

## Swiss Engagement for Africa

Many countries in Africa lack the facilities and technical know-how for environmentally sound treatment of waste; state control mechanisms are often inadequate. For Philippe Roch, Director of the SAEFL and President of the Basel Convention between 1999 and 2002 the case is therefore clear: “Africa needs our special attention”.

### Swiss assistance under the Basel Convention

Four examples of Switzerland’s engagement for the poorest continent:

- In 2001 Switzerland funded a **conference** in Morocco on the environmentally sound disposal of stockpiles of hazardous waste (e.g. pesticides, used oil and waste containing PCBs) or their prevention. SAEFL specialists were also involved as were consultants from Swiss firms.
- The Swiss Confederation committed itself to a project successfully started in Morocco for the disposal of **PCBs**, a toxic chemical compound which was used in condensers, transformers, paints, sealing compounds etc. and which has been banned in Switzerland since 1986.
- In 2000 the SAEFL organised a **training course** on the implementation of the Basel Convention for government representatives from Burkina Faso, the Gambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Morocco.
- Last year Switzerland brought 130 tonnes of obsolete **pesticides** from Madagascar and Uganda to Switzerland and disposed of the substances in an environmentally sound manner. The operation was funded using development aid funding and contributions from the chemical industry.

### African Stockpiles Project

Large volumes of pesticides found their way to Africa and the developing and threshold countries of other continents, sometimes even as development aid. Often there was a lack of knowledge about how to use these substances correctly resulting in large stockpiles and obsolete pesticides. These uncontrolled stockpiles threaten to contaminate the ground water and endanger both man and environment.

In order that obsolete pesticides can be disposed of the Global Environment Facility GEF together with the World Bank and the World Food Organisation funded the “African Stockpiles Project”.

The aim of the programme is to:

- Make disposal technologies available,
- Make shipments of waste safer,
- Better adjust pesticide production to requirements, and
- Raise awareness concerning Persistent Organic Pollutants, POPs contained in pesticides.

Through the Global Environment Fund Switzerland also makes a financial contribution to the project. Costs are estimated at USD 60 million, with the Global Environment Fund’s share amounting to USD 25.6 million.