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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

## Division of Technology, Industry and Economics OzonAction Branch

Tour Mirabeau, 39-43 quai André Citroën, 75739 Paris – Cedex 15, France, Tel: +33.1.44.37.14.50; Fax:  
+33.1.44.37.14.74

E-mail: [uneptie@unep.fr](mailto:uneptie@unep.fr) URL: <http://www.unep.fr>

### SECOND PARTNERS' MEETING

## GREEN CUSTOMS INITIATIVE (GCI)

REPORT

GreenCustoms

PARIS, FRANCE, 25-26 APRIL 2006

**Introduction:**

The Second Green Customs Initiative Partners' Meeting was a follow-up to the First Partners' Meeting held in January 2005. It was a necessary stage for the Initiative in order to assess the extent of the progress achieved, to determine whether the objectives set for the previous year were satisfactorily attained and discuss the lessons learned. The meeting was also convened so that the Partners could define the objectives for the initiative and agree on a work plan for 2006.

*Please see a list of Participants and the final Meeting's agenda in Annexes.*

**Summary of main discussions**

**Day 1 Sessions (25 April 2006)**

Mr. Rajendra Shende, Head of the OzonAction Branch, delivered the welcome remarks on behalf of UNEP-DTIE's Director, Ms. Monique Barbut, and expressed confidence that the meeting would bring new and fresh ideas for better implementation and attainment of the objectives of the Green Customs Initiative.

Mr. Suresh Raj, OzonAction's Capacity Building Manager, guided the participants through the 2-day agenda and briefed everyone on the expected outputs of the meeting.

**Session 1 - Activity Report**

Etienne Gonin, GCI coordinator, presented the results of the Initiative based on the work plan agreed upon at the First Partners' meeting in January 2005.

As a result of activities, there has been outreach to customs authorities in ca. 60 countries, and awareness has been raised. GCI has supported the engagement by environmental authorities of customs and other enforcement administrations. The initiative had led to the development of common tools for training, and set up good collaboration which would help for long-term implementation of its objectives.

For details of the Activity Report, please refer to the Annexes.

In complement to activities agreed in the previous work plan, supplementary activities were undertaken between January 2005 and April 2006 which have links to Green Customs. For example, at the regional level:

- Outreach of Green Customs to regional trade organizations and regional offices of Green Customs partners (in particular, the close involvement of Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices of the WCO was underlined).
- Reinforced cooperation on customs and environmental activities, such as the Project Sky Hole Patching proposed by the Customs of China (on ozone-depleting substances and toxic waste).
- Enforcement network for customs officers in the Asia Pacific region, initially on information exchange on trade in ODS, with a proposed extended scope to other chemical and waste issues.

Main Conclusions:

The Partners discussed the Activity report, and recognized the results achieved in terms of number of workshops organized in a short time span. Mr. Stephen Nash from the CITES Secretariat indicated he would like to see interested customs officers contact Partner organizations directly after Green Customs workshops. Comments were made on how workshop reports should be publicized – it was

requested that reports be sent to all partners for finalization whether they are present or not at the workshops.

A discussion followed on indicators of success which pointed out that possible indicators could be:

1. Completion of the Training guide;
2. Distribution of the guide
3. How is the guide used? (inclusion in customs' training curricula)

It was argued that number of illegal trade cases or downloads would not be good indicators of success – but that qualitative studies would be more useful, such as studying how training and awareness raising had triggered the Customs' intervention or prepared better the Customs officers to assist in the resolution of an illegal trade case.

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## Session 2 - Brainstorming Session

Ms. Magda Bauta Solés of OPCW chaired this session.

Ms. Elizabeth Mrema of UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions (**DEC**) spoke, via teleconference, of UNEP's Compliance and Enforcement activities and the development of a Compliance and Enforcement Manual – a 400 page reference document which provides guidance for the practical enforcement of MEAs.

