

Using Environmental Conventions in Development Cooperation



Environmental Conventions

Global challenges and global solutions affect everyone. This is the basis for Sweden's new policy for global development, "Shared responsibility". Enhanced collaboration and coordination between various actors is required if a coherent policy is to succeed in promoting sustainable global development and for the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals. Issues that concern the environment are examples of this.

There is an internationally agreed agenda for global environmental issues, the chief expressions of which are the environmental conventions.

These conventions address issues that are fundamental to the livelihoods of poor women, men and children. Often it is the poor who are most affected by environmental degradation. Excessive use of pesticides damages food production and is detrimental to health. Loss of wetlands undermines food and income opportunities and deprives nations of an important facility for purifying water. Climate change causes more and more violent and unpredictable weather patterns which can damage crops and infrastructure as well as cause both flooding and drought. The examples of linkages between environmental degradation and poverty are almost endless.

All parties to the conventions have a responsibility to implement the agreed measures. Sweden – like all developed country parties – also has a responsibility to assist developing country parties in doing so.

By improved mainstreaming of environmental conventions in development co-operation a dual goal can be achieved; improving the quality of life of poor women, men and children while contributing to a better global environment. It is therefore important that environmental conventions are included in dialogues both with partner countries and with other donors at the field level. The aim of this publication is to contribute to such dialogues.

Carin Jämtin, Minister for International Development Cooperation

Lena Sommestad, Minister for the Environment

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Environmental Conventions Are Assets in Development Cooperation

Global environmental threats hurt the poor disproportionately. Nearly a billion households, particularly the rural poor, rely directly on natural resources for their livelihoods. But global threats are undermining this resource base. The poorest countries are the most threatened: firstly because of their populations' dependence on natural resources for their livelihoods, their food security and health; secondly, because they have fewer resources to adapt to change. Poverty reduction, as the development agenda's priority, is therefore closely linked to sound management of the local, national, regional and *global* environments.

The environmental conventions presented in this brochure are of vital importance to development in poor countries. The conventions on climate change, biodiversity, desertification, wetlands, chemicals, hazardous waste and protection of the ozone layer all touch upon the fundamentals of sustainable livelihoods for many millions of people and provide for long term protection of people's health.

Each convention supports specific development areas by highlighting relevant environmental issues and providing the basis for a common view of the issues. The conventions are important for poverty alleviation because they address issues that are of vital importance to poor women, men and children – they are not ends in themselves.

Possible interlinkages between poverty eradication and relevant environmental conventions should be explored in the early stages of planning development cooperation operations. The Strategic Environmental Analysis undertaken as a compulsory part of country strategic processes is a useful tool for determining such connections. This exercise can bring out, from a joint needs assessment, opportunities for Sida and its developing country partner for utilizing environmental conventions as instruments in their common efforts to reduce poverty.

This brochure is intended to provide basic information about the conventions and their role in development cooperation for those who are involved in such development work.

The Rio Conference and the Johannesburg Summit

The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro 1992, the “Earth Summit”, was a watershed event in environmental history. The conference also represented a diplomatic breakthrough that opened up the possibility for a new era of global economic growth genuinely coupled with environmental stewardship. The Rio Conference initiated the pioneering work done by the environmental authorities in both developed and developing countries in order to implement the environmental conventions.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg 2002 endorsed, in its Plan of Implementation, the strengthening of international environmental governance, with particular reference to improved coordination and effectiveness of the multilateral environmental conventions.

The experience over the last ten years has shown that greater efforts to co-ordinate convention activities at national level and to integrate those convention processes into national planning and budgeting are essential for effective implementation in many developing countries.

Trade was also recognized at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as having a major role to play in achieving sustainable development and in eradicating poverty. The mutual supportiveness of environment, trade and development with a view to achieving sustainable development constitutes an important principle also in the work on improved mainstreaming of environmental conventions in development cooperation.

