

THE BASEL CONVENTION

The Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal was the first international treaty addressing the international movement of hazardous wastes. The treaty is administered by the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and has its Secretariat in Geneva. The Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention (SBC) is Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto of Japan.

The Basel Convention entered into force in May 1992 and represents the response of the international community to the problems caused by the annual world-wide production of 400 million tons of wastes which are hazardous to people or the environment. A Conference of the Parties (COP) to the convention is held every two or three years. At a September 1995 meeting, parties to the convention adopted an amendment banning the export for final disposal of hazardous wastes from OECD to non-OECD countries; this amendment has not yet received enough ratifications to enter into force. In 1998, states parties agreed on lists of specific wastes characterized as hazardous or non-hazardous. The lists were later adopted by the parties to the convention thereby clarifying the scope of the convention.

The most recent Conference of the Parties was held in Geneva in December 2002 and adopted a 10-year strategic plan. The Seventh Conference of the Parties is scheduled to be held in October 2004.

As of February 2004, the United States had signed the Basel Convention but had not yet ratified it.

INTERNET

www.basel.int

Background information and leaflets on hazardous wastes, the text of the treaty, a list of states parties, press releases, and details on national enforcement requirements.

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