

**Sachiko Kuwabara Yamamoto
Executive Secretary**

- Waste accumulates in Small-island developing States at an alarming rate. In addition to the stockpiles of hazardous waste such as obsolete pesticides, changes in the composition of domestic waste, the import of foreign goods and swelling populations threaten to cover many islands with a waste mountain.
- Small-island developing States are faced with enormous difficulties to handle all kinds of wastes, including hazardous waste, in a proper manner. Their unique geographical characteristics, high vulnerability, lack of adequate resources and expertise, lack of availability of land, as well as high costs of transport and disposal operations for hazardous waste are among many reasons for this situation. Their vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters is an aggravating factor.
- Existing waste management facilities barely match a fraction of the needs in many islands, leading generally to the dumping of the majority of the waste to unsafe areas and the shore, pits and fragile ecosystems such as mangrove forests. Serious damage to health through seafood poisoning, contamination by heavy metals, asbestos related diseases, pollution of precious groundwater, surface waters and wetlands, including drinkable water lens on atolls, and degradation of

coastal environments are likely consequences of the uncontrolled management of intermingled waste.

- Awareness of the problem in many island societies and the availability of waste management facilities do not match the speed of changing consumption patterns that many small island developing States are witnessing as part of their modernization process.
- The practical experience in the first decade of implementation of the Basel Convention in small-island developing States tends to highlight the need for the development of policies addressing the management of hazardous waste and municipal wastes in an integrated manner.
- Also, there are important benefits in pursuing a regional approach for managing waste, in particular hazardous waste, as small island developing States may fail individually to reach the critical mass for accessing the adequate waste management infrastructure.
- The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development singled out small-island developing States as a special case for sustainable development and requiring a specific approach, in particular as

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regards the ESM of waste and hazardous waste. The Plan of Implementation also stressed the importance of ESM of hazardous chemicals and wastes and the need for strengthening coordination and cooperation between their respective regimes.

- In this context, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel convention at its seventh meeting last October in Geneva took note of the specific constraints confronting small-island developing States in the implementation of the Convention and expressed the need to take urgent action in these countries to meet the obligations of the Convention as well as other related regional agreements. The Conference considered that these activities should take into consideration, wherever suitable, such principles as the promotion of integrated waste management and regional approaches for the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste.
- Also, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention drew the attention of the participants at the SIDS International Review Meeting to the need to give due consideration to the issue of the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in view of its importance in the implementation of and follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action'.
- Ladies & Gentlemen,

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- the Basel Convention has contributed in a concrete and effective fashion in the last decade to protecting small island developing States from the abusive import of hazardous waste. Still more work needs to be done in this field in order to fulfill the objectives of the Basel Convention. Shipwrecking is just an example worth mentioning.
- However, a major work remains to be done in reducing and managing in an environmentally sound manner the wastes — both hazardous and solid wastes — being accumulated with an alarming speed in SIDS. The recent tragic event in Southern Asia caused by Tsunami highlights the need for a comprehensive national waste management policy coordinated at the regional level to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of all wastes at the time of major natural disasters.
- In light of the critical needs of small island developing States to be able to handle their nationally generated hazardous waste, this important Meeting may wish to take note of the concerns expressed by small island developing States in the context of the Basel Convention and consider the need to facilitate the development of regional integrated waste management action plans in specific

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areas, commencing with the Caribbean, the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions.