CONCEPT NOTE

Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) sub-regional training workshop on building capacity to deal with the illegal shipments of e-waste and near-end-of-life electronics

1. Proposed Dates: 10-13 July 2012

2. Venue: Hanoi, Viet Nam

3. Organizers: United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment/Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam (ISPONRE/MONRE)

4. Supporting Organizations:

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Vietnam Cleaner Production Centre (VNCPC), Secretariat of the Basel Convention, and the Ministry of the Environment-Japan (MOE-Japan)

5. Participants: 40 (approximately)

- Two senior officials from each of the six GMS countries (Lao PDR, Cambodia, China (Yunan Province), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam) consisting of one representative from the Ministry of Environment and one official from the Customs Department: 2 participants x 6 countries = 12.
- Additional local participants from Viet Nam MONRE, Customs department, and private sector: Around 10 participants.
- International resource persons: Around 8 persons
- Local representatives of international organisations/donor agencies: as observers

6. Background:

6.1 E-waste and its transboundary movement

Globally, the annual production of e-waste is estimated to be 20 to 50 million tones[1]. Large amount of this e-waste ends up in a few numbers of developing countries for the purpose of reuse, refurbishment, recycling, and recovery of precious materials. E-waste has become an important health and environmental issue especially in the developing countries, as recycling electronic goods are often undertaken by informal sector workers or SMEs which do not have proper infrastructure and equipment, resulting in the exposure of dangerous heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium etc. which can be toxic to human and ecosystems.

[1] UNEP (2005) *E-waste, the hidden side of IT equipment's manufacturing and use*, Environmental Alert Bulletin.

In broad terms, the majority of e-waste exports over the last decade have been sent to China, India, Pakistan and Africa with USA supplying the largest volumes to China and Europe exporting to India and Pakistan[2]. Results of a recent international cooperative initiative against illegal shipping of wastes, conducted in June and July 2010, indicate that the most common routes for the illegal wastes were from North America to destinations in Asia and from Europe to destinations in West Africa and Asia[3]. During the past decade, Asian countries have introduced controls or bans on imports of e-waste and suspected e-waste, but illegal trade continues to grow, with domestic generation of e-waste compounding the problem.

The urgent need to address the issues of e-waste has been recognized globally and regionally. For example at the CSD-18 Chair's Summary called for special attention on particular types of wastes, including the emerging new waste streams such as e-waste. The need to build local capacity in the developing countries to address the flow of e-wastes was highlighted[4]. More recently at the Third Regional 3R Forum in Asia, held in Singapore in October 2011, the countries agreed on the *"Recommendations of the Singapore Forum on the 3Rs in Achieving a Resource Efficient Society in Asia.[5]"* As part of this document, the Forum recommended that the countries can consider:

- Establishing proper institutional infrastructures for collection, storage, transportation, recovery, treatment and disposal of e-waste at regional and national levels.
- Establishing appropriate regulatory procedures to control illegal exports of e-waste and to ensure their environmentally sound management.
- Introducing awareness raising programmes and activities at all levels on issues related to health and safety aspects of e-waste in order to encourage better management practices.
- Establishing formal standards, certification systems and licensing procedures for recycling and disposal enterprises to ensure safety and environmentally sound processing of e-waste.
- Implementing 'extended producer responsibility' (EPR) mandating producers, importers and retailers with the cost of collecting, recycling and disposal of e-waste.

6.2 E-waste and Green Economy

While e-waste could cause serious environmental and health concerns due to toxic materials contained, it also often contains valuable materials; for example, a metric ton of end-of-life personal computers contains more gold than that recovered from 17 tons of gold ore[6]. When e-waste is properly handled (i.e., collected, separated, recovered and treated with due consideration on environment as well as on occupational health), these precious materials can be used as alternative to virgin materials. Development and/or improvement of appropriate

[2] UNEP (2011) *Study on the possible effects on human health and the environment in Asia and the Pacific of the trade of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury*.
[3] INECE (2010) *International Hazardous Waste Inspection Project at Seaports: Results and Recommendations*. INECE Seaport Environmental Security Network. December 2010.
[4] http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/381/00/PDF/N1038100.pdf?OpenElement
[5] http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/spc/docs/3rd_3r/111014_C_Summary_3rd3R.pdf
[6] Bleiwas, D. and T. Kelly (2001) *Obsolete Computers, "Gold Mine," or High-Tech Trash? Resource Recovery from Recycling.* US Geological Survey.

infrastructure and the system for e-waste recycling would hence have a wide range of potential impact in terms of Green Economy, such as resource conservation, creating green jobs, and enhancing decent work and labour standards of the informal sector.

6.3 Main actors/projects supporting Asian countries on e-waste issues

The issues of e-waste in Asia, including the aspects of proper management as well as transboundary movement, have attracted attention of various international organizations and other agencies. Below are the key organizations/projects that have provided support to the Asian countries. Summary of their recent activities, which has contributed in revealing the current situation of transboundary movement, and in building capacity of the Asian countries, are shown in Annex 1.