Some activities conducted by UNEP DEC under "Compliance and Enforcement" include:

- Organisation of capacity building training workshops for negotiations in treaties (NGOs, Government MEA focal points and other negotiators).
- Development of a handbook for negotiators in government in association with the FIELD - Foundation on the International Environmental Law and Development in the UK.
- Organisation of regional workshops for MEA negotiators in various regions.
- Production of training modules for NGOs participating in the implementation of MEAs.

Special mention was made on the close collaboration between UNEP DTIE and DEC in coordinating and executing the various GCI workshops, and thanks were conveyed to DEC for continued cooperation.

A presentation was done by Magda Bauta on the ongoing objectives and actions of **OPCW**. OPCW has been addressing this issue of implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention by encouraging the States Parties to establish designated national authorities, and to implement relevant legislation. OPCW has received increased voluntary contributions which has enabled them to conduct technical assistance visits to meet and provide guidance to all who are involved in the implementation of the CWC. Ms. Bauta also acknowledged the opportunity provided by GCI in giving information to customs officers through a uniform approach and expressed interest in continued cooperation on the Initiative. OPCW has also found that working with Parliamentarians had helped them in having necessary national legislation adopted.

OPCW pointed out that cost-effectiveness has relied on its internal structure based on expertise provided by substantive offices and coordinated by the Implementation Support Branch.

## Presentations by Associate Organisations

Timothy Whitehouse of the **Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)** made a presentation on the mandate of CEC as well as on e-based training development.

- the CEC was created in 1994 under the NAFTA to strengthen the cooperation on the development and improvement of environmental laws, regulations, procedures, etc.
- the development of the Border Training Programme entails the CEC import/export work and since 1996 they have been conducting workshops on ODS, flora/fauna, illegal chemical trade, etc. There is a desire to institutionalize previous workshops but there is a need to integrate

these into existing global and regional efforts to ensure sustainability – hence their purpose of reaching out to GCI.

- CEC has developed an ODS module for customs and border protection agents of the 3 countries and have collaborated with UNEP DTIE for their material on ODS. They are considering either having a group website to conduct training or simply let the governments incorporate the CEC training module into their respective training centres/systems.

The CEC also noted that there are gaps in knowledge between those involved in Customs work and those involved in environmental protection. The latter may not be familiar with international trade and would not understand how border inspections occur and what type of customs support would be needed for a particular shipment. CEC therefore wants to make sure that not only do Customs inspectors have training and access to environmental information, but that environment officers know the conditions behind the work of customs officers.

Carl Bruch provided a backgrounder on **Environmental Law Institute** as well as some feedback from the first phase of the Green Customs Initiative. ELI is part clearinghouse, part think tank and part training NGO and concentrates its activities on research, training and technical advice. Historically organized on a regional basis, but they now see the need to exchange experiences between regions, focusing on 4 themes: 1) Water; 2) Biodiversity; 3) Sustainable Livelihoods - helping communities to develop economically in an environmentally sustainable way; 4) Capacity-building for sustainable development (especially technology transfer and governance). ELI has conducted training for judges, regulators, etc. ELI also sees the need for the combination between e-learning, conventional training workshops and in-country institutions and the need to have them integrated into the national training curricula.

A paper on the “Next Steps for GCI” was also prepared by Carl Bruch and will be given to the partners for comments and consideration. Other points were discussed in relation to customs training curricula:

- Some of the challenges for the training in national training centers were highlighted: for example, it was pointed out that there could be a transformation of the message when adapted to national curricula.
- During the discussion, it was suggested to have a GCI national focal point – to act as facilitator in organizing meetings/workshops while training experts would present the technical aspects. Detailed presentations and ‘Questions and Answers’ notes prepared by the secretariats would help conduct such meetings.

Ken Markowitz then presented the **International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE)** which is made up of officers involved in the enforcement of environmental laws at national and international level. INECE is currently involved in the following activities:

- bringing together practitioners and academics in finding a common ground and an understanding of the issues from different standpoints.
- assisting in the logistical and technical development and delivery of training programmes globally.
- working on capacity building projects on compliance and enforcement indicators and on enabling organizations to better manage and monitor their enforcement.
- working on discipline-specific networks, eg, prosecutors’, inspectors’, police officers’, judges’ networks.

