would be developed in consultation with the two respective DNAs and other relevant agencies. The legal framework and infrastructure facilities would also be reviewed and strengthened in order to manage chemicals efficiently. A need for establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee for industrial chemicals similar to that of pesticides was identified. The forum agreed to establish a drafting committee for the preparation of the Cabinet Memorandum by mid of May 2005 and to submit the Memorandum to the Cabinet by end of June 2005 for approval.

To entertain benefits of the convention without further delay, the DNAs would acknowledge export notifications (as needed), prepare and submit import responses for pesticides and industrial chemicals in Annex III of the Convention as appropriate. The DNAs would also update notifications of final regulatory action for banned or several restricted chemicals, where necessary, and take initiatives in establishing a system for collecting poisoning information in respect of Severely Hazardous Pesticide Formulations.

The summary report of the consultation is available on the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat web site.

3 Regional Workshop on International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides: Implementation, Monitoring and Observance

The workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 26-28 July 2005. It was attended by the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) member countries, which included Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Other participants included delegates from governments of Japan and Singapore, UNEP and WHO, representatives from CropLife and PANAP, as observers, and resource persons from FAO, Rome.

The participants discussed, how best the new provisions of the Code of Conduct, revised in 2002, be used to strengthen its guidance to reduce the adverse effects of pesticides on health and the environment and to support sustainable agricultural practices. They assessed the status of implementation of the revised Code at the country level and identified needs, priorities and emerging issues. They also discussed the implications of those new provisions of pesticide management in respective countries. Participants shared the information on the status of observance of the Code in Asia and jointly developed mechanisms for improved monitoring, collaboration and information exchange.

The workshop recognized that all countries in the Asia region are committed to implementing the Code and have made significant progress in promoting the judicious and responsible use of pesticides in support of sustainable agricultural development and improved public health. It was noted that all countries have passed national legislation to regulate the use of pesticides and have established institutions to register the products used in the respective countries. Products that are highly hazardous to the user, consumer or the environment have been banned or severely restricted. All countries support the integrated pest management approach as a means to promote less hazardous and more environmentally friendly alternatives.

The workshop delegates carefully reviewed the draft guidelines on monitoring and observance of the revised Code. Suggestions were made to further improve the questionnaire and its clarity of understanding. In order to strengthen the implementation of the Code of Conduct, the country delegates adopted the following recommendations:

1. The revised Code of Conduct is recognized as a useful document for all countries to review its pest and pesticide management policies for the purpose of protecting human health, the environment and to ensure a sustainable development.
2. Using the proposed guidelines for monitoring Code implementation can be an effective instrument to assess national pesticide management capabilities and capacities and the effectiveness of present regulatory mechanisms. All governments are therefore encouraged to use the guidelines to strengthen their self-monitoring mechanisms to improve decision-making and environmental performance.
3. The delegates recognized that the monitoring of the Code of Conduct couldn't be adequately handled by a single organisation. Under the leadership of the designated authority, countries are therefore encouraged to use their inter-sectoral cooperation mechanisms to set-up a broad-based collection and review of country data, also involving industry and civil society organisations where appropriate. This data collection should cover all aspects of pesticides use including public health. This will encourage cooperation and reflect the actual situation in the country more accurately, and thus become more useful for decision-makers in agriculture, environment and health.

4. Results from the regular monitoring of the implementation of the Code should be submitted to the appropriate policy makers in the country for information, and to FAO for compilation and summary. In addition, the option for ad hoc reporting should be made widely known and encouraged.
5. Particular attention should be given to the monitoring of effects of pesticides on human health and livestock, especially in poorer rural communities, and on important ecological functions such as natural pest suppression, pollination and nutrient recycling that support sustainable agricultural production.
6. More information is needed on pesticide use as it relates to residues in food, the environment, and effects on wildlife, in order to enable the authorities to minimize risks.
7. Participants identified the need for improving knowledge on risk assessment and risk analysis in order to strengthen risk evaluation of pesticides as part of the registration process.
8. Existing pest management policies should be linked with specific pesticide use targets in order to achieve a comprehensive pest and pesticide management strategy with mutually synergistic benefits. This could be achieved through a systematic promotion of good agricultural practices (GAP), including IPM, organic farming, biocontrol agents, biopesticides, appropriate application equipment and others in the context of a broad education of the public, especially the farmers.
9. Generally, the setting of more specific targets in all areas of the Code would facilitate the measurement of the level of compliance.
10. While recognising huge differences between the individual countries, regional similarities exist. Exporting countries should increasingly take on their special responsibilities under the Code; all countries should comply with the concerned international conventions and ensure product quality meeting international standards (e.g. FAO/WHO specifications, ISO standards, etc.); and emerging economies should request assistance to attain a high regional level of achievement of Code compliance.
11. More information exchange should be encouraged between regulatory authorities of the countries in the region, particularly neighbouring countries. A harmonized system of classification and standards would strengthen the information exchange and communication.
12. All countries should have inventories on stocks of obsolete pesticides. Access to facilities for safe disposal of obsolete and leftover pesticides, and used containers are needed.

