

G8 Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on the 3R Initiative Bonn, 4 - 6 October 2007

Chair's Summary

The SOM discussed the progress and history of the 3R initiative since the G8 Sea Island summit 2004. The SOM highly appreciated the contribution of the participating countries and international organisations to the discussions of the Meeting.

Developments of the 3R Initiative:

1. Sharing importance of the concept of the 3Rs.
2. The progress of the 3Rs in certain regions is recognised.
3. The Initiative process is recognised as a milestone forum to share the progress of the various on-going 3R-related processes.
4. The G8 SOM discussed the development of a proposal for a G8 3R Action Plan to be decided at the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting in Kobe, May 2008.

The next steps towards a possible G8 3R Action Plan (Process towards G8 Summit 2008) are as follows:

1. A G8 Preparatory meeting in Japan, April 2008
2. The G8 Environment Ministers Meeting in Kobe, May 2008
3. The G8 Summit in Japan, July 2008

The G8 states are expected to give their suggestions for a G8 3R Action Plan on the basis of the following issues of the 3R initiative by the end of January 2008. Based on these suggestions, Japan will, in cooperation with the other G8 states, come up with a draft G8 3R Action Plan for the consideration of the G8 preparatory meeting in April 2008.

Major points to be considered among the G8 states and other participating states and organisations:

- The 3R Initiative may function as a process e.g. for the coordination and monitoring of various 3R-related processes both domestically and internationally.
- Further efforts of each country especially focusing on waste prevention and reduction elements.
- Concerted efforts among the G8 for international cooperation for capacity building and assistance for the non-G8/non-OECD countries (transnational regional level cooperation).

Issues of the 3R initiative

BACKGROUND

The volume of waste is increasing worldwide in the industrialising regions, especially in countries with economies in transition.

The environment's capacities to absorb waste deposits are limited; soils, waters and drinking water and the atmosphere are becoming increasingly polluted;

Poor waste management contributes to greenhouse gas emissions from landfill gases, wastage of energy carriers in landfill and the inefficient use of resources; a modern system of waste management makes a major contribution to reducing these emissions through the expansion of biological and thermal waste treatment, energy recovery and an increase in material recycling;

In many countries [in the world], technical standards of waste treatment and disposal are low. As a result, the risks to human health and the environment remain high; global demand for 3R technologies is increasing;

Natural resource availability is essential for the sustainable development of the economy, society and ecological bases in every country;

The quantity of raw materials being wasted as a result of inefficient resource and waste management worldwide is immense; these raw materials are permanently lost to the global economy and lead to increased scarcity and hence rising prices for these inputs; for certain strategic raw materials, e.g. tantalum, vanadium, etc., which are needed for the production of electronic components, the availability and use of resource recovery technologies are vital in order to prevent resource scarcity in the next 20 years; the relevant technologies are available, but due to relatively low raw materials' prices in the short to medium term which may not internalise external impacts such as future scarcity, these technologies are not being deployed to an adequate extent;

The worldwide increase in resource scarcity must be counteracted through improved resource use efficiency;

Significant decoupling of resource consumption and waste generation from economic growth may be achieved through innovative production technologies and product design which assist the reuse and the recycling of materials;

Sustainable resource and waste management policies should seek to encompass the entire product life cycle, starting with resource inputs and including the production process, consumer choices, product use and reuse/recycling (sustainable production and consumption);

The avoidance of hazardous waste through the use of less toxic materials and low-waste production processes, environmentally sound waste treatment and the monitoring and control of the movement of waste are priority objectives for environmental policy;

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal provides an important framework for the promotion of environmentally sound management of waste worldwide; a future-oriented global environmental policy must aim to develop and enhance this framework;

The OECD work on material flows and resource productivity, sustainable materials management, economic instruments and environmental country reviews makes a key contribution to the development of the 3R Initiative – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – in an environmentally effective and economically efficient way.

Newly industrialising and developing countries are believed to hold major potential to pursue an approach to industrialisation which facilitates environmentally sound and sparing use of natural resources while achieving economic growth and prosperity at the same time;

Resource and waste management policy is a potential driver of innovation and jobs in all countries; In the industrialised and newly industrialising countries, the consistent application of regulatory, economic and other instruments results in the development of a wide range of technologies, organisations and applications in all areas of 3R, including waste logistics, waste sorting, waste treatment and processing; at the same time, this gives rise to new job opportunities with higher skills requirements;

For developing countries, a well-structured and tailored waste management system above all helps to protect human health and the environment, to ensure the availability of affordable raw materials, to open up new fields of business and to create jobs.

ELEMENTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS BY G8 COUNTRIES

I. Development of 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)

To champion the sustainable integration of 3R in all policy areas, especially industrial and consumption policy, energy supply and resource policy, trade policy and in product design;

To take account of the 3R concept in developing national waste management and resource strategies;

To set, as agreed at the St. Petersburg Summit in 2006 by the G8 leaders, self committing targets as appropriate taking account of resource productivity in furthering efforts for the promotion of 3Rs, taking also into account the work concerning work of the OECD, and report regularly to the G8 on the status of establishment and achievement of such targets; a set of consistent targets and indicators is desirable¹.