INECE has developed “Networks for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement” at the regional level, to increase the effectiveness of the enforcement agencies and to promote compliance with environmental requirements – most recently in Maghreb but also in Southeast Asia, CEITs, Central America, etc. Ken Markowitz pointed out that GCI is crucial to building the capacity of countries for securing their ports, corridors, etc. and that the platforms created by INECE are ready for GCI to deliver to the target audience and that the regional events they organize could provide the backdrops for the successful delivery of the GCI.

Julian Newman then presented the work of the **Environmental Investigation Agency's** (EIA) which is to investigate, expose and campaign against the illegal trade in wildlife and the destruction of the natural environment. EIA's work with ODS in the Asia-Pacific region exposed numerous smuggling activities and led to a collaboration with UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. This collaboration led EIA to produce with UNEP training/awareness raising materials in the form of a video wherein enforcement officers explain and share to their counterparts how they go about in handling illegal shipments. The issues raised in the 30-minute film are also backed by fact sheets. Although specific to the Asia-Pacific Region, the model has elements that can be adapted in other regions. EIA also produced similar material for endangered species (ivory and tiger and leopard skins). Mr. Nash underlined the quality of the latest videos prepared by EIA on CITES and that the development of such training material should be considered for the Green Customs Initiative in its next phase of work. There were remarks underlining the importance of attracting customs officers' attention, and in particular to be able to channel environmental language into the understanding of the Customs inspectorates.

### **Training Guide Finalization**

Stephen Nash facilitated the session. He pointed out that the Partners will need to look at the feedback and interpret them since some of the participants at workshops may not always be the intended/right target audience. Recommendations from the workshops were divided in three categories:

- 1) **Comments / recommendations** about the obvious objectives of the training guide: e.g. need for translation – such ideas have already been considered and will be done anyway.
- 2) **Comments that request for more details** – these can be seen as requests for solutions to problems. This type of requests usually comes after awareness is raised and GCI is not in a position to provide the solution as this is not its role. The Partners must not lose sight of the GCI mandate. The participants should be directed to the relevant Partners which will advise them on how to address their particular problems.
- 3) **Recommendations to provide an overview table** in the Manual showing the major provisions and the differences/similarities between the MEAs – it was pointed out that for a customs officer the paperwork between a shipment of chemicals and of live animals is basically the same except for some key points. These key points are what GCI should try to present to the target audience.

Clarifying the specific goals and the language used are key to ensuring the success of the manual. The training guide is to create an improved understanding of the MEAs by the inspectorate and this should be clearly stated in the document so that the user will know what to expect from the document.

It was suggested that the Partners first concentrate on getting the training guide produced and improvement can follow once the guide has been circulated and tested. This will already fulfil what some Partners want to get out of GCI – to get people to understand the basics of their respective convention and its interconnection with other MEAs.

The priority now is to complete the outstanding inputs to finalize the training guide, particularly re-writing the introductory section, constructing the synthesis section on similarities, but leaving the MEA sections as they are with a request to the Secretariats to eventually simplify their respective section. There is also a need identify a publisher and an editor who can do the work without losing the meaning/main message the guide wants to deliver, and launch the publication. Rajendra Shende proposed the creation of a task force among the Partners to spearhead the finalization of the guide. It was suggested that the taskforce consist of representatives from the CITES, Basel and Montreal secretariats and shall come together to facilitate the revision of the current draft. Additional comments and inputs from other partners shall then be gathered electronically.