Standing Committee on Pesticide Management

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Gamini Manuweera and was attended by following:

China	:Mrs. Yang Yong Zhen
FAO	:Dr. Yun Zhou
India	:Mr. Amand Shah
Malaysia	:Mr. Halimi Mahmud
Sri Lanka	:Dr. Gamini Manuweera
Thailand	:Mr. Arunpol Payakpan, Mr. Chaiyos Supatanakul Dr. Rattanaporn Promsattha, Ms. Krisana Chutpong Ms. Lamai Chugiatwatana
Vietnam	:Mr. Dam Quoc Tru

Recommendations of the Meeting

The Committee referred to the recommendations made at the 23rd APPPC on pesticide management and recognized that there were number of important activities that needed to refocused during the next two years with more specific thrust areas. Among the major issues discussed included (not in priority order);

- i. Poor progress on the initiatives of the efforts on harmonization of pesticide regulatory systems, standards, data requirements and protocols etc.
- ii. Lack of information exchange on among the pesticide regulatory authorities of member countries for efficient national, bilateral and multilateral pesticide risk reduction programmes
- iii. Further commitments on matters pertaining to ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam convention in order to enjoy full benefits
- iv. Difficulties in promotion of biopesticides among farmers
- v. Disposal of obsolete pesticides

Committee was of the view that the activities to be identified for the next two year should be more pragmatic and focused, with achievable goal within the stipulated time period. Accordingly the following recommendations were made as priority areas:-

- i. Ratification Rotterdam Convention
 - a) Member countries to report to the RC Secretariat with a copy to the APPPC secretariat on progress and difficulties, constraints, if any, in ratification of the convention as soon as possible, in order to identify areas for support, if any;
 - b) Member countries to organize national consultative meeting with the relevant stakeholders to initiate the ratification process and individual countries to consult RC secretariat for technical assistance, if required.
- ii. Implementation Rotterdam Convention
 - a) Member countries to report to the RC Secretariat with a copy to APPPC secretariat on progress and difficulties, constraints, if any, in implementation of the convention obligations (e.g. import responses, notification of regulatory action);
 - b) Promote development of NIP and/or explore the possibilities of making use of existing inter-agency coordination mechanism for efficient implementation of the programme and to include the RC into regular national meeting of the pesticide committee or similar bodies.
- iii. Harmonization and information exchange of regulatory activities
 - a) FAO to consider prioritizing financial assistance to sub-regional activities pertaining to the topic;
 - b) National pesticide regulatory procedures and data requirements to be linked through the APPPC –website; in countries where there is still no national website carrying the above information to send soft copies to the Chairman of the standing committee to incorporate into the APPPC website.

- iv. Extension of TA programmes of the FAO on management of obsolete pesticides in countries in the region.
- v. The country representatives to the meetings of international instruments and conventions to ensure dialogue prior to the meeting for coordinated efforts in areas of common interest to the countries of the region.
- vi. Some of the member countries expressed willingness to explore the possibilities of hosting or assisting for any inter-sessional meeting, programmes (bilateral, multi lateral) to facilitate the above initiatives if need arises.

Discussions of the Presentation

Pesticide Technical Cooperation Program

The delegates were informed of the need to accelerate the pesticide technical cooperation programs, stressing on the key element of regulation enforcement.

Guidelines for the Disposal of Pesticides

FAO clarified that guidelines for the disposal of pesticides had already been published, and available at the FAO website.

Technical Assistance for Ratification

The representative from India offered technical assistance to other member countries of APPPC in connection with ratification of the Rotterdam Convention. FAO welcomed any form of assistance, and was willing to work out the details with the interested parties.