

Ridding Africa of hazardous wastes - COP-3 Bamako Convention under way in Brazzaville

The third Conference of the Parties (COP-3) to the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa is currently under way in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo under the theme 'From decisions to action: Working for Africa with a safe chemicals and waste future'.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

“The theme for this COP is a call to move forward and make a reality those aspirations which member states have shared over the last two conferences,” said Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, director and regional representative for the UN Environment Programme’s (UNEP), Africa office. “This requires renewed political commitment and the development of strategies, policies and institutional frameworks for the effective implementation of the convention.”

Established in 1991 by African nations and coming to force in 1998, the Bamako Convention is a response to Article 11 of the Basel Convention, which encourages parties to enter into bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements on hazardous waste to help achieve the objectives of the convention. The Bamako Convention prohibits the import into Africa and the dumping or incineration into ocean and inland water of hazardous wastes, including radioactive waste. It also promotes the minimisation and control of trans-boundary movements of hazardous waste within the African continent.



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Collective responsibility

“Waste management is today one of the biggest challenges to our planet and a major concern for our

countries because of its health and environmental consequences,” said Joseph Seka Seka, minister of the environment and sustainable development for Cote D’Ivoire and the outgoing president of Bamako Convention. “We have a collective responsibility to protect and save our environment and our common planet in the face of threats to the health and well-being of our populations, and to work in favour of an Africa safe from the harmful effects of chemicals and waste.”

Parties are expected to review and adopt the new proposed list of substances which have been banned, cancelled or refused registration by government regulatory action, or voluntarily withdrawn from registration in the country of manufacture, for human health or environmental reason. The conference, concluding Friday 14 February, is also expected to discuss a roadmap for the transfer of the secretariat of the convention to the Republic of Mali.

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