**It was agreed that the first and foremost priority for Green Customs at this stage will be the completion of the training guide.**

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The question was raised of expanding the Partnership to other organizations and their inclusion in the training guide. It was pointed out that GCI does not have any defined or definite criteria for taking in new partners. Ms. Bauta pointed that OPCW had made considerable contribution to the GCI and that it is willing to continue this cooperation, including provision of text for the CWC to be included in the Training Guide. Although the CWC is not MEA, there are interlinkages with GCI at the level of the user in terms of enforcement. It was also recognized that the WCO and Interpol are not MEAs but are part of the GCI and as such should be included in the guide as 'relevant information'. Etienne Gonin pointed out that Biosafety Protocol has also expressed interest in being part of GCI and that it can quickly provide a section to the training guide.

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### Day 2 Sessions (26 April 2006)

Elena Sobakina, from the Stockholm Convention secretariat, joined the meeting. Elizabeth Mrema and Donata Rugarabamu of the Basel Convention secretariat joined the discussions via teleconference.

#### Session 3 - Discussion on the development of the Work Plan:

The formulation of the overall objective of GCI was initially discussed. It was concluded that GCI aims at:

- *Enhancing customs' capacity to detect and act on illegal trade*
- *Assisting customs in the facilitation of legal trade*
- ... *in environmentally-sensitive items covered by our respective agreements*

#### This is to be achieved through:

- *Awareness-raising on all related MEAs and agreements to make customs officers aware of these issues*
- *by developing common tools and programmes across partners to this initiative and integrating those in the national curricula*

It was pointed out that there is a need to provide a text to the customs officers that highlights the proper management authorities to contact/coordinate with once there is detection or even suspicion of illegal trade.

#### *Training Guide*

The importance of completing the training guide was again raised and the steps agreed upon the previous day were reiterated. Stephen Nash agreed to head the taskforce to finish the guide and DTIE agreed to take charge of the publication task once the guide is finalized.

It was agreed that the Task Force will be composed of CITES (Stephen Nash), Basel (Donata Rugarabamu) and Montreal Protocol (Jim Curlin in consultation with Gilbert Bankobeza from the Ozone Secretariat), who shall also ensure other partners' inputs are included. DTIE shall ensure the secretariat functions and facilitate information exchange (through the ftp site for texts, drafts, etc.) for the task force.

The immediate tasks for the completion of the training guide are as follows:

- Propose new text on existing sections where inputs are needed
- Work with new Partners to include new text sections
- Obtain inputs and highest level buy-in and endorsement of all Partners
- Production of the material

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The final draft of the training guide should be ready for production by the fall of 2006. It was pointed out that January 26 is World Customs Day and it would be a good opportunity to launch the training guide. This proposal could be specifically discussed with the WCO.

Although some funds to produce the training guide have already been earmarked, questions related to the translation of the guide were raised, particularly who will translate the introductory sections and how to cover the cost. One suggestion was to operate the translation by sections through the submission of COP documents, however this approach is not applicable to CITES for example. Matthias Kern said it would be possible to approach GEF. Rajendra Shende said that training centers could also be approached for co-financing. It was pointed out that Convention texts have already been translated into other languages thus particular attention must be given to the terminologies used when translating text related to specific convention. It was also suggested to first translate the guide into French and Spanish (CITES official languages) and then proceed with the translation into the other UN languages using secondary fund sources as available. The task force shall decide on the channels of dissemination as well as the number of copies to be printed. Other materials/tools to be developed such as videos/CD-ROMs and GCI's further evolution should also be considered.

The development/production of a generic GCI power point presentation/template was also suggested. This will allow for a uniform presentation of the training guide and GCI by the Partners to the public. It will also clearly show what GCI is and is not. A uniform presentation will permit the Partners to speak the same language and not miss opportunities to impress potential donors. This will also boost the Green Customs "brand."

### *Workshops*

Stephen Nash asked if the Partners intend to conduct more workshops in the future. There are other regional needs that need to be addressed that were not previously covered by the GCI activities, namely the establishment of fora for information exchange between interested customs officers, the development of a support for the presentation of the training guide that can be achieved with workshops. In Africa, South/Central Africa, South and Central America and the Pacific, there have been requests to duplicate the training that was delivered during the GCI pilot workshops. Several requests came for the development of national courses in Green Customs. There is also a strong interest in developing a Train-the-Trainer approach with centres of excellence, to build a pool of GCI trainers at the regional level. A request for a Train the Trainer workshop has come, in particular from the regional training centre of the WCO in Shanghai.

