



International PRTR Coordinating Group

Sixth meeting

Thursday, 6 October 2011, Paris

REPORT

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries and organizations: Chile, Czech Republic, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and European Environment Bureau/European ECO-Forum. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Iñigo de Vicente-Mingarro, Vice-Chair¹, and serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

I. Sharing experiences on PRTR

(a) Ongoing and planned activities

Government representatives and stakeholders shared information on their ongoing and planned activities to support implementation of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR).

Chile works to implement PRTR in the country and it has been also invited to share its experience with Argentina.

Czech Republic focuses on the elaboration of its website, including on making available in Internet its database on diffuse emissions. It plans to participate in a subregional workshop on PRTR aimed at promoting implementation and ratification of the PRTR Protocol in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, (EECCA) organised by the UNECE and Belarus (Minsk, 3-4 November 2011).

Japan is carrying out a bilateral project with Thailand to help the country to build its national PRTR. It also shared its experience in building dialogue between industry and the public.

Norway plans to participate in a subregional workshop in Minsk aimed at promoting implementation and ratification of the PRTR Protocol in the EECCA countries..

Spain carries out activities to support the development of PRTR in a number of countries in Latin America. One of the most important activities which are carried out under these projects, jointly with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development

¹ Chair was not able to attend the meeting due to health problems.

(Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo, CCAD), is the translation into Spanish of the UNECE Guidance for implementation of the PRTR Protocol. It is expected that the document will be available soon.

Switzerland focuses on promoting PRTR to a broad public. It has established an informative website in four languages, including English. The country pursues international cooperation under the auspices of UNECE, UNITAR and OECD.

Sweden had an expert visit from Belarus on environmental matters, including PRTR.

UK is working on the elaboration of its website, including on providing a prominent visibility to a database on diffuse emissions. It had an expert visit from China on environmental matters, including PRTR.

USA undertakes a number of rule making activities, including on extending the list of the reported chemicals and the sectors of economy. Its Environmental Protection Agency has implemented accessibility to the environment data through mobile phones. It also plans to organize a national conference to discuss the role of PRTR in the context of sustainability and to prepare a guidance document on the subject matter. Other activities included cooperation regarding PRTR with universities, which are largely populated by minorities. The country also promotes PRTR internationally under the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

UNECE informed about its capacity building efforts dedicated to the PRTR Protocol, including side events organised at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Chisinau, June 2011) and at the 7th “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, September 2011); a subregional workshop (Minsk, November 2011); survey on a technical assistance mechanism (Summer, 2011); population of a capacity-building matrix at PRTR.net and production of guidance material on the PRTR Protocol. It also informed about the 1st meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to take place in Geneva on 28-29 November 2011, which will provide a forum for countries to assess their efforts in implementing the Protocol and will allow for sharing experiences and knowledge in this field.

UNEP informed about the upcoming third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC3) to prepare a global legally binding instrument on Mercury to be held in Nairobi, from 31 October to 4 November 2011.

GEF, through its POPs Focal Area, is currently supporting a global project that has the objective of designing PRTRs to report POPs in Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Peru, Thailand and Ukraine and to continue implementation of the PRTR in Chile. With support of US EPA, this project also included development of infrastructure assessments for PRTR implementation in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The project is expected to end mid-2012. UNEP is the implementing agency for this project and UNITAR the executing body. Under this

project, guidance on POPs reporting through a PRTR and on legal considerations for PRTR implementation is being developed. The activities in Thailand under this project have been stopped due to new financing and support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Thailand to design a national PRTR. UNEP has included in its pipeline for the replenishment 5 of the GEF, a second phase of the project above mentioned (selecting 4-5 best performing countries) and it also planning to develop a PRTR system in the Russian Federation and possibly some work on PRTR in interested countries in different regions. UNEP has been requested by the Russian Federation to assist the country in developing a PRTR. Currently, the Ministry of Environment of Spain, CCAD and UNITAR are supporting a project in Central America that continues PRTR design work in Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras. United States is supporting PRTR design in Dominican Republic and El Salvador. These joint efforts are aimed to design a regional PRTR in Central America, which would be the third regional PRTR in the world and the first in a developing-country context.

