

28 September, 2015

## IPEN Opening Intervention

Dear Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates,

IPEN is a global civil society network committed to a toxics-free future.

I speak today on behalf of 700 participating organizations and more than 50 NGOs from 41 countries who have journeyed from all regions of the world to be here today because they believe SAICM provides a critical political framework for promoting and advancing chemical safety. We believe delegates should consider 5 critical issues at the ICCM4:

**1. ICCM4 should initiate a process to elaborate the future of SAICM.** SAICM is the only forum in the world where the full range of issues relating to sound chemicals management are identified and addressed globally. This forum is of special value to developing and transition countries which face growing toxic chemical exposure due to weak legislation and enforcement, and a simultaneous increase in chemicals production and use. Threats to human health and the environment from chemicals exposure will not end in 2020. And the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals approved last week highlighted the approach that international efforts on proper controls on chemicals and wastes should continue beyond 2020. If the global community waits until 2020 to begin its considerations on the future of intergovernmental cooperation on chemical safety, SAICM will expire; there will be a gap; and critical momentum will be lost. IPEN encourages you, the delegates at ICCM4 to agree to an intersessional process that will develop proposals to be adopted at ICCM5 for continuing the work of SAICM post-2020.

**2. The OOG should honestly assess progress and focus on concrete actions that can actually eliminate sources of toxic exposure.** ICCM4 should acknowledge that in most countries, only very limited progress has been made toward really minimizing the significant adverse effects on human health and the environment associated with current patterns of chemical production, use, and disposal. SAICM's objectives and actions in the next 5 years should focus on changing actual conditions in the world. One example and a clear objective that we recommend is the global elimination of lead in paint by 2020. The hazard of lead on human health has been known for more than 100 years and lead in paint has been banned for over 40 years in most industrialized countries. Surely, this is one concrete goal that SAICM can commit to achieving by 2020.

**3. We urge delegates to take concrete steps to phase out highly hazardous pesticides** Pesticide Action Network International and IPEN share the concern of more than 140 countries that highly hazardous pesticides are in widespread use in unsafe conditions, exposing and poisoning people, particularly vulnerable groups, and the environment. In developing countries, there is a close link between pesticides and poverty where the lives of people and of their children are irrevocably damaged by highly hazardous pesticides. In December 2014 the 54 countries of the African region called on UN agencies to establish a Global Alliance to Phase-out Highly Hazardous Pesticides, advocated for by the Pesticide Action Network, IPEN and many other organizations. We urge ICCM4 to establish a Global Alliance to Phase-Out Highly Hazardous Pesticides. The Global Alliance will greatly assist efforts to bring together various

stakeholders, strengthen existing work, build capacity and awareness, assist in identifying HHPs and replace them with safer alternatives in particular agroecology.

4. ICCM4 should take **meaningful steps on key emerging chemical issues**

One of SAICM's greatest strengths is the ability to identify, discuss, and take action on chemical safety issues that are not covered by the chemicals conventions. These issues are often of great importance to developing and transition countries. Lead in paint and highly hazardous pesticides are two good examples. Our expectation for this meeting is that an omnibus resolution will cover all current emerging policy issues so that work can continue to advance in the coming five years.

5. The last point is about financial matters. It is not a secret to anyone that SAICM is severely underfunded. We note that at this meeting the only discussion on finance is about providing money to the secretariat – and not actually implementing SAICM on the ground. The Quick Start Program is now closed and no substantial and sustainable program for mobilizing the necessary implementation resources has emerged. Substantial new and additional funds will be required for full and robust implementation of SAICM in the world's developing and transition countries with consideration of funding strategically directed towards those most in need.

Mr. President, this is a meeting with a compressed schedule and many issues – but we have a responsibility to move forward. We are committed to continue working with delegates to achieve tangible results that actually make a difference for millions of people exposed and harmed by toxic chemicals and wastes.

Thank you Mr. Chair.