In addition, it is important to strengthen international governance by promoting mutual supportiveness between the multilateral trading system and the multilateral environmental agreements and thus work for a positive outcome of the Doha work programme agreed through the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Besides the mandate to clarify the relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements, commitments were made in the Doha Declaration and the WSSD Plan of Implementation for close cooperation between the WTO and other international organisations. In addition, the widely acknowledged expertise of UNEP and environmental conventions is also urgently needed in the ongoing discussions in the WTO as these bodies are affected by the negotiations. There is an urgent need for rapid attainment of the Doha Development Agenda objective and for implementing these commitments.

This Is How the Conventions Work

Conventions are internationally agreed laws. They are also arenas for policy discussions and further policy development through amendments and added protocols.

Most conventions require a decisive assembly usually consisting of the parties that have ratified, agreed upon or entered the agreement. The assembly is called Conference of the Parties (COP) and is often held in developing countries, serving to promote interest in the relevant conventions and environmental issues.

Observers from various non-governmental international organisations and groups (NGOs) are allowed to take part during meetings although some conventions allow only voting members to participate.

In working with environmental conventions, a culture of openness and co-operation has developed. In the preparatory stages, hearings are held in many countries with different interest groups. Even if NGOs are officially only observers, there is generally some leeway that can be exploited by knowledgeable and persistent NGOs with a broad support base. The regular reports on implementation of the conventions that participant countries are obliged to provide regularly, are also publicly accessible documents, underlining the democratic character of the conventions.

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), established in 1991, helps developing countries and countries with economies in transition to fund projects and programmes that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants. The fund serves as financial mechanism to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

These conventions provide broad strategic guidance to the GEF Council. The GEF Council converts this broad guidance into operational criteria for GEF projects. The GEF also collaborates closely with other environmental conventions and agreements. In partnership with the Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, GEF grants are enabling the Russian Federation and nations in Eastern Europe to phase out the use of ozone-depleting chemicals. Regional and international waters agreements influence GEF initiatives to protect international waters.

Eight Conventions

There are more than a hundred multilateral environmental agreements, most of them in the form of conventions. They are all in various respects prerequisites for an environmentally sustainable development. The following eight environmental conventions, with prime relevance for poverty alleviation, are given specific attention in Sweden's development cooperation.

1. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
2. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
3. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
4. The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands)
5. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
6. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
7. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal
8. The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Some examples of convention-related development cooperation activities supported by Sweden are given in boxes.

Atmosphere

The Climate Change Convention and the Montreal Protocol are both aimed at protecting the atmosphere from harmful changes, by reducing emissions, production and consumption of specified man-made gases.

1 THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

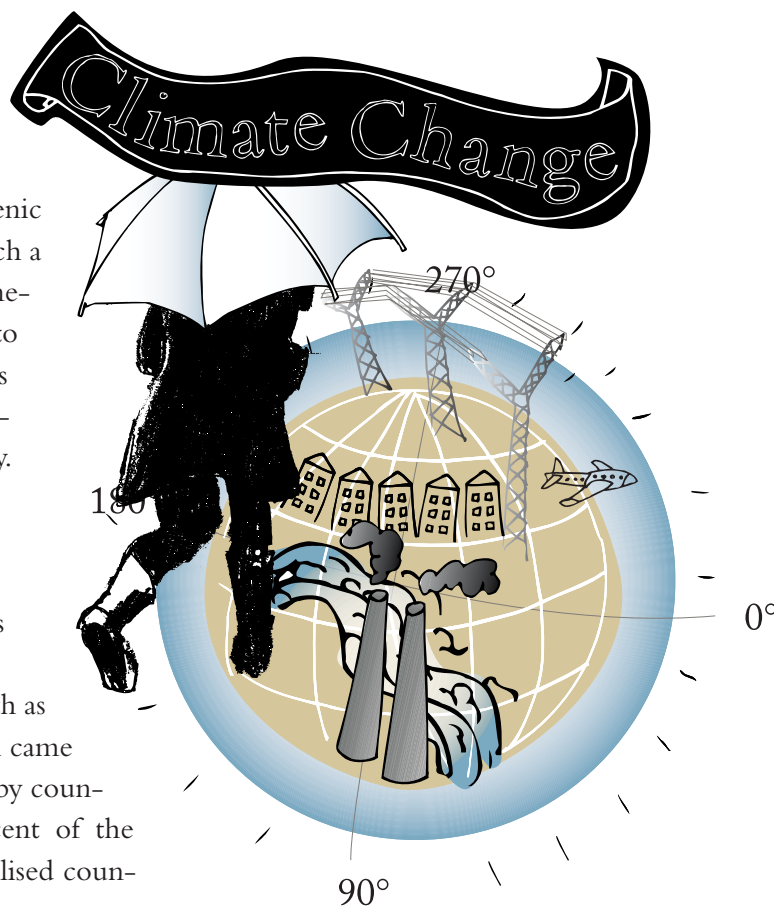
The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acknowledges the problem of human interference with the climate system, while the *Kyoto Protocol* and the Marrakech accords represent further steps towards tackling the problem. One of the main features of the protocol is commitments from industrialized countries regarding reduction or stabilization of greenhouse gases.