UNITAR also outlined the main activities related to PRTR under the Quick Start Program (QSP) funded by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which allows countries to have enabling activities to implement PRTRs. The QSP is currently supporting PRTR design projects in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Panama, with UNITAR as an executing agency.

European ECO Forum informed about its capacity building activities in the following countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation (Volgograd region). The activities included, workshops, developing of software to support a demo-PRTR and publishing a guide.

Through the discussion the following two issues have been highlighted as the most challenging for implementing PRTR: reporting on diffuse sources of emissions, and interrelation and comparability between a waste-specific and pollutants-specific reporting.

(b) Electronic information tools

UNECE and UNITAR presented PRTR.net and PRTR: Learn webportals. PRTR.net constitutes a major global-wide hub on PRTR-related information. It was designed as a static platform and therefore is not able to provide dynamic services, which are, on the contrary, offered by PRTR: Learn. PRTR: Learn includes the following features: meeting calendar, web conferences, web classroom, chat etc. Both organizations informed about their coordination efforts aimed to streamline use of the webportals. For example, the capacity building matrix (which provides information on capacity building activities on PRTR.net) and the interactive map (which provides a summary of the status of PRTR development in a country on PRTR:Learn) should be interlinked in future. The participants agreed that it is crucial to keep the two webportals updated and to promote them widely. They, in particular, stressed the need for providing timely information to the capacity building matrix.

(d) Cross-walk project

UK and the Czech Republic informed that it was agreed by the OECD TF on PRTR that the two countries and UNECE will develop a concept of a scoping study of the pollutant-specific and waste-specific approaches ("crosswalk" between the pollutant and the waste specific reporting on off-site transfers). The participants considered that an exchange of information on the experience gained in reporting transfers using the pollutant-specific and waste-specific approaches would facilitate review of that experience. UNECE informed that it will be in a position to start working on this activity from 2012.

(e) Global promotion

The participants agreed that it is important to promote PRTR in the major upcoming global fora, such as RIO+20, Eye on Earth summit in Abu Dhabi, and negotiations on Mercury. Furthermore, they supported the proposal discussed at the meeting of OECD TF on PRTR regarding a global-wide round table on PRTR to be organized in 2013 under the auspices of OECD and UNECE.

II. Major conclusions and outcomes

The participants agreed that the work on PRTR has a great potential for coordination and for building synergies. They furthermore decided on the following specific actions to further cooperation:

- UNITAR, UNEP, OECD, UNECE and GEF will exchange contacts of the national focal points involved in their respective activities.
- Countries will keep UNITAR, UNEP, OECD, UNECE and GEF informed on their bilateral PRTR-related cooperation with developing countries and with countries with economies in transition.

- OECD TF on PRTR is very advanced in producing substantive material. It is therefore necessary that the material is made available to a broader audience as soon as possible as to facilitate its use by countries which have lesser level of PRTR development.
- Results of the survey carried out by UNECE to assess the need for technical assistance mechanism should be used by UNITAR, UNEP, OECD and GEF in their relevant activities, and by countries in their relevant bilateral programmes.
- OECD and UNECE will send a joint message to the focal points for their PRTR activities, which will: (a) invite governments and stakeholders to promote PRTR in the Eye on Earth Summit and in the Rio+20, and (b) bring to the attention of the governments and stakeholders the importance of a proper reflection of PRTR in a future legally binding instrument on mercury.
- OECD, UNECE and UNITAR will send a joint message to the focal points for their PRTR activities, which will inform them about the potential and features offered by PRTR.net and PRTR: Learn webportals and will encourage focal points to keep the webportals updated and make use of them.
- UK, Czech Republic and UNECE will develop a concept for the “cross walk” project and will share it for comments with USA, with a view of developing a more comprehensive project proposal and its eventual submission for funding.
- The next meeting will be held in Fall 2012 back-to-back with the OECD Task Force on PRTR.
