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**Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention  
on the Control of Transboundary Movements of  
Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal**

Sixth session

Geneva, 3–7 September 2007

Item 10 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**Strategic partnerships: Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative**

## **Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. By paragraph 3 of its decision VIII/6, the Conference of the Parties requested the Open-ended Working Group at its next session to review the guidance document on environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones further, based on Parties' experience and needs, and to present it to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting for consideration and final adoption. By paragraph 4 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties decided that the Mobile Phone Working Group would continue to work under the guidance of the Open-ended Working Group.

2. To assist the Open-ended Working Group in that regard, annex I to the present note contains a progress report on the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, as provided by the Chair of the Mobile Phone Working Group. The progress report in annex I identifies issues raised during the discussions on the transboundary movement of used and end-of-life mobile phones and the need for financial resources. Further to the progress report, annex II contains a brief summary of the Chairman's paper on issues raised during the discussion of the guideline on transboundary movement of used and end-of-life mobile phones.<sup>1</sup> Annex III contains the proposed work programme for the working group for 2007-2008.

#### **II. Implementation**

3. At the first meeting of the Expanded Bureau of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, the Chair of the Mobile Phone Working Group reported on the work of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and drew the meeting's attention to the aforementioned paper. The Chair noted that, in the light of the adoption of the Nairobi declaration on the environmentally

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\* UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/1/Rev.1.

1 UNEP/CHW.8/INF/6, annex, appendix 1.

sound management of electrical and electronic waste<sup>2</sup> some of the issues raised in the Chairman's paper might have broader implications on e-waste and further discussion might be warranted at the sixth session of the Open-ended Working Group.

4. The Expanded Bureau took note of the Chair's report. The members recommended that the Chairman's paper should be referred to the regional groups for comments so as to facilitate the organization of the work of the Open-ended Working Group at its sixth session in providing guidance to the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to assist in transmitting the document to Parties and other stakeholders by e-mail, and to place it on the Basel Convention website. The Chairman's paper was circulated to focal points on 26 April 2007.

### III. Proposed action

5. The Open-ended Working Group may wish to consider the following text for a decision:

*"The Open-ended Working Group*

1. *Takes note* of the report on progress made by the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative as prepared by the Chairman of the Mobile Phone Working Group,<sup>3</sup> including the information contained in the Chairman's paper on issues raised during the discussion of the guideline on transboundary movement of used and end-of-life mobile phones;<sup>4</sup>
2. *Encourages* Parties, Signatories and stakeholders to participate actively in the testing of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative guidelines and in raising awareness of the information contained therein;
3. *Requests* the Secretariat:
  - (a) To transmit the Chairman's paper to Parties and Signatories for further comments on the issues raised and on the options identified in that paper;
  - (b) To consolidate all comments on the Chairman's paper received from the focal points, stakeholders, partners and the Basel Convention regional centres and to submit them to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its ninth meeting;
4. *Invites* Parties, Signatories, partners and other stakeholders to provide financial support to the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative;
5. *Approves* the mobile-phone-related elements of the 2007–2008 work programme;
6. *Requests* the Secretariat to report on progress in the activities undertaken by the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration at its ninth meeting;
7. *Also requests* the Secretariat to prepare a draft decision concerning the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting."

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2 UNEP/CHW.8/16\*, annex IV.

3 UNEP/CHW/OEWG/6/19, annex I.

4 UNEP/CHW.8/INF/6, annex, appendix 1.

## Annex I

### Progress report by the Chair of the Mobile Phone Working Group

#### I. Introduction

1. This annex presents the report by the Chairman of the Mobile Phone Working Group on progress made by the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VIII/6. The Chairman wishes to request that, in addition to taking note of the present progress report as a whole, the Open-ended Working Group should take special note of its annex II, which contains a summary of the Chairman's paper on issues raised during the discussion of the guideline on transboundary movement of used and end-of-life mobile phones, which was issued as document UNEP/CHW.8/INF/6, annex, appendix 1. The paper describes some issues raised during the discussions of the Project 2.1 group as it developed the guidelines on the collection and transboundary movement for used and end-of-life mobile phones.. The chairman of Project Group 2.1 produced the Chairman's paper to raise issues and ideas that were brought forward by the project group but on which there was no consensus. If the Open-ended Working Group decides to act on any of the issues raised in the Chairman's paper, the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative may consider conducting further work on this.

2. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision VIII/6, inter alia welcoming the work of the Mobile Phone Working Group and its project groups, and requested the Open-ended Working Group to review the guidance document<sup>5</sup> further, based on Parties' experience and needs, and to present it to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting for consideration and final adoption. The guidance document summarizes the five completed guidelines on used and end-of-life mobile phones which have been developed under the guidance of the Mobile Phone Working Group.