Objectives

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to ensure that economic development proceeds sustainably.

According to the Kyoto Protocol, the industrialised countries undertake to reduce their total greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2 per cent from 1990 levels during 2008–2012.

The UNFCCC has a strong position with as many as 186 Parties. The Kyoto Protocol came into force in early 2005 as it was ratified by countries contributing to at least 55 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions from industrialised countries.



The North-South Dimension

The industrialised North is responsible, both historically and currently, for most emissions of greenhouse gases while certain areas in the South risk the worst consequences in the form of droughts, more violent storms and a rise in the level of the oceans. This situation is reflected in the Convention and in the Kyoto Protocol where only industrialised countries, mainly in the North, have specific obligations to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, even if all parties, according to the Climate Convention and in accordance with the general principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, should control emissions by efficient energy use and other means. To achieve the objectives of the Climate Convention and as the Kyoto Protocol unfolds, countries of the South that emit large quantities of greenhouse gases will also have to take specific actions to curb their emissions.

The Kyoto Protocol introduces several mechanisms for cooperation, of which one, the Clean Development Mechanism, will provide developing countries with emission-avoiding technology, including its financing. The protocol also includes a financial package for climate change-related actions in developing countries. The package includes the establishment of a special climate change fund, a least-developed countries fund and an adaptation fund.

Internet source: www.unfccc.int

Energy Efficiency in Asian Businesses

Sida and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) have jointly set up an operation, called GERIAP, to promote more efficient use of energy in industry in nine Asian countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The project is based on the Cleaner Production approach that aims to minimise the use of materials and fuels, whilst reducing costs at the same time. Practical demonstrations of efficient use of energy in energy intensive industrial sectors such as steel, pulp, cement and chemicals are under way in each of the countries.

The project is foreseen to lead to business-driven activities in energy efficiency, based on project outputs as proven methodology, sector-specific efficiency manuals, trained energy consultants and an Asian energy efficiency network. www.geriap.org

2 THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON OZONE, WITHIN THE VIENNA CONVENTION

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer was adopted in 1985 and came into force in 1988 and the *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer* came into force in 1989. During the first years of the Protocol, focus was on eliminating emissions in industrialised countries. Now the focus has shifted to developing countries that receive considerable funding from the Multilateral Fund, which is the financial mechanism of the Montreal Protocol to support activities in order to enable the developing countries to meet the targets for phasing out the use of ozone depleting substances. The importance of strengthened institutional capacities for the targets to be met has been recognized. Part of the Swedish contribution to the Fund has been ear-marked for bi-lateral development projects.

Objective

The basic objective of the Montreal Protocol is to protect the ozone layer by eliminating the global production and consumption of ozone depleting substances.

Between 1990 and 1999 the Montreal Protocol was amended four times, each amendment accelerating the abolition of ozone-depleting substances or introducing systems for licensing the import and export of new or recycled ozone-depleting substances.



