

Second Workshop of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary
Movement of Wastes
November 23, 2005, Tokyo, Japan

Chair's Summary

Chair: Mr. Kazuhiro Okuma

1. The Second Workshop of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Wastes was held in Tokyo on 23 November, 2005. The workshop was attended by 22 participants from competent authorities or focal points to the Basel Convention from 10 countries or administrative regions and Basel Convention Regional Centers (BCRCs) in China, and Indonesia, and 7 observers from 6 other countries or organizations and the Executive Secretary and the Senior Program Officers of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC). The workshop was chaired by Kazuhiro Okuma, Deputy Director, Policy Planning Division, Waste Management and Recycling Department, of the Japanese Ministry of the Environment (hereinafter referred to as the MOE).
2. At the Opening Ceremony, Mr. Tsutomu Sakagawa, Director, Office of Waste Disposal Management, MOE delivered the opening address. He pointed out that for the purpose of preventing adverse effects on the environment and assuring proper international trade in recyclable materials, it is important to strengthen collaboration among participating countries by sharing relevant information and exchanging views and experiences. He expressed his expectation that participating countries would exchange information of transboundary movements of recyclable materials, especially E-waste, which has increasingly become a major concern in the region. –One of the best strategies is making good use of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes.
3. The Chair stated that we would share information and discuss future collaboration paying special attention to the issue of E-waste since the workshop was held in conjunction with the ongoing four day E-waste workshop (Asia-Pacific Regional Inception Workshop on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electronic and Electrical Wastes) convened by the SBC in cooperation with the MOE and the National Institute for Environmental Studies (Japan).

4. In Session 1, the participants shared their experiences and difficulties in implementing the Basel Convention obligations of each competent authority. Participants from Cambodia, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam made updates to their activities. These included information about major legislative or policy measures, institutional arrangements, trends in exports and imports of hazardous wastes with emphasis on second-hand commodities, specific actions for hazardous waste management, and items which are subject to regulation. The participants also shared their views on challenges they faced, including clarification on the definition of hazardous wastes and strengthening enforcement. The Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention, Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, noted that SBC is in the process of renewing the notification system as provided for in Article 3 of the Basel Convention. It was a great opportunity for the participants to present the current situation of their countries and share information since they rarely had face-to-face contact with each other. The Chair expressed his deep appreciation to the participants for comprehensive or detailed presentations despite of their busy schedules.
5. The MOE, which is the interim Secretariat of the Asian Network, summarized the achievements of the Network; the website of which was officially opened in June this year (2005), and which has promoted communication in various media among offices that are responsible for implementing the Basel Convention. The Ministry proposed to upload information on legal and policy frameworks for the management of hazardous wastes on the website, and requested the participating countries to update their information in a timely manner.
6. In Session 2, representatives from BCRCs presented their accomplishments and reported their recent activities. With regard to the BCRC China's initiative, surveys on importation and environmentally sound management of E-waste and new partnership projects with local authorities for environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes have been carried out. BCRC-Indonesia gave a presentation on its role and responsibilities, activities, challenges and business plan based on the results of the needs assessment (ASEAN countries) and the E-waste workshop (ESM for e-waste).

7. In Session 3, the participants extensively discussed transboundary movement of hazardous wastes disguised as second-hand commodities, with the focus on Electronic and Electrical Equipment (EEE). The MOE summarized the current status and issues related to import and export of used cathode-ray tube (CRT) monitors and TVs, printed circuit boards, and lead-acid batteries in the participating countries based on a questionnaire survey conducted prior to the workshop. Thailand introduced their new legislative control over import of used EEE while the HKSAR explained their recommended good practices for adoption of the trade in importing second-hand monitors and televisions and the criteria used in screening for such waste. The discussion focused on the issue of definition and the possible development or formulation of regional guidelines. Participants shared common interests in developing tools to help parties in controlling second-hand EEE while wide range of views was expressed on their nature. The participants agreed to start gathering information on criteria and operations in classifying second-hand EEE with a view to developing common guidelines or tools that are not legally binding, but flexible. The MOE offered to prepare the first draft in close cooperation with Environmental Protection Department (EPD) of the HKSAR for the discussion at the next workshop. The proposal of the MOE was accepted by the workshop participants. In this connection, the participants reconfirmed the importance of transmitting the notification to the Secretariat of the Basel Convention about the national definitions of hazardous wastes pursuant to Article 3 of the Basel Convention. In addition, the importance of information-sharing and capacity building for enforcement was also endorsed.

During the one-day workshop participants shared information on current activities regarding the implementation of the Basel Convention, and discussed future activities to tackle transboundary movement of hazardous wastes disguised as second-hand commodities, with special attention to EEE. The workshop facilitated information-sharing among the participants and enhancement of the Asian Network. The participants welcomed and supported the proposal from the MOE that the next workshop would be held outside of Japan. The workshop was a precious and meaningful opportunity for those in charge of implementation of the Basel Convention to gather and discuss issues and concerns. The Chair asked for continuous support and cooperation from the participating countries and BCRCs in strengthening the Network.