



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

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January 14, 2010

Ms. Katharina Kummer Peiry  
Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention

Mr. Peter Kenmore  
Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention (FAO)

Mr. Donald Cooper  
Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention &  
Co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention

Secretariats of the Basel  
Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention  
International Environment House 1  
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Dear Ms. Peiry and Messrs. Cooper and Kenmore,

I thank you for your letter dated 18 December 2009, received January 10, regarding the synergies decision of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and for bringing to my attention in particular paragraph 19 of section I-C which *“invites the GEF, within its mandate, other relevant international financial institutions [...] and others [...] to provide financial support for the regional centres to carry out projects aimed at cooperation and coordination in support of implementation of the three conventions.”*

As you know, the GEF has from the onset taken the view that a meaningful approach to implementation of the Stockholm Convention had to be mindful of the broader context of countries' frameworks for sound chemicals management. This is recognized for example as far back as GEF “Initial guidelines for POPs enabling activities” adopted by the GEF Council in May 2001. You also know that I have personally invested in the synergies process and I am delighted to see things moving in the right direction and committed to enhancing the synergetic implementation of the chemicals-related conventions to maximize the benefits to our partner developing countries and global environmental benefits.

This policy of the GEF is most recently translated in the GEF-5 Programming Document (draft) which states that,

*“Many of the challenges concerning the management and phase-out of POPs are similar to the steps that countries need to take to comply with the Basel, Bamako and Rotterdam conventions. [...] Therefore, the existing GEF policy that support to Stockholm Convention and Montreal Protocol implementation should build upon and contribute to strengthening a country’s foundational capacities for sound chemical management more generally will be actively pursued [...]”.*

Nevertheless, the GEF derives its mandate in the chemicals field predominantly from serving “as an entity entrusted with the operations of the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants” (paragraph 6 of the GEF Instrument). The GEF therefore has a special relationship with the Stockholm Convention which is governed by the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the GEF Council and the conference of the Parties to the Stockholm convention. According to the MOU, the Stockholm COP directs guidance to the GEF, including regarding “policy, strategy and programme priorities”. Such guidance is regularly developed by the COP and consolidated in specific “guidance to the financial mechanism” decisions.

In this regard, the above mentioned decision of the three conventions can be read in light of, and is fully coherent with, the relevant guidance from the Stockholm Convention related to this matter, and particularly decision SC-3/16 on additional guidance to the financial mechanism that,

*“Requests the Global Environment Facility, in its support for the delivery of technical assistance on a regional basis, to give consideration to the proposals that may be developed by nominated Stockholm Convention centres and to prioritize such support to those centres situated in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in accordance with paragraph 31 of the terms of reference for regional and sub-regional centres contained in the annex to decision SC-2/9 and paragraph 5 (e) of the annex to decision SC-3/12”* and that,

*“Requests the Global Environment Facility to give special consideration to support for those activities identified as priorities in national implementation plans which promote capacity-building in sound chemicals management, so as to enhance synergies in the implementation of different multilateral environment agreements and further strengthen the links between environment and development objectives”.*

Noting also the terms of reference for the Stockholm regional centres adopted by decision SC-2/9, and repeated in annex to decision SC-3/12 that provide that,

*“Activities in the area of capacity-building and the promotion of transfer of technology undertaken by regional and sub-regional centres to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition in the implementation of the Convention according to Article 12 of the Convention may be funded as appropriate and mutually agreed through the financial mechanism of the Convention which was established under Article 13 and consequently must be consistent with the guidance to the financial mechanism*

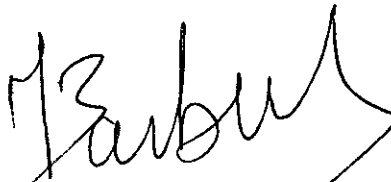
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*adopted by the Conference of the Parties in its decision SC-1/9 and set forth in the annex to that decision.”*

The decision of the three conventions also “*encourages representatives of Parties to support the delivery of coherent and coordinated messages from the conference of the Parties of each convention to the GEF [...]*”. We would welcome in principle such an effort.

In closing, I look forward to a very successful simultaneous sessions of the extraordinary conference of the parties to the three conventions, to the further strengthening of the synergies process amongst chemicals related conventions and agreements, and to working in particular with Stockholm convention parties to maximize the multi-convention benefits of GEF support to developing country parties in implementing that convention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Barbut', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Monique Barbut  
Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson  
Global Environment Facility