Internet sources: www.unep.org/ozone and www.unmfs.org

South East Asian Network on Ozone-depleting Chemicals

The challenge for developing countries is to phase out the ozone-depleting substances regulated by the protocol by 2010. The industrialised countries have undertaken to assist in this process. Sweden implemented this phase-out at the beginning of the 1990s, in cooperation with the other Nordic countries. Based on this experience, Sweden is since 1992 supporting, through Sida, a network of eleven countries in South East Asia and the Pacific.

The network includes representatives of government agencies in Brunei, Fiji, the

Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The United Nations Environment Programme in Bangkok is coordinating the network, which is called Ozone Depleting Substances Officers Network for South East Asia and the Pacific (ODSONET/SEAP).

The network meets regularly and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency participates, contributing its experiences from Sweden and the EU. The annual meeting for 2002 was held in Stockholm, providing an opportunity to demonstrate Swedish expertise.

The positive experience gained from this Swedish-financed pilot network has led to the establishment by the United Nations Environment Programme of seven similar networks for other regions, with financing from the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol. Discussions are also ongoing on the feasibility of using regional networks for the implementation of other environmental conventions. Further information can be found in the publication *Networking Counts*, which is available at www.unep-tie.org/ozonaction/library/policy

Biological Diversity

Biological diversity is protected by the Convention on Biological Diversity and its forerunner, the Ramsar Convention.

3 CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was opened for signature in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered into force in December 1993. There are 180 parties to the Convention. Each party to the Convention undertakes to develop national strategies for conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, to integrate these strategies in relevant sector policies, to identify and monitor components of biological diversity, etc. The authority to determine access to genetic resources rests with the national government.

Issues relating to access to and benefit sharing of gains from genetic resources are important aspects of the CBD. Under the framework of the Convention, the “Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization” have been adopted to address these issues.

Parties to the Convention report every fourth year on measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention.

Objectives

The objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity are:

- conservation of biological diversity;
- sustainable use of its components;
- fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from genetic resources.



The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

In 2000 *The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* was agreed upon. It entered into force in September 2003. The objective of the protocol is to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from biotechnology. It establishes an informed agreement procedure ensuring that a country is given the opportunity to make an informed decision on whether to allow import of living modified organisms. The protocol also establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House to facilitate the exchange of information on living modified organisms and to assist countries in the implementation of the Protocol.

Internet source: www.biodiv.org

Biosafety in East Africa

To support capacity building for implementation of the Biosafety Protocol, Sida/SAREC funds the East African Regional Programme and Research Network for Biotechnology, Biosafety and Biotechnology Policy Development (BIO-EARN) to strengthen four East African countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – in meeting the challenges of modern biotechnology, biosafety and biotechnology policy. It involves more than 70 researchers and some 100 policy makers in East Africa and in Europe. www.bio-earn.org

Community-based Forest Management in Tanzania

The forest in Suledo, in the southeast corner of Kiteto District, on the famous Masaai steppe in Tanzania, provides important products and services to the nine multi-ethnic villages in the area. Because it is in Masaai land, a core use of the forest has been for grazing. The forest also provides products like fruits, nuts, medicines, mushrooms, etc. In this undulating area the hills also function as small water catchments. In addition the forest has an important role in initiation ceremonies.

However, increasing pressure for land has brought more and more land under agriculture. To halt deforestation, the government in 1994 decided to declare the whole area a National Forest Reserve. This would have prevented all access by local communities to the forest. Community members therefore protested, organized and decided to manage the forest for themselves. Local management plans outlining regulations for use, management and benefit-sharing were defined, based on traditional knowledge and institutions. The rules were passed by the respective village assemblies as village by-laws and have thereby gained full legal status through approval by the District Council. The whole process was facilitated by the District Forest Officer and the Sida-supported Land Management Programme (LAMP) which is implemented by Kiteto District Council.

To date, nine villages have been successful in implementing their management plans, at no cost to government. Key resources for local livelihoods are efficiently managed and protected, biodiversity is sustainably utilised, and the forest can therefore continue to provide important eco-system services such as watershed protection and products.

This success is partly a result of the simplicity of the approach, which builds on the institutional framework and on decentralised government that puts the village in the centre. The structure also strengthens village-level democracy.