- **Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes** (Financially supported by MoE-Japan)
- **Asia-Pacific E-waste Project** (Project of the Secretariat of Basel Convention, supported by Japan, Canada and Netherlands)
- **Green Customs Initiative** (Partnership consisting of multilateral environmental agreements (including Basel), Interpol, UNEP and the World Customs Organization)
- **Solving the E-Waste Problem (StEP) Initiative** (UNU serves as secretariat)
- **Operation Sky-hole Patching** (a collaborative initiative by custom authorities across the Asia-Pacific region)
- **Basel Convention Coordinating Centre for Asia and the Pacific (BCRC China)**
- **Basel Convention Regional Centre for South-East Asia (BCRC-SEA)**
- **UNEP DTIE/IETC**

6.4 Outcomes from the GMS Workshop on National Strategy of Integrating Solid Waste Management and 3Rs, Do Son, Viet Nam, 28-29 July 2010

The above mentioned meeting was co-organized by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) of Viet Nam, UNCRD, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) of Japan, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Ministry of the Environment of Japan. At this meeting, participants from GMS countries took special note of the emerging issue of the flow of e-wastes into the region, in particular the need to build local capacity for dealing with illegal shipments of near-end-of-life electronics to developing countries. The meeting further noted the necessity of capacity-building of importing or target countries in distinguishing between second-hand goods and waste, and on prior quality assurance of the exported second-hand goods[7]. In response, UNCRD has proposed to organize a sub-regional workshop targeting the GMS countries, aiming at building the capacity of customs, environment and other relevant officials to deal with the illegal shipments of near-end-of-life electronics.

[7] Refer the Chair's Summary at http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/spc/docs/ 100727_3r_chair_summary.pdf

7. Objectives:

- Enhance understanding on the significance of controlling transboundary movement of e-waste and near-end-of-life electronics, and of proper recycling of e-wastes, taking into consideration the impact of e-waste on environment, occupational health and safety, and resource efficiency.
- Build local capacity of the Customs Department and Ministry of Environment in effectively controlling transboundary movement of e-waste and near-end-of-life electronics.
- Improve interagency coordination towards effectively addressing the issue of transboundary movement of e-waste and near-end-of-life electronics.

8. Proposed Draft Programme:

Refer draft Provisional Programme.

Annex 1: Main actors/projects supporting Asian countries on e-waste issues

Name of organization/initiative	Main activities
Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes	- Duration: 2004 - - Participating countries: Brunei, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (Rep.), Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam - Secretariat/Financial support: Ministry of the Environment, Japan - Objectives: Capacity building of Asian countries to implement the Basel Convention and develop information exchange system (network) among the relevant countries, to prevent illegal import and export of hazardous waste. - Main activities: Annual workshops, e-handbooks, and research. - The annual workshop held in Yokohama, Japan in January 2010, was attended by 22 participants from competent authorities and focal points to the Basel Convention, the Customs officer of each country, as well as the relevant international organization such as World Customs Organization (WCO) and Interpol, with an aim to strengthen cooperation between environmental authority and customs and to discuss possible cooperation for strengthening border control activities. - Latest annual workshop held on Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2011 in Shenzhen, China, attended by 37 delegates from 12 countries/region. Details: http://www.env.go.jp/en/recycle/asian_net/index.html
Asia-Pacific E-waste Project	- Duration: 2005 – (currently in 2nd phase) - Participating Countries: Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, (SPREP) - Secretariat: Basel Convention - Financial Support: Japan, Canada and Netherlands - Objectives: To enhance the capacity of Parties in the Asia-Pacific Region to manage electrical and electronic wastes in an environmentally sound manner through the establishment of public-private partnerships, and the prevention of illegal traffic. - Main activities: workshop, tools development (regional database on the ESM of e-waste), awareness raising, technical training and pilot schemes for the environmentally sound collection of e-waste, at both the national and regional levels. Details: http://archive.basel.int/pub/leaflets/leaflet01012011-1.pdf, http://basel.int/cop10/data/COP10-INF/documents/i29e.pdf

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Name of organization/initiative	Main activities

Green Customs Initiative	- Duration: 2003 –
	- Participating organizations: UNEP, Interpol, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Secretariats of MEAs with trade provisions (the Montreal Protocol, the Basel Convention, CITES, the Rotterdam Convention, and the Stockholm Convention), and UNODC.
	- Secretariat: Green Customs Secretariat, UNEP DTIE
	- Objectives: To enhance the capacity of customs and other relevant enforcement personnel to monitor and facilitate the legal trade and to detect and prevent illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities covered by the relevant conventions and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
	- Main activities: Capacity building of customs and other relevant enforcement personnel through regional and national training; Development of Green Customs Guide.
	- Some key activities implemented recently:
	  - National Green Customs Workshop in China, September 2011. Provided awareness-raising and training on combating the illegal trade of environmentally-sensitive commodities. Participated by 60 senior Chinese Customs officers.
	  - Green Customs Workshop for Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries, September 2007, held in Thailand. Participated by customs officers from GMS countries.
	  - Green Customs Train-the-Trainer Workshop, May 2007, in China. Participated by customs officers and customs training institutes from 8 Asia-Pacific countries.
	  - National Green Customs Train-the-Trainer Workshop for Viet Nam, August 2010.
	
