

***A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE
TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION***

A Workshop

9-11 April 2003, London, United Kingdom

Preliminary Programme

Wednesday, 9 April

Afternoon:

- 14.00-14.20 **Welcome and Introduction by the Chairman of the Workshop:**
Richard Ballaman, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) and Chairman of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (WGSR)
- 14.20-14.40 **The Public Understanding of Science:** *Steve Yearley, Professor of Sociology, University of York*
- 14.40-15.30 **Stakeholders and the Convention:**
NGOs - *Christer Ågren, Swedish NGO Secretariat on Acid Rain*
Industry - *Peter Goodsell, CONCAWE and Susie Baverstock, BP*
The Media – *Tony Carritt, Media Relations Manager, European Environment Agency*
- 15.30-16.00 **Coffee break**
- 16.00-16.20 **The Achievements of the Convention:** *Keith Bull, Secretary to the Convention*
- 16.20-16.40 **Communicating the Convention:** *John Chenery, Environmental Communications Consultant, Canada*
- 16.40-18.00 **Discussion: What are the key elements for an effective**

Communications Strategy? Discussion Leaders: *Ramon Guardans, Steve Yearley and John Chenery*

19.30 **Workshop Dinner**

Thursday, 10 April

Morning:

09.30-09.50 **Internal Reporting Procedures under the Convention - Present**

Practice and Improvements: *Brinda Wachs*, Secretariat of the Convention

09.50-10.20 **Discussion: How can we make the most of the reporting process (emissions and strategies & policies) in communicating the Convention? Discussion Leaders: *Kimber Scavo* and *Brinda Wachs***

10.20-10.50 **Coffee break**

10.50-11.40 **Enhancing Synergies Beyond the Convention: Lessons from the Convention for Regions Outside Europe –**

Lars

***Nordberg*, former Secretary to the Convention
Perspectives from Developing Countries – *Surendra***

***Shrestha*,**

UNEP, and *Johan Kuylenstierna*, Stockholm Environment

Institute

Consensus and Control: Processes under the Convention

and for

Climate Change – *Bernd Siebenhüner*, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

11.40-12.30 **Discussion: What Message Does the Convention Wish to Convey,**

in Europe and Elsewhere? Discussion Leaders: *Harald*

***Dovland*,**

Lars Nordberg and Keith Bull

12.30-14.00 **Lunch**

Afternoon:

14.00-14.15 **Group Organisation: *M.J. Chadwick*, Stockholm Environment Institute**

14.15-17.30 **Break-out Groups:**

- **Communicating the Convention: the Public, Actors and Stakeholders (Group leader: *Steve Yearley*)**
- **Internal Reporting: the Secretariat, Governments and the Convention (Group leader: *Richard Ballaman*)**
- **Beyond the Convention: Geographical and Topical Outreach and Co-ordination (Group leader: *Keith Bull*)**

Free Evening

Friday, 11 April

Morning:

09.30-10.30 **Strategy Inputs from the Groups**

10.30-11.00 **Coffee break**

11.00-12.30 **Discussion: The Strategy and How to Implement it.
Discussion**

**Leaders: Harald Dovland, Lars Lindau, SNV, Sweden &
Brinda**

Wachs

12.30-13.00 **Next Steps: Transmitting an Implementable Strategy to
WGSR and the Executive Body - Delegation of Tasks, *Keith
Bull***

13.00 **Close of Workshop**

THE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

COMMUNICATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE TASKS FOR THE CONTROL OF TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

A Workshop

Background and mandate

It is thirty years ago that scientists from Scandinavia brought to the attention of the international community the evidence that pollutants emitted in one place were causing serious damage to ecosystems and other elements of the environment far away from their point of origin. In 1975 in Helsinki, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) decided to search for a solution to this problem through international agreement to reduce transboundary pollutants. In 1979, in Geneva, member countries of the UNECE signed the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). It is through this Convention, with its supporting structure of an Executive Body, a Bureau, Working Groups, Task Forces and an Implementation Committee that effective control measures and reductions of damage to the environment and human health have been agreed and implemented.

The Convention itself is only a declaration of intent in which all those that have signed agree to fight air pollution. Additional Protocols to the Convention have targeted specific emissions allowing the Convention to become a useful and vital tool for reducing air pollution. These Protocols dealt successively with *sulphur compounds* in 1985 (and 1994), *nitrogen oxides* in 1988, *volatile organic compounds* in 1991, and *persistent organic pollutants* and *heavy metals* in 1998. In 1999 the Protocol to abate *acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone* (the "multi-effect, multi-pollutant" Protocol) became the most recent to be agreed. These Protocols have brought tangible results in reducing emissions and improving the environment.