The initiative had direct impact on the formulation of the Tanzania Forest Policy of 1998 and the Forest Act of 2002. With the strong policy support that now exists, the vision is to scale-up activities so that eventually every village in Tanzania can have its own village-managed forest.

4 THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS



The official name of the treaty – *The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat* – reflects its original emphasis on the conservation and wise use of wetlands primarily to provide habitat for water birds. Over the years, however, the Convention has broadened its scope to cover all aspects of conservation and wise use of wetlands, recognizing wetlands as ecosystems that are extremely important for biodiversity conservation in general and for the well-being of human communities.

The Ramsar Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and entered into force in 1975, which makes it a forerunner in international environment cooperation.

Objective

The conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means of achieving sustainable development throughout the world is the objective of the Ramsar Convention.

Parties to the Convention shall:

- designate at least one national wetland for inclusion in a *List of Wetlands of International Importance*. (In autumn 2003 there were just above 1,300 wetlands listed.);
- promote the conservation of the listed wetlands and the wise use of wetlands in their territory;
- cooperate with other countries on shared wetlands and wetland species.

Internet source: www.ramsar.org

Fishing Families Protect their Interests

"I prefer being killed protecting the mangrove rather than by starvation" says one fisherman member of Coddeffagolf, a local NGO dedicated to protecting the rich wetlands of the South Pacific coast of Honduras. Coddeffagolf's efforts are supported by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, and mainly funded by Sida.

For local groups, the wetlands are an important source of food, firewood and income, but they are under severe threat from expanding shrimp farms. The local people have not only lost a source of livelihood because of the destruction of the wetlands, but are also unable to reach the coast to fish as they cannot pass the fenced and guarded shrimp farms.

In 1988 thousands of fishing families organised themselves in Coddeffagolf. After 12 years of well-organised work, protests, lobbying and struggle Coddeffagolf reached one of its goals: to achieve Ramsar status for most of the remaining wetlands. But the struggle is not over.

Land Degradation

5 THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) calls for broad community-based and democratic approaches to sustainable land use management. The mutual dependence between humans and their environment is possibly greater and less forgiving in arid areas than anywhere else. People depend for their survival and nourishment on ecosystems that are fragile and highly vulnerable to damage from human activities.

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification occurs because dry-land ecosystems, covering one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation and inappropriate land use. Over 250 million people are directly affected by desertification and some one billion people in over hundred countries are at risk.

Objective

The objective of the UNCCD is to combat desertification and reduce the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The strategy is effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach consistent with Agenda 21 and contributing to sustainable development in affected areas.

Action Programmes

The Convention calls for every country affected by desertification to prepare, publicize and implement national action programmes.



These shall:

- incorporate long-term strategies to combat desertification and reduce the effects of drought;
- give particular attention to the implementation of preventive measures;
- provide for effective popular participation.

Internet source: www.unccd.int

Caring for Grazing Land in Senegal

Most of the land in Thiambene Till in Senegal was formerly used collectively for grazing. Over-grazing reduced the vegetation cover to only a few scattered *Acacia tortilis* trees. The rest of the land was nude, with only grasses of low fodder value.

In 1986, a peasant, Serigne Samb put up a fence composed of the local plant *Euphorbia balsamifera* around five hectares of barren land with a few scattered *Acacia tortilis* trees. Thanks to dormant seeds in the sandy soil, a spontaneous regeneration of *Acacia tortilis* occurred the same year. It was so impressive that Samb, on advice from the Sida-funded Probovil project, fenced in three more plots on his land. When the plants had grown above grazing height, Samb started to rent out his plots to local cattle and sheep owners on a weekly basis. He also harvested the trees' pods and sold them on the local market as fodder. In 1993, tree cover was so dense in the oldest plot that he had to cut down some trees. He made charcoal from the wood and sold it.

Samb's experience indicates that improvement in land use is possible through innovative action and change in farming system. Wider use of Samb's model would also require land tenure reform.

Chemicals and Wastes

The purpose of the following three conventions is to limit the spread of dangerous chemical substances and wastes by minimizing the trade in dangerous substances and wastes, and by introducing worldwide bans on the most dangerous chemicals.

