

# Rotterdam Convention

## on Prior Informed Consent (PIC)

### FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

The [Rotterdam Convention](#) on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) is a global treaty that came into force in February 2004. It is designed to protect public health and the environment by promoting informed decision-making by importing countries in relation to products that have been banned or severely restricted by at least two other Parties to the Convention. It formalises the voluntary principles established in the FAO Code of Conduct.

### CropLife Perspective

The Rotterdam Convention and principles of Prior Informed Consent (PIC) in principle provide additional safeguards to protect human health and the environment

The Convention is not a mechanism to ban the global trade or use of specific chemicals, but to control their trade.

The PIC procedure should remain focused on problematic, internationally-traded chemicals and should not be used to create unnecessary controls on a broader range of crop protection products.

The Rotterdam Convention is not a substitute for effective regulatory schemes at the national level in developing countries.

### What is the Convention?

The Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) aims to help participating countries make informed decisions about the potentially hazardous chemicals that might be shipped to them, and to facilitate communication of these decisions to other countries. The Convention requires exporting Parties to honour the decisions of importing Parties.

The key principles of PIC are:

- International shipment of a pesticide included in the PIC list should not occur against the wishes of the importing country.
- In the absence of a decision from an importing country, the export may proceed if the pesticide is registered in the country, or if it has previously been used or imported into the country.
- If an importing country decides not to consent to further imports, the decision must be applied to imports from all sources, and domestic manufacturing and use must cease.
- Recommendations for inclusion of banned and severely restricted chemi-

cals in the PIC procedure must be supported by risk evaluations reflecting prevailing conditions at the national level.

The plant science industry has supported the principles of Prior Informed Consent since their adoption in 1989 as a voluntary procedure under the [FAO Code of Conduct](#). They provide additional safeguards to protect human health and the environment, especially in those countries where effective regulatory controls are rudimentary. However, PIC is no substitute for robust and effective national regulation, and we continue to work to build capacity to achieve this in all countries.

There are a number of key points to note about the Rotterdam Convention, in particular:

- It establishes of a set of science-based criteria, for a sound risk evaluation, as a basis for listing banned and severely restricted chemicals
- The concept of informed decision-making by importing countries with reasonable trade provisions allows exports to proceed in the absence of an import response
- To operate fairly, if consent is not granted for import of a particular product, then use of the chemical and its manu-

facture by any national producers must also be stopped, and the import ban must apply to all suppliers. To do otherwise would be an unfair barrier to trade.

Significant experience has already been gained from use of the [interim PIC procedure](#). More details on CropLife International's recommendations based on this experience can be found in the [position paper](#) (also available in [French](#) and [Spanish](#)).

For further information, visit the following websites:

<http://www.pic.int/>

<http://www.croplife.org/>

<http://www.unep.org/>