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## **SUMMARY OF REGIONAL MEETING: AFRICA AND WEST ASIA/MIDDLE EAST - BUILDING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL NETWORKS**

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### **GOALS**

The regional meeting addressed the following issues:

- The genesis of the network and how it was established.
- What was/is involved in developing and maintaining the network.
- Who is asked to participate and at what levels in the organizations.
- Subjects the network covers.
- Vehicles used for exchange and means of communication used.
- Topics on which exchange is taking place.
- How the network overcomes differences in language and legal or other definitions of terms such as what constitutes a hazardous waste.
- Future directions and changes anticipated for the network.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Representatives of countries and non-governmental organizations from Africa met to discuss the development of a regional network of the International Network of Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE). This two day meeting was in furtherance of INECE's clear goal of fostering regional networks to complement the global networking which has steadily expanded since the first workshop in Utrecht, the Netherlands in 1990.

## **2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

### **2.1 Day One**

Participants introduced themselves and described the status of enforcement and networking within their own countries and regions. The early discussion revealed that the continent, as a whole, is in the process of developing an infrastructure for environmental upgrading.

#### **2.1.1 Legislative Framework**

The legislative framework for enforcement is rapidly developing across the continent. Laws are in place, or soon will be in place, in most countries, though they are at different stages of development. Some countries, such as Nigeria, have a wide variety of laws in place (ranging from toxic waste and air to effluent and solid waste) and are signatory to all

conventions and protocols. Some, such as South Africa, are signatories to conventions and protocols, have some laws in place and a comprehensive bill in the making, but do not yet have an enforcement enabling act. Some countries, such as the Benin Republic, have bills before their Parliaments and expect to have laws in place this year. Others, such as Uganda, are developing laws and regulations in hazardous waste, air and conservation. While studying proposals, some countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and Zimbabwe are relying on "19<sup>th</sup> Century" laws. Efforts are being made in some regions to harmonize laws and policies for environmental management, and a treaty is expected to be enacted by Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania by mid 1999.

### 2.1.2 Enforcement Systems

While some remarkable exceptions, enforcement capability is at an earlier stage of development than legal development in Africa overall. While there are known disadvantages to being at an early stage of development, the countries which are at those earliest stages have the advantage of being able to learn from the experiences of more developed enforcement systems.

As the African nations are fully aware, Africa is no a single place. The ecosystems of the continent do not follow national borders. Communication and transportation between different parts of the continent is difficult. While some nations are industrially developed, others lack communication ties, such as Internet access, which would provide tremendous support in developing their own enforcement systems.

Regional networks for enforcement cooperation, which exist in some parts of the continent, have met with various degrees of success. They are based on common geographical ties or agreements to protect common ecosystems.

### 2.1.3 Enforcement Network Approach

Several points of agreement were reached based on the first day's discussion. First, irrespective of the status of countries' status with their laws, each should be working in parallel with each other to build enforcement capacity. Each country needs links to the world and to INECE, specifically through Internet access.

Because of the wide variety of ecosystems and weak communication infrastructure, it is impractical and unnatural to consider Africa a "region" for the purposes of setting up networks. Emerging from the discussions were five identifiable regions to focus on, notwithstanding possible overlap between those regions due to geographical ties.

The development of those subregional groups would be the focus of discussion during day two. Specifically, the group would try to identify existing protocols to build on in those subregions; establish the most advanced countries in the subregions as links to INECE and the other subregions; identify key institutions in the regions as focal points; identify key people who would take responsibility for future contact and activity.

## 2.2 Day Two

In identifying subregions, the participants agreed that they needed to be flexible. They recognized that the subregions needed common or current issues to bring them together, which issues would provide a measure for progress. The regions needed to be large enough to have a capacity to share, and small enough to share concerns. As a starting point, five natural subregions emerged: West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, North Africa, and Central Africa.

Country representatives met with other members of their subregion with the following goals:

- Articulate a realistic agenda for two years. What can realistically be accomplished? Under what conditions, and under what restrictions?
- Specify the short term objective for the subregion, and the sequence of activities.
- Identify a “focal point” person for the subregion. This person should have the communication facility to serve as a contact point with the other subregions and with the rest of the world (e.g., INECE).

#### 2.2.1 East Africa

The overall East African agenda, as articulated by the participants, was to move toward a more harmonized region. East Africa identified three major contact points (Kenya - NES; Uganda - NEMA; Tanzania - ED), with Uganda designated as the regional coordinator. Specific individuals agreed to take on the responsibility of identifying key people in their own areas, appoint a director, and exchange information.

The first specific objective of the region was to create for specific sectors (such as wildlife), using existing staff, to facilitate the exchange and flow of information on enforcement and compliance. To better utilize existing resources, the group agreed to encourage the development of networks in both government and nongovernmental organizations, on a parallel course.