To strive for optimised utilisation of the inputs, materials and energy which are contained in waste; in this context, to support in particular activities related to waste separation, waste pre-treatment and the biological and energy use of waste, and to ensure that waste management processes maintain high standards of protection of the environment and human health;

To work to ensure that the individual countries' waste management systems make a significant contribution and achieve the co-benefit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thus contribute to global climate protection; in particular, to encourage the use of the organic matter contained in waste through an increase in composting, fermentation and energy recovery in treatment plants with high emissions standards;

Together with individual business sectors, to identify the latter's various potentials to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by analysing the status quo and establishing programmes to reduce each sector's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions;

¹ Possible targets are e.g. resource productivity, abiotic raw materials used, total waste, hazardous waste, municipal waste, waste per capita, recycling rates, energy intensity.

To determine the greenhouse gas emissions as well as other environmental impacts of their own waste management systems, identify reduction potentials, and establish programmes to harness these potentials;

To aim to carry out joint projects in this area, for example through cooperation within the Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism framework.

To support measures in developing and newly industrialising countries aimed at

- institution-building and policy implementation through the provision of administrative advice,
- the introduction of separated waste collection systems, mindful of the need to involve the informal sector,
- the introduction of collection and processing systems for e.g. electronic waste, used batteries and end-of-life vehicles,
- the application of appropriate waste treatment technologies,
- the promotion of environmental awareness among citizens, public agencies and industrial emitters,
- compliance with occupational health standards in waste recovery and disposal facilities,
- monitoring the movement of waste and the trade in secondary raw materials in terms of their compliance with environmental standards;

Use price signals and market mechanisms to internalise as much as possible external costs through economic and other instruments.

To monitor and share experience about all these activities at regular intervals from 2010;

To specifically share information about

- key developments in the field of legislation and administration,
- public procurement to achieve 3R objectives,
- impacts on human health and environment,
- the use of economic and other instruments,
- national cooperation with major players,
- new technological developments and innovations,
- the effectiveness of waste management processes as well as strategies and opportunities to improve their application in the individual countries,
- innovative processes and modern systems,
- own contributions to capacity-building in developing and newly industrialising countries.

To support the establishment and maintenance of an internet-based information and knowledge network for the 3R Initiative starting with existing activities.

II. Partnership - Cooperation among actors

To promote policy dialogue with all actors involved in the 3R Initiative at national and international level;

To develop strategies to increase the involvement of the business community, especially with a view to improving resource efficiency and low-emission waste treatment;

To support the promotion of innovative recycling and efficiency technologies and low-waste generation processes;

To adopt measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises which develop innovative 3R processes;

To inform industry, NGOs and citizens about 3R-related activities at national and international level;

To promote the introduction of training programmes which include 3R-related measures (e.g. on remanufacturing, efficient industrial technology);

III. Clean and efficient 3R technologies - Development of science and technology for 3R

To cooperate internationally to share information and build understanding on common priorities and opportunities for more innovation in product eco-design;

To collect data on 3R-related technological innovations in the fields of operational environmental protection, processing techniques, low waste production and waste disposal technologies, and inform the public;

To promote research and development programmes, which aim to identify, develop and assess 3R technologies, and support the use of sustainable raw materials in production and consumption;

To support dissemination, adaptation and implementation of recycling and low-waste generation technologies in bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation;

To recognise that green public procurement can increase the market for 3R-related technologies and promote development of more eco-efficient products.

IV. International flows of 3R-related goods, materials and products

To seek joint solutions to issues concerning the legal distinctions between waste and non-waste within the framework of international activities and agreements; in this context, the work undertaken by the OECD is especially important;

To put top priority on the promotion of environmental sound management of re-usable and recyclable resources within each country in conformity with appropriate regulations;

To prevent the illegal transboundary movement of re-usable and recyclable resources (as waste or non-waste) and to respect and support the provisions of the Basel Convention and work together to curb the illegal transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and other wastes;

Where the above three elements are achieved, to facilitate the transboundary movement of 3R-related goods, materials, products including services, re-usable and recyclable resources and remanufactured products which contribute to the reduction of environmental impacts and the effective use of resources without discouraging domestic efforts to improve re-use and recycling;

To engage in and recognise the ongoing Doha agreement on multilateral trade in clean technologies, environmental services and sustainable products;

V. Improvement of standards for the environmentally sound management of waste by International cooperation

To welcome international 3R-related activities within the United Nations, the Basel Convention, UNCRD, UNEP and the OECD;

To underline the importance of the Basel Convention and the Basel Declaration on Environmentally Sound Management of waste, and to support ongoing work on cooperation and coordination with the Rotterdam, Stockholm, IMO, Montreal and other conventions, bearing in mind the importance of coherence among international agreements on 3Rs issues;

To welcome the work undertaken by the OECD in relation to material flows, resource productivity and sustainable materials management;

To work to ensure that waste is treated and disposed of in facilities which comply with high environmental and technical standards;

To welcome all endeavours aimed at promoting international cooperation with other governments, international organisations, NGOs and scientific establishments to achieve further progress in 3R;

To promote the transfer of environmentally compatible technologies, management and know-how on 3R technologies and low-waste generation processes to developing countries, in order to initiate innovative reforms there;

To find ways to ensure that multinational cooperation is efficient, e.g. through encouraging cooperation at regional level or between G8 members and regions, and through adequate cooperation with international organisations: UNEP, BC, EC, UNCRD.