It was argued that programme of continuous workshops would not be sustainable nor cost-effective (time and fund consuming) – the training guide is meant to raise awareness while the assistance provided by GCI should evolve into ensuring that the guide is making an impact on customs' practices.

Elena Sobakina of the Stockholm Convention (SC) pointed out that not many countries are a Party to the SC and that it would be important that workshops aim at raising awareness about the Convention. She also underlined that during the most recent Green Customs workshop, the participants had underlined the need for face-to-face training workshops (as opposed to only on-line training for example).

Matthias Kern introduced that, from a GEF perspective, the training guide must show its usefulness through pilot activities in countries. The development of a Train-the-trainers approach would interest GEF as well. What GEF looks at is the sustainability of the outputs and the outcomes and not only at series of workshops. Activities at the national level must ensure linkage of national customs authorities with national MEA focal points – together they could build in related programmes for other stakeholders.

Elizabeth Mrema proposed to focus on regional training programme development (train the trainer approach) and to work with national customs authorities to build the GCI curriculum into their

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training programme and work plans. The possibility of on-line training was discussed, and of the need for pilot at the country level.

Mr. Nash commented that once the training guide is out, GCI should evolve towards activities/tools that will help sustain the initial outputs with less and less direct intervention from the Partners (eg. exploring the possibility of doing online training, or developing a 2-hour segment in the national training curriculum)

It was agreed that the Partners and stakeholders will first have to assess the needs of the regions and the sub-regions before setting up a strategy to limit or stop conducting workshops.

Donata Rugarabamu of the Basel Convention Secretariat, via the teleconference, shared Basel's position regarding some of the issues raised. She agreed to be part of the Task Force for finalizing the training guide. She added that she would also be interested in seeing the support of individual partner's training through GCI in the future and inquired whether GEF can support this integration of work. Matthias Kern replied that country initiatives should follow-up on the regional awareness already raised. Donata expressed interest in assisting in the preparation of the proposal that could be proposed for GEF funding.

Ms. Rugarabamu informed the Partners that she always finds out about new regional efforts against illegal trade and she feels that GCI could prepare a database that would raise awareness on efforts that might be complementary. Various comments were given in this regard:

- Gathering the information on related activities/efforts in the regions would be a difficult task but would be a good means to highlight similar initiatives on GCI.
- Jim Curlin of DTIE pointed out that the priority contents of the web should first be defined and if the database figures as a priority, then a proper strategy on how to gather the data would then be prepared.
- Stephen Nash argued that the GCI website should be dedicated to highlighting GCI tools and information.
- There should also be links to the websites of the Partners' Conventions for further information. Links to the Conventions' tools that are directly related to GCI work could also be given.
- The website could also be used to highlight regional news on GCI efforts/activities. Such regional pages could be developed in coordination with regional offices of UNEP.
- A proactive approach is necessary to obtain permissions from partners on the use of documents and ensure that the website carries a disclaimer to cover copyright issues. Ms. Rugarabamu mentioned she will work on a list of connective links that can be added to the website.

Rajendra Shende, noted that some regions were not included in the first phase of GCI (e.g. Pacific region) and inquired about a mechanism that would allow MEA focal points and national authorities to work together to carry out national activities. Etienne Gonin said that GCI funds that could cover costs of organizing pilot national workshops and that DTIE is currently working to obtain specific funding for GCI in the Pacific region. Organisations in the region were also cited as potential collaborators for the GCI activities in the region (e.g. Pacific Island Forum, SPREP, Oceania Customs Organisation).

