

Workshop on Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Wastes
December 7 - 8, 2004, Tokyo, Japan

Chair's Summary

Chair: Mr. Hiroki Hashizume

1. The Workshop on Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Wastes was held with 26 participants mainly from Competent Authorities of the Basel Convention in Tokyo on December 7 – 8, 2004. I presided over the workshop.
2. At the Opening Ceremony, Minister of the Environment, Ms. Yuriko Koike delivered the opening address in which she noted that in order to prevent adverse effects on the environment and to ensure proper transboundary movement of recyclables, it is important to strengthen cooperation between countries by exchanging information. Minister Koike also encouraged the participants to make good use of the existing framework of the Basel Convention and expressed her expectation that the Workshop set off an enhanced cooperation among the Asian countries to address the common concern on movements of recyclables or wastes.
3. After self-introduction of the participants, Ms. Soden, of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan presented the workshop objective that is the plan to establish the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Wastes (hereinafter referred to as the Network). The Network aims to strengthen the capacity of the participating countries in implementing the Basel Convention and to establish a network of the participating countries so as to exchange information. A series of this type of workshops will be held as a part of the Network activities.
4. During Session 1, the participants shared experiences and difficulties in implementing the Basel Convention. The participating countries as well as the Basel Convention Regional Centers (BCRCs) in China and Indonesia presented and discussed the institutional arrangements for implementing the Basel Convention, the current import and export volumes of hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention, and challenges that they are facing. It was a wonderful opportunity for the participants to give a presentation on current situation of their own countries and to share information since they rarely have face-to-face contact with each other. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the participating countries and

BCRCs China and Indonesia in taking time to prepare their presentation despite their busy schedule.

5. During Session 2, the participants discussed export and import of hazardous wastes under the disguise of second-hand commodities and manipulating hazardous wastes as non-hazardous wastes. Several participants pointed out that the import of hazardous electronic waste for recycling in their countries caused significant environmental impacts, as most of these countries did not have suitable recycling or disposal facilities for the waste. Representatives from the participating countries presented their experiences based on the incidents that have occurred in their countries. I noted that the legal frameworks to regulate second-hand commodities vary by country; some countries apply the Basel Convention and others formulate their own national laws or regulations. Thus there are difficulties to have effective measures to control transboundary movement of wastes including hazardous wastes. It is also important to share relevant information among participating countries. The representative from Hong Kong, Mr.Chan, introduced a network for voluntary information exchange about transfrontier shipments of wastes which are conducted mainly in EU countries (IMPEL-TFS) and are currently implemented by Hong Kong. The participants recognized that IMPEL-TFS framework could be an effective tool or system to prevent illegal transboundary movement of wastes in Asia.
6. During Session 3, the participants reviewed and discussed the draft terms of reference (hereinafter referred to as draft TOR) and the draft website map for the Network. Some opinions regarding the needs of strengthening the linkage with such entities as secretariats for international treaties (e.g. Basel Convention) and customs and port authority in each country were stated. The draft TOR was finally adopted as attached. As for the draft website map, some participants proposed that the information and the linkage to the website of relevant organizations should be listed. The Secretariat will revise the draft website map and then upload the draft website within the first quarter of 2005. The participants agreed to add "hazardous" before "waste" in the title of the Network in order to address our priority. I would like to express my deep appreciation for the constructive opinion and cooperation by each participant in finalizing the TOR. The Network activities will be conducted based on the adopted TOR.
7. During Session 4, the workshop also provided the participants with an opportunity to deepen their understandings on actions to be taken to promote 3Rs (reduce, reuse,

and recycle) in Japan. Mr. Morishita of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan presented and distributed the information sheet on the Ministerial Conference on 3R Initiative proposed by Japan and agreed upon as a new G8 initiative at the G8 Summit held in 2004. The Conference will be held in Japan in April 2005. In this Session, the participants agreed that the regional approach will be necessary to cope with the emerging issues such as E-wastes generation and their movements in the Asian region.

8. During the workshop, the participants shared good practices and acknowledged proposals to prevent illegal transboundary movement of hazardous wastes as follows: for the prevention of export and import of hazardous wastes under the disguise of second-hand commodities, the following suggestions were proposed from some participating countries: 1) an import permit is issued only to the importers that have conducted good practices and have had the capacity to manage it, 2) second-hand commodities i.e., TV sets, refrigerators, etc within a certain service years will be allowed to be imported, 3) residues generated from recycling of the imported second-hand commodities are shipped back to the country of origin for treatment if the local facilities cannot manage the residues, 4) in order to take proper actions, it is necessary to promptly share information about suspicious import or export cases and establish cooperative relationship between central and local governments, and 5) since human and financial resources of governments to monitor illegal practices are limited, increasing public awareness is important so that local communities complement the government monitoring. Further, in order to ensure the sustainable operation of the Network, the participants agreed that the Secretariat of the Basel Convention is expected to explore funding source. In this regard, the Government of Japan will cooperate and collaborate with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and BCRCs for necessary support.
9. As the workshop covered a number of topics, promoted information exchange among the participants, and had constructive and fruitful discussions toward the establishment of the Network, holding of international workshops in the participating countries next year has been supported by all the participants to further enhance their understanding about implementation of the Basel Convention and promotion of 3Rs. In summing up the workshop, it was a precious and meaningful opportunity for those in charge of implementation of the Basel Convention to gather and discuss our concerns. The Chairman would like to ask your continued support and cooperation for the establishment of the Network.