

Participation Report of the French Solid Waste Partnership at the fifteenth Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG-15) of the Basel Convention

Geneva, Switzerland, 23–26 June 2026

June 2026



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1. Introduction

As an accredited observer, the French Solid Waste Partnership went to the fifteenth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG-15) of the Basel Convention, held in Geneva from 23 to 26 June 2026. This meeting prepared a number of technical and policy recommendations for consideration at the eighteenth Conference of the Parties (COP18) which will be taking place in Panama City. While the Basel Convention has historically been considered as focusing on hazardous waste and the control of transboundary movements, OEWG-15 continued illustrating its growing role in addressing high-volume waste streams associated with the transition towards a circular economy, including plastic waste, used textiles and textile waste, and electrical and electronic equipment waste (e-waste).

For the waste management sector, these discussions extend well beyond international trade. Plastics, textiles and e-waste now represent some of the fastest-growing municipal waste streams worldwide, placing increasing pressure on collection systems, recycling infrastructure and environmentally sound treatment capacities – hence the role in trying to address such issues taken by the Convention, which has been ratified by 191 Parties. Throughout the meeting, Parties repeatedly stressed that strengthening international controls must go hand in hand with improving domestic waste management systems, technical guidance and implementation capacities. This emphasis on implementation, rather than the negotiation of entirely new obligations, emerged as one of the meeting's central themes.

Following current geopolitical trends in MEAs, OEWG-15 primarily sought to identify implementation challenges, improve technical guidance and prepare future work programmes rather than revisiting existing Basel amendments. The discussions also highlighted growing recognition that effective management of municipal waste increasingly depends on coherent international rules, robust national legislation and adequate technical and financial support for implementation.

The FSWP therefore saw this as an opportunity to better understand the stakes behind the negotiations on the few waste streams closely related to the subject of municipal solid waste, and to continue its work to disseminate the [Global Push](#) initiative.

The FSWP's participation in the Open-Ended Working Group was made possible thanks to our members and the specific support of:





2. Our presence at the OEWG-15

The FSWP was invited to present the Global Push initiative and the case study of Grenoble Alpes Métropole at the side event “Advancing Zero Waste Approaches: Policy, Enabling Factors, and Good Practices for Waste Prevention and Circularity” on Thursday, June 25. Discussions focused on the actions needed to achieve “zero waste”: providing citizens with alternatives to reduce waste generation, extending the lifespan of objects, and ensuring the environmentally sound management of generated waste. This served as an opportunity to reiterate the need to break down traditional silos and mobilize all stakeholders around a common goal.

Speakers :

- Felipe Dall, UNEP IETC
- Gabriela Medina, BCCC-SCRC Uruguay and co-chair of the HWP
- Qingyin Dong, BCRC China
- Houhu Zhang, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, China
- Caroline Pertussatti, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in Brazil
- Corinne Trommsdorff, French Solid Waste Partnership

The FSWP brought its [Global Push presentation brochure](#) and presented its [circular economy video](#), to continue its effort to unite the international community of waste prevention and management.





Advancing Zero Waste approaches: Policy, enabling factors and good practices for waste prevention and circularity

25 June 2026
13:30 – 14:30

CICG, Room C
Online, [Teams](#)

Opening remarks:



Isabel Martinez
Deputy Executive Secretary
Basel, Rotterdam, and
Stockholm Conventions

Facilitator:



Felipe Dall
Project Officer
UNEP IETC

Presenters and panelists:



Gabriela Medina
Director
BCCC-SCRC Uruguay
co-chair of the HWP



Caroline Pertussatti
Coordinator
Reverse Logistics and Solid Waste
Projects, Ministry of the Environment
and Climate Change, Brazil



Şule BEKTAŞ
Branch Manager
Zero Waste Planning and
Projects, Ministry of
Environment, Türkiye



Qingyin Dong
Senior Programme Officer
BCRC China



Houhu Zhang
Director
Research Center of Solid Waste
Pollution, Ministry of Ecology
and Environment, China



Corinne Trommsdorff
Executive Director
French Solid Waste
Partnership





International
Environmental
Technology
Centre (IETC)







3. General discussions, stakes and positions

3.1. The Basel Convention is adapting to new municipal waste challenges

A recurring message throughout OEWG-15 was the need to ensure that the Convention remains relevant as waste streams evolve. In his opening remarks, Executive Secretary Rolph Payet highlighted the growing importance of issues such as plastic waste, e-waste, batteries, textiles and the continued improvement of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure, describing technical guidelines as essential tools for translating the Convention into practical implementation.