The second specific objective was to create a capacity for compliance and enforcement. It was recognized that this would entail a big cost. Accordingly, the group narrowed its focus to certain priority activities:

- Identify common issues for the subregion.
- Exchange of experiences in the medias needing enforcement and compliance. This will require creating an awareness among enforcement agencies, criminal enforcement, environmental inspectors, and sector inspectors (game, forest, fish, etc.).
- Develop training for the above listed groups.
- Establish modest documentation centers.
- Seek financial, technical and facilitation support for the training and market the training when it does become available.

#### 2.2.2 West Africa

In formulating an overall agenda, the West African countries identified several common issues which would have to be addressed. Among them were weak institutional frameworks for enforcement, insufficient enforceable regulations in many countries, and overall weak enforcement capabilities. The overall agenda would have to include overcoming the lack of political “will” for enforcement; capacity building; and devising ways to overcome the language barrier (French and English) in building the networked.

The group identified priority actions as follows:

- Establish national networks for enforcement within the individual countries.

- Help in the efforts by individual countries to harmonize environmental enforcement laws within their countries.
- Help ensure that each individual country has an environmental policy.
- Provide training for inspectors, environmental lawyers, judiciary, law enforcement officers, and media.
- Promote information exchange and dialogue between agencies to build a political "will."
- Establish a secretariat for the network, and acquire donor/government assistance for the secretariat to establish a communication network (telephones, fax machines, internet access, document center to be publicized within the network).
- Hold subregional meetings, either separately in English and French or with translators.

Nigeria was identified as the focal point contact for the West African network. Within the network, the national contacts would be the enforcement directors of the countries' environmental agencies. All of the meeting participants agreed to participate in the network.

### 2.2.3 Central Africa

Central Africa has an existing agreement and common program among its seven countries. It includes an Executive Committee and is set forth in a detailed paper.

The overall agenda for the Central Africa network would include:

- Evaluation and strengthening of the existing networks (forest ecosystem network; wildlife conservation ecosystem network) and management of environmental information.
- Utilize the institutional and legal frameworks of those existing networks to establish formal arrangements between the countries, and other regulations concerning management of the Central Africa network.
- Identify funding sources for the network (states/donors/NGOs).

The initial focus for the Central Africa network and its nations would be:

- Creation of a Central Africa Network Commission, with a Secretariat; Coordinating Committee; member nations (Cameroon, Democratic Congo, Rep. Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Central Republic); membership of NGOs and other funding sources.
- Organization of workshops to accomplish the creation of the Commission described above.
- Goals of the workshops would be to (1) elaborate objectives for activity, (2) determine priorities, (3) Plan specific training programs.
- Training programs would be designed to (1) help member nations with development and implementation of environmental codes, (2) train inspectors and staff in compliance and enforcement field, and (3) teach member nations how to obtain financial, human and material resources.

Cameroon was identified as the focal point for contact with the Central Africa network.

#### 2.2.4 Southern Africa

Southern Africa has strong cooperation in the region, with the Environmental and Land Management Sector (ELMS) of SADC. The region needs to bring together compliance and enforcement officers, then have ELMS take it on.

The initial objectives of the Southern Africa network would be to:

- On a national level, identify key institutions and individuals involved in compliance and enforcement issues. After each country does this, the information will be used to create a regional database.
- Bring the key individuals and institutions together.
- Hold a Southern Africa regional network workshop. The goals would be to identify issues the member nations have in common; foster possible cooperation; identify capacity building needs in the region.
- Begin issue focused workshops, to train judges, inspectors (such as waste management inspectors).
- Identify one or two projects for cooperation. Possible projects might be the CITES Convention, or cooperation on waste management issues at a national and regional level.

To facilitate communication, Zimbabwe was identified as the regional coordinator. A small secretariat will be developed, and all participants agreed to facilitate Southern Africa network development. To further communication, e-mail capacity of members must be developed.

#### 2.2.5 North Africa

Only one North African country was represented at the meeting. Egypt agreed to be an initial contact point, and to communicate conference activities to other North African nations. See Theme #6 write-up for report on status.

### **3 DEVELOPMENT OF CONCRETE PLANS**

Designated members of each region reported their objectives back to the entire group. Participants shared their observations about the approach of other regions, and asked critical questions of themselves and each other regarding the attainability of particular goals.

In some respects, the regions took different approaches. For instance, the Southern African region focused on common issues as a way to draw member nations together. West Africa looked to mobilize capacity building support as a start. And East Africa looked for simple, cost effective ways to get results, building on strong existing structures and focusing on areas in which law enforcers are already involved.

However different the regional approaches, common issues arose in every case:

- Funding for meetings and training is an issue. Participants asked the NGOs at the meeting to talk about funding possibilities.
- Communication within and among the regional networks requires access to the Internet.
- Technical and financial support from INECE is critical at this stage.

Having established and shared overall goals, the members of the regions met again to identify the concrete “first steps” they would take to further their regional networks.