3. Through decision VIII/6, the Conference of the Parties encouraged the Mobile Phone Working Group and other interested groups to facilitate the initiation of pilot projects, in cooperation with Parties to the Basel Convention, the Basel Convention regional and coordinating centres and other stakeholders. It also encouraged testing of the completed guidelines and the guidance document so as to refine them further based on any additional information provided. The first two countries selected for such pilot projects are Egypt and Romania. The anticipated deliverables from the project would be raised public awareness regarding such collection and recovery schemes; raised public awareness regarding the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative; and a successful mobile phone collection and recovery scheme operating in the selected country or region.

#### II. Status of activities

4. The Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative has completed its first phase of activities and work programme. All guidelines on used and end-of-life mobile phones have been completed and approved by the Mobile Phone Working Group. They can be found on the Basel Convention website at [www.basel.int/industry/mppiwp/projects.html](http://www.basel.int/industry/mppiwp/projects.html).

5. The overall guidance document on environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones, which summarizes the information contained in all five technical guidelines, was provisionally adopted by the eighth Conference of the Parties. In that regard, Parties requested that the document be further reviewed and subsequently submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting for consideration and possible final adoption.

6. The Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative partners agreed to promote awareness of the Initiative's guidelines in cooperation with activities planned by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and through their own information and awareness-raising channels. The first regional workshop was organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Bratislava from 25 to 26 June 2007. This activity is of key

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5 UNEP/CHW.8/2/Add.3\*, annex.

importance for providing the information in the guidelines to country experts who can use and apply them.

7. In addition, the Mobile Phone Working Group would be ready to provide input on practical guidance on evaluation, testing, packaging and labelling of collected mobile phones prior to export for the reuse/repair/refurbishment market if the Open-ended Working Group decided that such an input was required.

### III. Transboundary movement

8. The transboundary movement issue for used mobile phones destined for repair, refurbishment or upgrading underwent extensive discussions in an effort to find a compromise proposal. The compromise reached lists two options for Parties to consider when dealing with transboundary movement of used mobile phones destined for reuse, possibly after repair, refurbishment or upgrading. The guidelines on the transboundary movement of collected mobile phones provide clear and concise information on the options that could be undertaken.

9. To that end, some Parties or Signatories to the Basel Convention may determine that used mobile phones destined for reuse following repair, refurbishment or upgrading in the importing country may qualify as hazardous wastes and would be subject to the Basel Convention. Other Parties or Signatories may determine that such shipments do not qualify as hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention and are therefore outside the scope of the Convention. In the second instance, partners recommended a voluntary notification procedure which would provide information on proposed shipments to States of export, import and transit and give those States an opportunity to respond or react.

10. At the same time, Project Group 2.1 agreed that exports of end-of-life mobile phones destined for material recovery and recycling or disposal should be subject to the Basel Convention transboundary movement controls if they contain any Basel Convention Annex I constituents that exhibit Basel Convention Annex III hazardous characteristics.

11. Both those procedures necessitate an evaluation over the next two years based on information collected, and it is envisaged that there may be revisions to guidelines prior to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### IV. Resources

12. All stakeholders, Parties and Signatories to the Convention together with manufacturers and representatives of the network providers, non-governmental organizations and other experts and international bodies currently involved in the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative have demonstrated commitment towards the Partnership by participating actively in the teleconferences and meetings held. They have provided in-kind resources and financial support.

13. Extrabudgetary funding will be needed to complete Phase II of the activities under the Initiative, which includes testing and revision of the guidelines; awareness-raising; training; and support to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and know-how to countries that are considering launching collection and recovery schemes and are looking for environmentally sound practices. The Mobile Phone Working Group will attempt to quantify more clearly the funding needs for Phase II of the Initiative's activities, as reflected in the 2007–2008 work programme. In that regard, decision VIII/6, paragraph 8, is worth bearing in mind:

*“Encourages Parties, Signatories, members of industry and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to make financial or in-kind contributions or both...”*

## Annex II

### **Chairman's paper on issues raised during the discussion of the guideline on transboundary movement of used and end-of-life mobile phones: summary of issues**