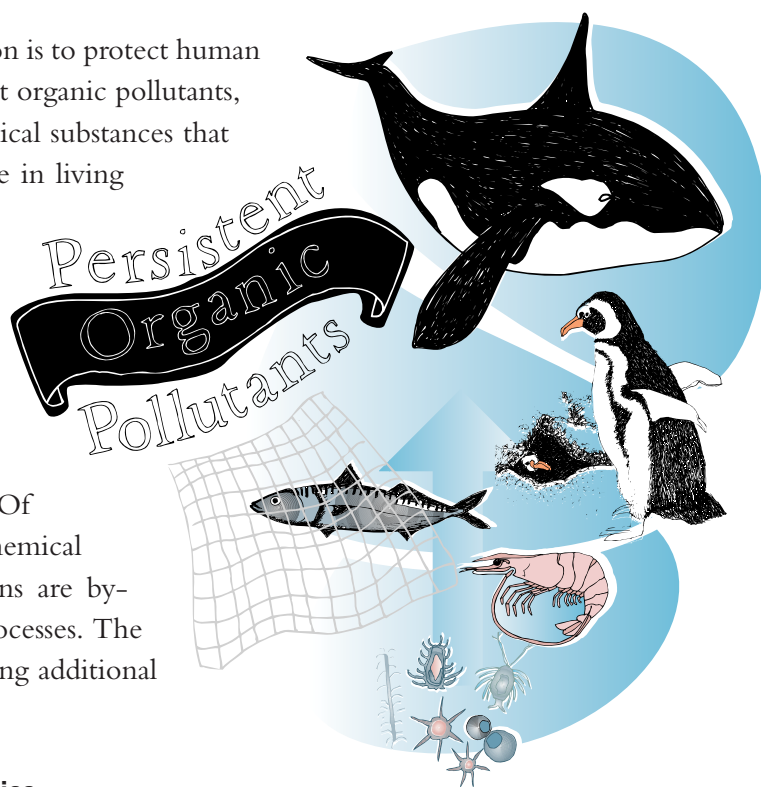
6 THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants opened for signature in 2001 and entered into force in 2004.

Objective

The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants, so called POPs. POPs are highly toxic chemical substances that persist in the environment and accumulate in living organisms. These chemicals present a global risk as they can be transported through the atmosphere and oceans and re-appear far from their origin.

The Stockholm Convention initially addresses 12 POPs of which eight are pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene. Of the other pollutants, PCB is an industrial chemical and hexachlorobenzene, dioxins and furans are by-products of industrial or combustion processes. The Convention also includes a process of adding additional problematic POP-chemicals.



Supporting Measures in Developing Countries

Most of these initial POP chemicals are already banned in OECD countries, so the Convention mainly addresses use and emissions of POPs and management of POP-waste in developing countries. The agreement provides a framework for technical and financial assistance to help developing countries eliminate existing stocks of POPs, manage waste containing POPs, restrict the import and export and

take other measures to meet the aim of the Convention. Phasing out use of DDT for malaria control by introducing safer alternative methods or chemicals is yet another aim of the Convention.

Internet source: www.pops.int

Strengthening Environmental Authorities in Vietnam

Sida and the Vietnamese Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment cooperate in an extensive programme to develop the institutional capacity and professional competence of the new public administration for management of natural resources and the environment. One specific focus of the programme is to promote policies and systems for chemical safety and pollutions prevention and control. The programme will be implemented by the Ministry in co-operation with six provinces.

The cooperation on environment protection between Vietnam and Sweden dates back to the early 1980s and includes capacity building of international collaboration, environmental planning and inspections service at the Vietnam National Environmental Agency. A Swedish partner in this cooperation is the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

7 THE BASEL CONVENTION ON HAZARDOUS WASTES

In the 1980s stricter rules on stocking and treating hazardous wastes in industrialised countries led to the uncontrolled export of wastes to developing countries. This is the background to *the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal*, adopted in 1989 and in force in 1992.