Etienne Gonin was then requested to provide a list of potential workshop needs, regions and where intensive trade takes place. This could also be the opportunity to look into re-tooling the agenda of the workshops instead of simply duplicating the previous ones when the time comes to resume training activities. This could also be the opportunity to invite Customs authorities (institutes) and present the Training Guide so that they can quickly start work on adopting it nationally.

Other consideration/tasks/actions to be done parallel to finalization of the training guide:

- Consider carefully where to hold new workshops (draw criteria for selection)

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- Determine whether there is a need to change target audience (customs offices vs. customs/training institutes) – to facilitate integration of training manual through Train the Trainers approach
- Focus on where trade is intensified and where legislation is poor (or ‘Hot Spots’ - It was however pointed that ‘hot spots’ for one Convention may not necessarily be the ones for other conventions – so there are limits to that ‘hot spots’ approach)
- Seek high-level support to get training centers involved
- GCI should hold events at various COPs, and generally at meetings organized by Partners to possibly get specific decisions on cooperation with GCI.

Peter Younger of Interpol pointed out that the mandate of GCI should be kept in mind when preparing the list of needs from developing countries and CEITs. He further pointed out the diversity of situation for customs around the World. As an example, Australia has a national curriculum but not a national training academy – training is done regionally. The situation may vary from one country to another, so it should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. Once the GCI training guide is out, it will be essential that Partners figure out the various categories of training facilities/programmes in countries in which GCI needs to incorporate the use of the guide. This would be key information which could be discussed with the World Customs Organisation. This would also be of interest to the GEF in selecting countries where the guide will be tested at national level. Mr. Younger also suggested using a Critical path Analysis to be prepared for the next stage of activities of the GCI.

### Development of Common Information Strategy in Support of Activities

Jim Curlin, Information Manager for DTIE’s OzonAction, made a presentation on the possible objectives for GCI Communication Strategy. The main suggested objectives for such a strategy were to:

- 1) Build political support (high-level awareness)
- 2) Mobilize resources for GCI
- 3) Encourage more extensive support of GCI by the enforcement community
- 4) Ensure full awareness and support of GCI objectives within Partner institutions
- 5) Raise awareness of GCI among general public and decision makers through media
- 6) Share information between GCI Partners

Mr. Curlin pointed out that there should be some level of media strategy so that GCI can easily be part of fora to build up interest in its activities – such a strategy would facilitate the launch of the training guide. Mr. Nash reminded Partners that GCI should mainly seek buy-in of the customs officers and UNEP is the one to coordinate this. The Communication Strategy, the overall objective of which is to reach out to the Customs Authorities, could also have a subset of activities for internal and high level awareness that will mobilize support and resources for GCI.

The Communication Strategy would give GCI the opportunities for showcasing its objectives and achievements and make it more proactive (and productive) as opposed to simply being reactive on issues such as combating illegal trade/facilitating legal trade. The level of complexity of the strategy is for the Partners to determine. UNEP pointed out that a lot of interest is already being shown by the press.

Moreover, the strategy will provide Partners with a sort of “rules of engagement” when dealing with the press. As a start, the Partners agreed to convey simple information and shall have more in depth discussion in the future to determine the mechanism for dealing with the press/media and who shall speak on behalf of GCI, for example.

## Session 4 – Implementation Strategies

### Discussion on next Meeting of Partners

This session and the following one was chaired by Ms. Elena Sobakina. Regarding the **next Partners' Meeting**, it was agreed that it would be good to aim for a meeting in early December 2006. There could be a formal approval of the Guide by all Partners on this occasion. The meeting venue could be Paris, Geneva or Brussels.

There was a discussion that, in the meantime, there could be follow-up meetings with a subset of Partners on the occasions of the Conference of Parties for example. Virtual meetings via teleconference, web site or video conferences could also be explored.

It was also mentioned that the Regional Enforcement Network for Asia and Pacific (to be presented for funding approval later in 2006) had proposed to hold its steering committee back to back with future Partners Meeting to facilitate involvement and synergy with the Green Customs Partners.