Regional statements reflected broad agreement that municipal waste streams are becoming an increasingly important area of work under the Convention. While priorities differed across regions, many delegations highlighted similar concerns: **rapidly increasing waste volumes, illegal transboundary trafficking, limited treatment capacity and the need for stronger technical and financial support**. African countries (via the African Union) particularly emphasised the importance of strengthening environmentally sound management (ESM), improving customs controls and ensuring that new obligations remain adapted to national circumstances and implementation capacities.

3.2. Classification of emerging waste streams: balancing stronger controls with circularity

A recurring discussion throughout OEWG-15 concerned how plastics, textiles and e-waste should be classified under the Basel Convention's annexes. Although addressed under different agenda items, these debates all centred on the same question: how to distinguish materials that can legitimately circulate within a circular economy from wastes that should be subject to the Convention's Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.

Because the annexes determine whether transboundary movements require PIC, their classification has important implications for customs authorities, recyclers and waste operators. Expanding the scope of [Annex II or Annex VIII](#) strengthens oversight of international shipments but also increases administrative requirements for exporters and importers.

While many Parties favored expanding PIC to improve traceability and protect countries with limited waste management infrastructure, others advocated a gradual approach, arguing that clearer technical guidance and stronger implementation should come before further amendments. For the municipal waste sector, these debates are particularly relevant, as future classifications will shape not only international trade but also domestic collection, recycling and producer responsibility systems. As additional waste streams come under Basel controls, municipalities and waste operators may face new traceability, documentation and compliance requirements, while benefiting from greater oversight of international waste movements.

3.3. Plastic waste: strengthening implementation while maintaining political momentum

Plastic waste remained one of the most visible topics throughout OEWG-15. However, discussions focused less on negotiating new obligations than on improving implementation of the 2019 Plastic Waste Amendments and assessing how the current framework is functioning in practice.

Many Parties highlighted continuing challenges in controlling transboundary movements of plastic waste, particularly the misclassification of mixed or contaminated plastics and the persistence of illegal





trafficking. Several developing countries stressed that weak implementation capacity and insufficient customs resources continue to undermine effective enforcement. Others emphasised that clearer technical guidance and harmonised interpretation of the Basel annexes are required before considering further regulatory developments.

Moreover, several delegations considered that upstream measures on production and circular economy are more appropriately addressed under the treaty negotiations, while others argued that the Basel Convention should continue implementing its existing mandate without waiting for future agreements. This discussion (especially on whether or not plastic waste prevention is in the scope of the Convention or in that of a potential global plastics treaty) is expected to come up during COP18 also.

3.4. Used textiles are emerging as a new priority for the Convention

Among the newer agenda items, discussions on used textiles and textile waste illustrated how rapidly this waste stream is moving onto the international policy agenda. Although Parties were not yet discussing specific amendments to the Convention, there was broad recognition that increasing volumes of textile waste are creating growing environmental and management challenges, particularly for importing countries.

Much of the discussion focused on the need to distinguish genuine second-hand clothing intended for reuse from low-quality textiles that are effectively waste. Several delegations noted that inadequate classification creates opportunities for exporting waste under the label of reuse, shifting environmental and financial burdens towards importing countries with limited waste management infrastructure.

Delegations also identified a number of practical issues requiring further analysis, including clearer classification criteria, harmonisation between customs codes and Basel classifications, improved data on international textile flows, and the development of technical guidance for sorting, cleaning and recycling. Some countries additionally highlighted the importance of addressing upstream measures such as eco-design, product durability and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), recognising that improvements in waste management alone will not be sufficient to tackle rapidly increasing textile consumption, and that subjecting this stream to the PIC procedure might lead to important negative socio-economic impacts. Some Parties and observers underlined how textiles should not be seen as a waste, but rather as a resource, and its transboundary transfer a key enabler of social access to clothing and of global circularity.

3.5. E-waste discussions increasingly focus on implementation and circularity

OEWG-15 also continued work on implementing the Convention's recent amendments (2022) relating to e-waste. Rather than reopening negotiated provisions, discussions centred on practical guidance that would enable more consistent implementation across Parties.

A recurring issue concerned the distinction between waste electrical and electronic equipment and products intended for legitimate repair, refurbishment or reuse. Once again, delegates recognised that unclear definitions create opportunities for illegal shipments, while potentially hindering legitimate circular economy activities.





4. Detailed discussions of relevance for FSWP

4.1. Plastics

In a key development, Switzerland, along with the Cook Islands, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Palau, and Zimbabwe, introduced a proposal (UNEP/CHW/OEWG.15/CRP.1) that, among other things, called for exploring approaches and measures to prevent and minimize plastic waste generation, including establishing a working group on the issue.

Significantly, this proposal would meaningfully expand Basel's active work into upstream plastic issues, not just downstream waste. As Switzerland pointed out, this is fully within the mandate of Basel under Article 4(2)(a).

