



Contact: Bjorn Beeler, IPEN International Coordinator
bjornbeeler@ipen.org,
+1 (510)710-0655 or +46 31 799 9474

Dr. Mariann Lloyd-Smith, IPEN Senior Advisor
biomap@oztoxics.org
+614-136-21-557

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10 May 2013

UN meeting on chemicals moves forward on flame retardant ban but stalls on asbestos and paraquat

(Geneva, Switzerland) – Delegates from more than 120 countries moved forward on some key chemical and waste issues but stalled on some of the most important matters. The combined meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions in Geneva covered prohibition of chemicals, waste guidelines, and responsible trade.

HBCD, the third most commonly-used flame retardant chemical, was added to the Stockholm Convention for global elimination with a five-year exemption for use in building insulation. The listing also requires labeling new building insulation products containing HBCD which helps countries separate dangerous products and wastes. Delegates rejected a proposal to allow recycling of products containing HBCD – a practice prohibited by the Convention.

“Governments made the right decision to ban this chemical and label new products containing it during the five-year phase-out,” said Dr. Mariann Lloyd-Smith, IPEN Senior Adviser. “This is a common-sense approach that will help countries separate dangerous products and wastes.”

The Basel Convention tried to finalize ewaste guidelines but some developed countries and the electronics industry proposed loopholes that would allow repairable electronic waste to be exempt from the Basel Convention hazardous waste trade control procedures. The guidelines could not be adopted because developed countries would not agree to the ewaste guidelines without these loopholes.

“Developing countries struggling with ewaste would benefit from the Basel ewaste guidelines,” said Tadesse Amera, Pesticide Action Nexus, Ethiopia. “But they do not want loopholes that allow dumping under the excuse of repair. We need stronger measures, not a weakened treaty.”

Delegates at the Rotterdam Convention considered the addition of six chemicals to the Convention list. A Convention listing does not ban a substance but simply requires exporters to notify and get permission from importing countries. Flame retardants PentaBDE and OctaBDE were added to the treaty along with PFOS, an industrial chemical, and azinphos methyl, a pesticide. However, a small number of countries took the political decision of blocking the listing of chrysotile asbestos and paraquat, a highly hazardous pesticide.



“All the candidate substances met the Convention criteria according to the treaty’s own expert committee,” said Joe DiGangi, IPEN Science and Technical Advisor. “That means that a small handful of opposing countries undermined the treaty with a political decision that disrespects governments’ right to know what substances are entering their borders.”

Public Interest NGO positions, information and updates about the Stockholm Convention Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland are available at: <http://www.ipen.org/cop6/documents/>. Please also see Twitter updates: @toxicsfree

[IPEN](#) is a leading global organization working to establish and implement safe chemicals policies and practices to protect human health and the environment whose mission is a toxics-free future for all. IPEN helps build the capacity of its member organizations to implement on-the-ground activities, learn from each other’s work, and work at the international level to set priorities and achieve new policies.

###