

## Persistent Organic Pollutants: Progress Continues

The Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-6) for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) met from 17–21 June 2002, in Geneva.\*

The Meeting was opened by the INC Chair John Buccini (Canada), who introduced Philippe Roch, Director of the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape. In noting that INC-6 marked a shift from negotiation to implementation of the Convention, Philippe Roch stressed in that connection the importance of technical and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

This multilateral environmental agreement is consid-

ered to be one of the real international success stories, and delegates saw their main task as ensuring that the Convention is both ratified and fully implemented in a timely manner. In this regard, delegates considered, *inter alia*, preparations for the Conference of the Parties (COP) and adopted the following decisions:

- the size of the Bureau;
- budget;
- DDT and Register of specific exemptions;
- the Expert Group on best available techniques and best environmental practices;
- wastes and stockpiles;
- implementation plans;
- the POPs Review Committee;
- a clearing-house mechanism;
- technical assistance;
- financial resources and mechanisms and the interim financial mechanism;
- effectiveness evaluation;
- non-compliance; and
- INC-7.

*(These decisions can be downloaded from the Convention website, so will not be discussed here.)*

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\* At INC-5 (4–10 December 2000 in Johannesburg) delegates concluded negotiations on the POPs Convention. At the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Stockholm Convention, held on 22–23 May 2001, in Stockholm, delegations adopted the Convention, resolutions adopted at INC-4 and INC-5, and the Final Act.

At that Conference, a total of 91 States and the European Union signed the Stockholm Convention and a total of 115 countries and the European Community (EC) signed the Final Act of the Conference. *Environmental Policy and Law* has covered all the negotiations for the Convention. For the report on INC-4, see *EPL* Vol. 30, No. 3 (2000) at page 123 and for the report on INC-5, see *EPL* Vol. 31, No. 1 (2001) at page 15.

There is abundant evidence of international support for full ratification of the Convention, and many believe that it will enter into force within two years – at least one year ahead of schedule. That was the positive message of this latest session – that the Stockholm Convention is well on its way to becoming legally binding.

Concerning the first Conference of the Parties, during INC-3 Switzerland had proposed to finance holding the

COP-1 in a developing country. At INC-6, the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) stated its interest in hosting COP-1. During the present session, Uruguay expressed its pleasure with the opportunity to host the first COP. Delegates then agreed to a co-proposal from Switzerland and Uruguay that Switzerland would fund COP-1 in Uruguay. (MJ)

