

About the Basel Convention

What is the Basel Convention?

The Basel Convention is an international treaty formally titled the **Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal**. Adopted in 1989 by more than 100 nations in Basel, Switzerland, the treaty was developed in response to incidents involving shipments of hazardous waste (HW) from many countries during the 80's. The treaty created new international rules governing transboundary shipments of HW. Informally known as the **Basel Convention**, the treaty went into force in 1992. With approximately 130 nations and the European Union now parties to it, the treaty's goal is sound management and disposal of HW, including implementation of controls on import, export and transit of HW destined for disposal. A key feature is a notice-and-consent-import-export scheme imposing obligations on both importing and exporting countries not to export or import waste that either party has reason to believe will not be handled in an environmentally sound manner by the receiving country.

The US was among the original signatories of this treaty but has not yet adopted domestic implementing legislation, so the US is not a party. From time to time, the non-party status of the US presents challenges in disposing of DOD HW overseas, one of the issues of interest at the upcoming workshop. For more information on the Basel Convention, please consult the website maintained by the [United Nations Environment Programme](http://www.unep.ch/basel/) (<http://www.unep.ch/basel/>). This site includes an up-to-date list of the countries that are Basel Convention parties as well as the treaty provisions. For insight into the some of the political issues related to the Basel Convention, please consult the website maintained by the [Basel Action Network](http://www.ban.org/) (<http://www.ban.org/>), a non-governmental organization that is a network of toxic activists.