### Fundraising strategies

It was agreed that the products of the GCI to be specifically advertised for fundraising purposes were:

- a. Translation of the Training Guide – It was mentioned by Mr. Kern that DGEF could explore the possibility of funding through GEF;
- b. Implementation of work programme 2007 (to be approved by the next Partners Meeting), including possible further workshops (probably through a Train the trainer approach) and possible other training products (such as videos)
- c. Incorporation of the Guide in the national curricula – DGEF could also explore possibility of funding.

The following general principles for fundraising were proposed: the responsibility for raising additional funding will remain with UNEP DTIE through its Green Customs project. DTIE will inform other partners of developments. Possibilities for co-funding will be explored by UNEP DTIE as the GCI secretariat in 2006, in cooperation with relevant UNEP divisions and, if feasible, with MEAs secretariats.

The following potential donors were succinctly listed:

- GEF
- UNEP's trust fund
- Bilateral specific funding
- NGOs (national and international)
- Industry and its associations
- Foundations
- Partners of GCI
- SAICM Fund

There was a suggestion to organize a donors' meeting and bring together past and potential contributors to GCI. The meeting could be scheduled back-to-back with the next Partners' meeting.

The following immediate action was proposed:

DTIE would discuss internally fund raising strategies and potential donor identification. It would follow-up on potential funding for activities in the South Pacific. Further work would be done to develop potential proposal for GEF funding.

### Other procedural matters:

Regarding communication between partners: DTIE would contact existing and new Partners on the modalities for information exchange between Partners.

Contact points would need to be confirmed so that the email distribution list can be updated.

### *Session 5*

#### **Consideration for additional partnership to the initiative.**

Erie Tamale, Worku Yifru and Markus Lehmann of the CBD Secretariat/Biosafety Protocol joined the discussion via teleconference to present the Secretariat and its interest in becoming a Partner to GCI. They pointed out that the Cartagena Protocol is much like the Basel Convention and the Rotterdam Convention (the PIC Convention) with respect to its regulatory objective and approach. They, in particular explained that

- (i) The Biosafety Protocol essentially provides for procedures, such as the advance informed agreement procedure, which applies to transboundary movements of living modified organisms that are destined for introduction into the environment of a Party of import;
- (ii) In addition to the procedure which assists Parties of import to take informed decisions, the Protocol requires also that shipments of living modified organisms to be accompanied by a document that contains information specified in the Protocol or elaborated by a decision of Parties, with a view to ensuring identification of the content of the shipment as living modified organisms;
- (iii) As living modified organisms are subject to national approval before they are released for domestic use or placing into the market, there is always a possibility that transboundary movement of organisms that have not approved could occur and thus the issue of illegal transboundary movement as provided for in the Protocol could arise.

The implementation of the procedural rules of the Protocol as well as other provisions such as those on documentation requirements makes the role of customs relevant and, therefore, enforcement of these provisions by customs officers will be of crucial importance.

The SCBD participants expressed their strong desire to take part in the Partnership with a view to soliciting opportunities for eligible Parties to the Protocol in support of their efforts towards effectively implementing the Protocol. In that context, they assured the meeting that they can immediately provide an input on their Protocol in time for the finalization of the Training Guide. As for co-funding capacity, Biosafety pointed out that they do not as yet have specific budget lines (for this initiative) and that they are currently setting up their own capacity building training for mid-level officials.

After the presentation, a discussion followed on the inclusion of new members to the Partnership. OPCW and the SCBD have reiterated their interest in becoming full partners to GCI. It was then agreed that UNEP, as coordinators, shall draft a letter/proposal highlighting the proposal for an expanded partnership.

The Meeting was then closed by Mr. Shende who thanked the participants and wished a successful implementation of agreed activities for 2006.

#### **D: ANNEXES – SEE ATTACHED**

ANNEX I: AGENDA

ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANNEX III: FIRST ACTIVITY REPORT

ANNEX IV: WORK PLAN