Yet, the Convention, its Protocols and its achievements are one of the best-kept environmental secrets! No one would expect a majority of European citizens to be conversant with the details of the way in which improvements have been brought about. But even environmentally concerned and committed citizens, groups and authorities are often ignorant or ill-informed of the achievements of the Convention.

The Executive Body of the Convention has been aware for some time of the lack of an effective strategy for communicating the work and the achievements of the Convention. An "open-ended group of experts" held discussions on *Elements for a Communications Strategy* in April 2001 (EB.AIR/WG.5/2001/3). One recommendation was for a workshop to be held to devise solutions for communicating the work of the Convention. At its twentieth session (December 2001), the Executive Body noted with appreciation the offers of Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to organize such a workshop on communications to improve the visibility of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/77, para. 48(n)).

Developing the Communications Strategy

The purpose of this workshop is to explore innovative approaches to the development of an effective communications strategy for the Convention. Such approaches need to take account of the current understanding of features relating to the public understanding of science and the public responses that emanate from such understanding (such as participation and involvement in science; judgements of accuracy and legitimacy of the science; the interrelationships between the various actors and stakeholders that are involved in scientific issues and any resulting science policy). In other words, the strategy will be developed against the background of, not only the transmission of information to the public, but also the reception and use of such information by it.

An offer was made to facilitate such a workshop by the Stockholm Environment Institute, an international institute with its headquarters in Sweden that has, for many years, contributed to the work of the Convention. Financial support was offered by the USA Environmental Protection Agency, the Statens Naturvårdsverket of Sweden and BUWAL of Switzerland. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the United Kingdom offered logistical support in London. Professor Mike Chadwick of the Stockholm Environment Institute will co-ordinate the arrangements for the workshop in close consultation with the sponsors of the workshop and the Convention secretariat.

The Workshop, its Themes and its Output

The Workshop will take place in London, UK for two and a half days on 9-11 April, 2003. The meeting venue is DEFRA and local hotels will be used for accommodation. Registration information, the final Workshop programme and background papers will be provided about four weeks before the Workshop.

Three main themes will be discussed and these will form the basis of the Workshop. Each theme will be introduced by papers specially prepared and circulated before the meeting. Each paper will be authored by experts in the field. At the Workshop plenary sessions will be interspersed with panel discussions and break-out groups devoted to the three themes, as follows:

I. The Convention and its stakeholders: who is our audience, what is our message and how can we convey it?

- a) What determines the public's understanding of science? How are public knowledge, attitudes, interest and expertise formed and shaped within the public domain and amongst stakeholders? How might uncertainty, complexity and interest be dealt with and sources of external expertise utilised?
- b) Who are the stakeholders and key actors (including opinion-formers, pressure groups, business and industry, and NGOs) who need to be targeted in order to appreciate the achievements of the last 25 years and to be involved in reaching

future environmental targets? How do the Convention, EU-CAFÉ, Parties/member governments and their constituencies interact?

- c) What are the achievements of the Convention over the last 25 years and what might be achieved in the future? What information needs to be relayed to involve the public, stakeholders and decision-makers in further progress following the review of Protocols and their effective implementation? How do the Convention, EU-CAFÉ and Parties/member countries see the barriers to effective communication?

II. Reporting to the Convention – Internal Reporting and the Support System within Governments

- a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the existing internal reporting process and how can this be improved?
- b) How might reporting processes to other bodies (UNFCCC, EC Directives) be co-ordinated?
- c) How can the exchange of technology and the sharing of information on abatement measures be improved?

III. Enhancing Synergies - Beyond Regional Boundaries

- a) Lessons from the Convention: SO₂; NO_x; VOCs; POPs; heavy metals; agreement procedures and acceptance. The value for non-European situations: lessons, warnings and adaptation.
- b) Links between air pollution and climate change.

Following a final plenary session, a report will be prepared embodying the major discussion points and conclusions of the Workshop for submission to the Convention's Working Group on Strategies and Review in September 2003 and from there to the Executive Body of the Convention at its twenty-first session in December 2003. The Report will attempt to point the way to the major elements required for the construction of the Convention's Communications Strategy, the actors involved in the delegated tasks and a realistic time frame for implementation.

Participation in the Workshop

There are expected to be 25-30 participants in the Workshop. This will include representatives from Parties, authors and presenters of papers, members of the Secretariat, organisers, representatives of industry, NGOs and environmentally concerned citizens' groups. It should be stressed that participation is limited to experts on the Convention and experts in communications and public information. The possibility for financing participation of a limited number of suitable experts from countries with economies in transition is foreseen.

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