1. The document entitled "the Chairman's Paper" was developed by the Chairman of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative Project Group 2.1 and issued as document UNEP/CHW.8/INF/6, annex, appendix 1. The Paper presents issues that were raised during discussions of the transboundary movement of collected used and end-of-life mobile phones. It should be noted, however, that the Paper is not a consensus text: participants in Project Group 2.1 differed in their views on how and when the Basel Convention should apply to the transboundary movement of used mobile phones destined for reuse after repair, refurbishment or upgrading in the importing country and to transboundary movements of end-of-life mobile phones destined for material recovery and recycling.
2. To address the issues raised through the discussions of Project Group 2.1, a number of options have been identified, ranging from improving the implementation of controls under the Basel Convention to clarifying the classification of some of the current waste listings, and also to streamlining some of the controls (notification procedures, shipments from non-Annex VII countries to Annex VII countries).
3. Some participants were of the opinion that further specificity is needed in the Basel Convention and its Annexes with respect to the waste entries in Basel Convention Annexes VIII and IX. Without further clarification, there may be difficulty in the near future in arriving at a common understanding of what is or is not covered under the Convention. For example, definitions are lacking of "major reassembly", "direct reuse" and the apparent distinction between "reuse following repair" and "direct reuse". Also, although the Chairman's Paper raises issues concerning used mobile phones, there could be implications when applied more broadly to used electronic equipment.
4. Other Project Group 2.1 participants believed that repair could at times entail the replacement and discarding through Basel Convention Annex IV operations of hazardous parts, and in those instances the Basel Convention should apply. They were of the opinion that there should be evaluation and/or testing and labelling prior to movement to avoid accumulations of used mobile phones or hazardous components after repair, refurbishment or upgrading which would require disposal in the importing country.
5. In that connection, the point was made that an exporter can easily claim full functionality or reparability of a used piece of equipment. Without proper information, customs officials and competent authorities cannot easily verify whether claims are valid. Consequently, it was recommended that additional guidelines be developed under the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative on the evaluation and/or testing and labelling of used mobile phones prior to export. Such guidelines would cover the question of how to conduct a proper assessment of functionality and the certification and labelling of used mobile phones, and so help ensure that there is no significant dumping of non-reusable parts.

## Annex III

### Elements of the 2007–2008 work programme

1. The following work programme consists of the core work elements for 2007–2008 and a summary of six programme elements, taking into account those activities completed under Phase I of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and those unfinished tasks to be carried out in Phase II. The core work elements are:

- (a) Practical testing of the agreed guidelines through comparisons with existing life-cycle operations for used and end-of-life mobile phones and making changes to the guidelines or recommending improvements to existing practices as required;
- (b) Launching pilot projects to develop successful collection schemes;
- (c) Addressing issues as assigned to the Mobile Phone Working Group by the Open-ended Working Group from the list of issues set forth in the Chairman's Paper developed by the Chair of Project Group 2.1;
- (d) Taking into account the interests of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in raising awareness concerning the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and implementing the guidelines;
- (e) Raising awareness on the environmentally sound management of used and end-of-life mobile phones using existing resource strengths such as the Basel Convention regional centres;
- (f) Collecting information on the use of different procedures for the transboundary movement of used mobile phones;
- (g) Taking into account complementary work of related initiatives such as the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) and Solve The e-waste Problem through the United Nations University (STeP);
- (h) Undertaking a review of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and preparing suggestions for the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting on future directions for the Initiative.

#### **1. Testing the five guidelines developed by the various project groups and making appropriate adjustments**

2. Core element 1 is as follows:

- (a) Testing the guidelines on refurbishment of used mobile phones;
- (b) Testing the guidelines on material recovery/recycling of end-of-life mobile phones;
- (c) Testing the guidelines on design considerations (see section 4.5 (b) below);
- (d) Testing the guidelines on collection of used and end-of-life mobile phones (see section 4.5 (a) below);
- (e) Testing the guidelines on transboundary movement of collected mobile phones and establishing a central contact point for the collection of information;
- (f) Preparing consolidated reports with recommendations on each completed test study for consideration by the Mobile Phone Working Group.

#### **2. Reviewing and making adjustments to the overall guidance document**

3. Core element 2 is as follows:

- (a) Coordinating, with the Secretariat, any comments by regional group focal points and Basel Convention regional centres;
- (b) Preparing documents as appropriate for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group;

(c) Revising the overall guidance document as required;

(d) Transmitting the document to the Secretariat for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting for final adoption.

### **3. Awareness-raising and training**

4. Core element 3 involves:

(a) Elaborating on the role of the Basel Convention regional centres as a mechanism for assisting in raising awareness concerning the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and in implementing the various guidelines and the overall guidance document;

(b) Organizing, or assisting in the organization of, workshops in the various United Nations regions as supported by local and other stakeholders.

### **4. Projects on practical evaluation of guidelines and projects on collection in developing countries and countries with economies in transition**

5. Core element 4 involves:

(a) In consultation with local telecom operators, local governments, competent authorities and non-governmental organizations, carrying out a practical evaluation of the guideline on collection of used mobile phones in countries previously identified (Romania and Egypt) by reference to existing takeback operations (see section 1 (d));

(b) Carrying out a practical evaluation of each applicable section of the guideline on awareness-raising design considerations for new mobile phones by manufacturers and proposing recommendations for further improvement of the guideline, where appropriate (see section 1 (c));

(c) Where a local or international commitment of resources is available from industry, Governments or and competent authorities, working with competent authorities and Basel Convention regional centres in other United Nations regions that express interest in hosting projects on collection.

### **5. Coordination and collaboration with related initiatives**

6. Core element 5 involves:

(a) Reviewing the activities and work programmes of related initiatives and identifying similarities and differences, ensuring that there is no duplication of effort;

(b) Initiating further coordination and collaboration, as appropriate.

### **6. Review of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative**

7. Core element 6 consists in undertaking a review of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative and preparing suggestions for the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting concerning future directions for the Initiative.