During its first decade (1989–1999), the Convention was principally devoted to setting up a framework for controlling the movement of hazardous wastes across frontiers. Criteria for environmentally sound management have also been developed. An inspection system, based on prior written notification, was also put into place.

In the decade up to 2010 the Convention focuses on reducing the generation of hazardous wastes.

Objectives

The objectives of the Basel Convention are to:

- minimize the generation of hazardous wastes in terms of quantity and danger;
- dispose of them as close to the source of generation as possible;
- reduce the movement of hazardous wastes.

In an amendment to the Convention, still not in force due to too few ratifications, the parties agreed to an immediate ban on the export from OECD to non-OECD countries of hazardous wastes intended for final disposal. They also agreed to ban the export of wastes intended for recovery and recycling. The European Union has unilaterally agreed to ban waste exports in accordance with the amendment.



Internet source: www.basel.int

Toxics Link – for a Toxics-free World

Toxics Link was formally set up in March 1996 by a group of like-minded NGOs, voluntary organisations and individuals concerned about toxic pollution in India. The goal is to develop an information exchange mechanism to strengthen campaigns against toxics pollution, help push industries towards cleaner production and link groups working on toxics issues into a national toxics movement in India. Toxics Link receives financial support from Sida.

Toxics Link collects and shares information about the sources and dangers of chemicals in our environment and bodies, and about clean and sustainable alternatives for India and the rest of the world. Its members work together for “environmental justice and freedom from toxics”.

Toxics Link on the Basel Convention...

The Basel Convention on hazardous wastes has been of utmost importance to Toxics Link.

Says Toxics Link’s Director Ravi Agarwal: “The Basel Convention has been a key driver in moving the toxic waste issue in India. We first went to the Indian High Court in April 1996 and obtained a ban on the import of toxic wastes into India. The

Supreme Court in fact made specific mention of the Basel Convention, and set up a high-level committee to examine not only waste import issues but in-country hazardous waste management issues as well.”

Toxics Link is part of the worldwide Basel Action Network, joining NGOs from many countries.

Ragi Agarwal: “We have researched and tracked the import of various hazardous wastes such as lead, zinc, and electronic wastes. The Basel Convention provides us with the basic framework for this work.”

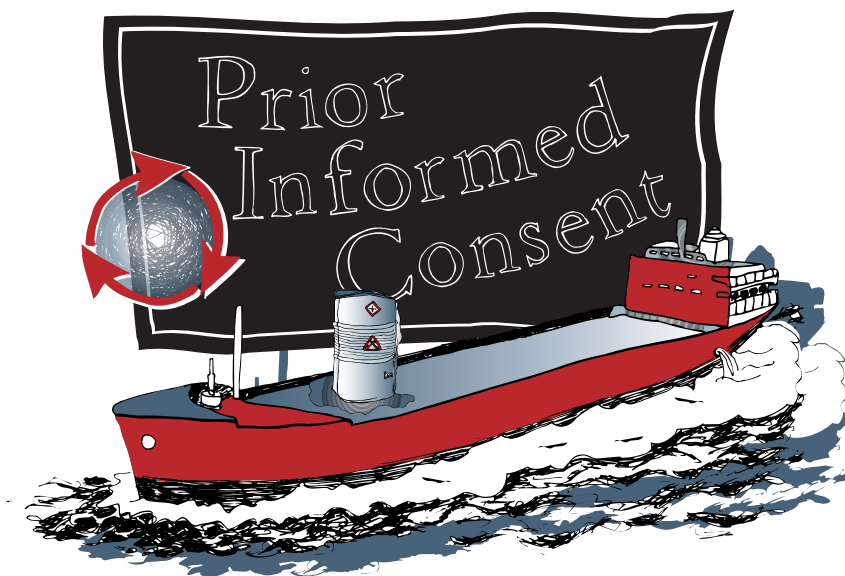
Toxics Link has also taken part in Basel Conferences of the Parties, “keeping the pressure on the Indian government” and in a technical working group influencing guidelines on health care wastes, shipwrecking, plastics, lead and lead compounds.