	Details: http://www.greencustoms.org/index.htm

Solving the E-Waste Problem (StEP) Initiative	- Duration: 2004 - - Participating organizations: Secretariat of the Basel Convention, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNU, GIZ, US-EPA. Partners also from business and industry, and from academia and research and NGOs (overall, more than 50 members). - Secretariat: United Nations University - Objectives: To initiate and facilitate approaches that promote the sustainable handling and management of e-waste. - Main activities: Research (analysis, planning), pilot projects. - The core work is done by the members of the five task forces, which include Policy, ReDesign, ReUse, Recycling and Capacity Building. - StEP White Paper *"E-waste Take-Back System Design and Policy Approaches"* Published in 2009. Details: http://www.step-initiative.org/index.php

Operation Sky-hole Patching	- Duration: September 2006 to October 2007 - Participating Countries: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Japan; Korea; Macau, China; Maldives; Mongolia; New Zealand; the Philippines; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Thailand and Vietnam. - International organizations involved: UNEP ROAP, Environmental - Investigation Agency (EIA) and Regional Intelligence Liaison Office of Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) - Objectives: To set up an united anti-environmental crime front in the Asia-Pacific region to stamp out the illegal trade in ODS and hazardous wastes as defined in the Montreal Protocol and Basal Convention. - Main activities: Customs authorities across the Asia-Pacific region seized more than 3,000 tons of hazardous waste during the project period. Hong Kong Customs alone seized 98 consignments from 25 countries, including 47 tons of used computer monitors from Italy, 170 tones of monitors from Belgium and 34 tons of monitors from Germany. Details: WCO RILO-AP (2007) *Evaluation Report on Project Sky-Hole Patching* (http://www.greencustoms.org/reports/workshop/Sky_hole_patching.pdf)

Basel Convention Coordinating Centre for Asia and the Pacific (BCRC China)	- Established in: 1997
	- Financial support: Sources include Secretariat of the Basel Convention, SAICM, UNEP, MoE-Japan, EVD-Netherlands, MoE-Canada; MEP-China.
	- Core function: To assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition, within Asia and the Pacific region, through capacity building for the environmentally sound management. to achieve the fulfillment of the objectives of the Convention.
	- Main activities: National and regional workshops/training courses, policy research, experimental analysis, technical research and demonstration projects.
	- Some key activities implemented:
	  - Regional Workshop on E-waste Identification toward the Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement for Hazardous Waste and Other Wastes in Asia, November 2008, attended by 15 delegates representing the competent authorities of 9 countries or administrative regions.
	  - Regional Workshop on Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement for Hazardous Waste in Asia, March 2007, attended by attended by 35 delegates from the competent authorities or focal points to the Basel Convention from 11 countries or administrative regions, and around 20 others from international organizations academia, etc.
	
	Details: http://en.bcrc.cn/

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Basel Convention Regional Centre for South-East Asia (BCRC-SEA)	- Established in: 2006
	- Countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam
	- Financial support: MoE-Indonesia, Secretariat of the Basel Convention, and other donors.
	- Core function: To provide services for implementation of the Basel Convention to the Parties / South East Asia Countries.
	- Main activities: •Training, Technology Transfer, Information, Consulting, and Awareness Raising
	- Some key activities implemented:
	  - Regional Technical Training Workshop on Environmentally Sound Collection, Separation and Management of E-Wastes, July 2010, Indonesia. Attended by 49 participants including representatives from 9 Asian countries.
	  - E-Waste Training Workshop for Asia and the Pacific, August 2009, Viet Nam. Attended by 71 participants including reps from 8 Asian countries.
	  - Regional Workshop on the Environmentally Sound Management of E-Wastes, March 2007, Cambodia. Attended by 50 participants including reps from 8 Asian countries.
	  - *"Regional Technical Guidelines for Inventory of Electrical and Electronic Waste"* developed in 2007.
	  - *"Technical Guidelines on the 3Rs of End-of-Life Electronic Products"* developed in 2007.
	Details: http://www.bcrc-sea.org/

UNEP DTIE/IETC	- Main focus: Promotes and implements environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), including management systems, for sustainable production and consumption as well as for water and sanitation. Since 2004, IETC has been focusing on waste management, and water and sanitation as two major themes.
	- Some key activities related to e-waste:
	  - Waste Electrical Electronic Equipment (WEEE) /E-waste Management Workshop on Take-Back System, July 2011, Osaka, Japan.
	  - Regional Workshop on WEEE / E-Waste Management, July 2010, Osaka, Japan.
	  - *"E-waste Volume 1: Inventory Assessment Manual"* and *"E-waste Volume 2: E-waste Management Manual"* published in 2007.
	  - Draft version of *"E-waste Volume 3: Manual 3: WEEE / E-waste "Take Back System"* available (dated March 2011).
	Details: http://www.unep.or.jp/Ietc/