Petrostates and their allies, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the US, strongly pushed back. In a highly unusual move for an OEWG, due to the pushback, the issue was not moved into a contact group for detailed discussions. This decision from the Secretariat was met with frustration by number of Parties. After tense negotiations on the last day of the OEWG-15 (which led to the Chair giving an hour or so to a "small group of interested parties", co-facilitated by Saudi Arabia and Tanzania), the Parties agreed to ask the Secretariat to compile existing activities on "hazardous and other plastic waste" carried out in accordance with Convention Article 4 (General Obligations), for consideration at COP 18 – therefore erasing the prevention and minimization part of the initial proposal.

4.2. Annexes I and III of the Convention

One of the discussion topics on the legal side was the ongoing review of Annex I (waste streams that may be considered hazardous) and Annex III (hazardous characteristics used to determine whether a waste is subject to Basel controls). These annexes are particularly important in understanding the Convention [see Annex of this report].

The current review aims to improve the clarity, consistency and scientific basis of these annexes. During OEWG-15, several delegations highlighted the importance of continuing this work in preparation for COP18, with the European Union noting that substantial progress had already been achieved.

The review also illustrates an important shift in the Convention's approach. Rather than creating new waste-specific listings for every emerging waste stream, Parties are increasingly seeking to ensure that the underlying hazard classification system remains scientifically robust and capable of addressing evolving waste compositions, including increasingly complex products containing mixtures of chemicals or novel materials.

Unlike discussions on plastics or textiles, OEWG-15 did not seek to conclude this review. Instead, the meeting confirmed Parties' commitment to continuing the technical work with a view to presenting further progress at COP18, where future revisions to the annexes may eventually be considered.





5. Annex – Basel Convention Annexes

Annex	Purpose	Key particularities / Why it matters
Annex I	Categories of hazardous wastes	Lists wastes that may be considered hazardous, including both waste streams (Y1–Y18, e.g. clinical wastes, waste oils) and hazardous constituents (Y19–Y45, e.g. mercury, lead, asbestos). A waste generally falls under Basel if it belongs to Annex I and exhibits a hazardous characteristic from Annex III. This annex is currently under review to improve legal clarity and reflect modern waste streams.
Annex II	"Other wastes" requiring special consideration	Covers wastes that are not necessarily hazardous but are nevertheless controlled under the Convention. Originally this included household waste (Y46) and incinerator ash (Y47). Since the 2019 Plastic Waste Amendments, many plastic waste streams have also been listed here, making them subject to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
Annex III	Hazardous characteristics	Defines the hazardous properties (H1–H13) such as explosivity, flammability, toxicity, ecotoxicity and corrosivity. A waste listed in Annex I must exhibit one or more of these characteristics to be hazardous under Article 1(1)(a). This annex is also under review to improve consistency with modern chemical classification systems.
Annex IV	Disposal operations	Lists all operations considered "disposal" under the Convention. It includes both Annex IVA (final disposal operations such as landfill or incineration) and Annex IVB (recovery operations such as recycling, reclamation and regeneration). This annex determines whether a transboundary movement falls within the Convention, regardless of whether the waste is destined for disposal or recovery. It was recently revised to better reflect circular economy activities and will enter into force in 2030.
Annex V A	Notification information	Specifies the information that exporters must provide when notifying a transboundary movement subject to PIC (e.g. waste description, quantity, destination, transport route).
Annex V B	Movement document	Specifies the information that must accompany a shipment during transport, allowing authorities to track the waste from export to final treatment. Together with Annex VA, it forms the administrative basis of the PIC procedure.
Annex VI	Arbitration	Establishes procedures for arbitration in the event of disputes between Parties concerning interpretation or implementation of the Convention. It is rarely used in practice.
Annex VII	Parties covered by the Ban Amendment	Lists OECD members, the European Union and Liechtenstein. Under the Ban Amendment, these Parties may not export hazardous wastes destined for disposal or recovery to non-Annex VII countries. The Ban Amendment entered into force in 2019.



<u>Annex</u>	Purpose	Key particularities / Why it matters
Annex VIII (List A)	Presumed hazardous wastes	Lists specific waste streams considered hazardous (List A). Wastes included here are generally subject to Basel controls and PIC. However, their inclusion does not prevent a Party from demonstrating, using Annex III, that a waste is not hazardous in a particular case. Plastic and e-waste entries have recently been updated.
Annex IX (List B)	Presumed non-hazardous wastes	Lists wastes generally considered non-hazardous and therefore normally outside Basel controls. However, if a waste contains Annex I constituents in concentrations that give it an Annex III hazardous characteristic, it may still be regulated. Recent discussions on textiles have centred on whether new textile entries should eventually be added to Annex IX or instead become subject to PIC through Annex II.