...and on the Stockholm Convention

Toxics Link participated all through the preparatory work for the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and held many NGO meetings in India during the POPs negotiations. It published the first report in India on the issue, entitled “Trojan Horses: Status of POPs in India.” The organisation has also worked on awareness-raising on DDT and even introduced the concept of dioxin pollution to the Indian environmental agenda.

Ravi Agarwal: “The [Basel and Stockholm] treaties provide substantial leverage points and set common language to the meaning of the words “chemical safety” by internationally binding regimes. www.toxicslink.org

8 THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION



The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade establishes as international law the Prior Informed Consent procedure, originally voluntary. PIC requires exporters trading in certain hazardous substances to obtain the prior informed consent of importers before proceeding with the trade.

Objective

The objective of the Rotterdam Convention is to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among Parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals to protect human health and the environment from potential harm.

Shared Responsibility

The Rotterdam Convention enables importing countries to decide which chemicals they want to receive, and to exclude those they cannot manage safely. The responsibility for ensuring that the recipient country has given prior consent lies with the enterprises in the exporting countries which are trading in chemicals.

Internet source: www.pic.int

More Information about Conventions

In Sweden, expertise on multilateral cooperation on environmental issues is to be found at the following authorities:

- the Ministry of the Environment;
- the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency;
- the National Chemicals Inspectorate;
- Sida;
- the National Board of Trade (concerning the Basel and Rotterdam conventions).

The Ministry of the Environment is the focal point for all conventions, except for the Convention on Desertification for which the Ministry of Foreign affairs is the focal point.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has specialists for the Montreal Protocol, the Ramsar and Basel Conventions as well as for the Climate Change Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The National Chemicals Inspectorate has specialists for the Rotterdam Convention and the Stockholm Convention.

Abbreviations:

CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity

COP – Conference of the (Contracting) Parties

GEF – Global Environment Facility

GERIAP – Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction from Industry in Asia and the Pacific – an UNEP/Sida operation

LAMP – Sida-supported Land Management Programme

NGO – non-governmental organisation

ODSONET/SEAP – Ozone Depleting Substances Officers Network for South East Asia and the Pacific

PIC – Prior Informed Consent

POPs – Persistent Organic Pollutants

UNCCD – United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNEP – United Nations Environmental Programme

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WTO – World Trade Organisation

WSSD – World Summit on Sustainable Development

Sources in print

Sida Print

Sida has adopted a number of strategy papers on how environmental conventions should be integrated in development cooperation:

The Montreal Protocol – Guidelines for the Swedish Bilateral Programme – May 1997

Sida and the Convention to Combat Desertification – March 1998, Updated 2001

Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity – March 1998, Updated April 2000

Climate and Development – Sida's position – October, 2003

Integrating Biological Diversity – Analysis of the main experiences and lessons learned from the first phase of biodiversity at Sida 1998–2000 – March 2004

Other Sources

Overview of the Major Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Processes – Commitments and Options for EC Development Co-operation, DG Development – Unit B4, December 2002, 62 pages. *A very useful guide to understanding in more detail the dynamics and role of multilateral environmental agreements in development co-operation. Includes an appendix with a condensed overview of many of the agreements (excluding, however, Vienna/Montreal and Ramsar).*

The DAC Guidelines – Integrating the Rio Conventions into Development Co-operation. *These Guidelines highlight the linkages between global environmental issues, on the one hand, and sustainable development and poverty reduction, on the other. They are primarily aimed at decision makers and development policy experts in donor organisations.*

Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development, 2003/2004, The Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway, Earthscan Publications, 352 pages. *Exhaustive information on 53 environment conventions and inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in the convention process. Check www.greenyearbook.org for the latest issue.*

www.unep.ch/conventions *news about environment conventions, access to newsletters and useful references to various information sources.*

untreaty.un.org *gives access to a database on international conventions under UN auspices.*

The eight environmental conventions presented in this pamphlet are essential for poverty eradication and sustainable development. They are ratified by most of Sweden's partner countries and therefore provide a good basis for cooperation.

The following conventions are highlighted:

The Climate Convention and the Kyoto Protocol

The Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The Convention on Biological Diversity

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure



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