### 3.1 East Africa

The first steps to be taken by the East African region are as follows:

- Addresses of conference participants have already been exchanged.
- A network of the participants will be used to spread information. Each country, at no cost, will compile a directory of people and institutions, which will then be exchanged. Information about the network will be shared with those identified in the directory.
- The e-mail capability of three countries will be used to conference.
- Two simple newsletters will be published, in January 1999 and July 1999. The first will describe INECE conferences; share basic issues from region nations; spread the message that Africa is moving in the direction of compliance and enforcement; and encourage involvement. The NGO partners agreed to take on the task of the two newsletters, which have a total cost implication of about \$5000.00.

The region identified four major activities which it hopes to accomplish:

- Draft a strategic action plan by June, 1999, covering networking, compliance and all issues in common among the countries in the region.
- Hold a network workshop in August, 1999, to build consensus among the member countries, come to agreement on future programs, and create a sense of “ownership” of the network for members.
- Get thirty people trained as trainers to sustain the activity of the network, in March, 1999. The focus of the training would be multimedia inspections and the principles of enforcement.
- Establish a compliance and enforcement center. The facilities for the center are already available. The major task will be to obtain compliance and enforcement materials.

### 3.2 West Africa

The first steps to be taken by the West African region are as follows:

- Identify issues which cut across the region (transboundary hazardous waste movement, for example).
- Contact each nation’s focal point in ECOWS secretariat.
- Send a first letter to notify member countries of the new network, and identify other issues of common interest.
- Responses will be used to plan a regional workshop on identified issues.
- Secretariat of ECOWS will make an effort to get commitment of the states, and to educate them.
- Nigeria agreed to temporarily fund correspondence.
- A second letter/questionnaire will be mailed , and responses elicited to:

- Develop a profile of issues and concerns of the member nations
- Assess the strength of resources in enforcement and compliance in the region.
- Identify resource people to participate in and conduct training on the issues.
- Members will initially exchange ideas by mail and e-mail.

The West African region's initial goal is to organize a workshop for the region to be held in nine months. The workshop will focus on:

- One or two of the common issues identified in the mailings and communications.
- A discussion of the findings from the initial work.

In planning the workshop, a proposal will be written and ideas circulated for input and feedback. Plans will have to be made to provide translation for the language barrier. The proposal will be sent to ADB for funding for the workshop.

Later activities will include the preparation and circulation of a statement about the workshop, implementation of plans and further goals, and follow up training. No funding is available for these activities.

### 3.3 Central Africa

The first steps identified by the Central Africa region are to:

- Hold a meeting within the region to discuss the plans developed at this conference.
- Identify contacts from nations and groups in the networks described and from prior INECE attendees and invitees.
- Execute the plans described in the Goals as they are approved by members.
- Most important, obtain funding to hold the necessary meetings.

### 3.4 Southern Africa

The steps the Southern Africa network will take during the next three months are:

- Prepare detailed briefs for key institutions in the member nations.
- Identify key stakeholders in compliance at the national level. That information will be used to start a data bank, and as a start for workshop planning. During that process, countries not represented at the conference will be identified, and a summary of this meeting will be circulated to them.
- Begin the process of identifying resources at the national level which can be utilized to support the network, support workshops, and support secretariat activities.
- Set up e-mail communication for the network. That process would begin before attendees left the conference.

The focus of the initial activities would be preparing an infrastructure for network activities. At the end of three months, participants expect to have a clear proposal for an initial Southern Africa network workshop.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

In reviewing the work that had been accomplished during the six hours they met in session, participants noted marked similarities among the approaches of the developing regional networks. All of the plans focused on filling the gaps between political agreements and laws and actual field activities. All of them focused on capacity development in both training and communication. All of them saw a need and developed plans for databases of key contacts in national governments, NGOs and agencies. And though the participants had clear ideas about issues of common regional interest, they all decided that their proposals should be discussed in a wider circle at launching network workshops.

There were also differences in the regional approaches. Some sought to meet needs with central document and training material centers. The issue focus was different among the regions. Southern Africa focused on CITES. In the East African region, Lake Victoria was a common concern. In the West African region, national capacity in the hazardous waste field was a binding issue. And Central Africa was concerned about forest and wildlife ecosystems. In both Central and West Africa, the networks will face and have to contend with problems of communicating in bilingual settings. Some of the programs were detailed to the point of costing out activities; others were broader and entailed virtually no initial costs.

The meeting of the participants from the African continent generated a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. All of the participants expressed a willingness to spread the word about network goals and activities and made a personal commitment to continue sharing. Regional coordinators were selected, and arrangements were made to continue communications and sharing both between and among regions.

The participants were hopeful that within a year databases would be established, consensus building workshops would be commenced, communication networks would be set up, and future plans would be clarified. They all recognized, however, that the goals could not be accomplished without financial and technical support from INECE. Without trigger money, even the basic communication goals would be beyond the financial reach of some participating nations.