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IPEN Intervention on Chemicals in Products

Given by Ram Charitra Sah, CEPHED, Nepal

Thank you Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of our organization CEPHED, Nepal, a participating organization of IPEN.

CEPHED would like to thank UNEP and the Steering group of the Chemicals in Products Project for the effective work on the Chemicals in Products program and guidance for stakeholders.

Like many other developing countries, every day, children in Nepal are exposed to harmful chemicals while toys they play with in many homes and schools have dangerous levels of chemicals coming from different product they uses. Studies have shown elevated blood lead level ($>5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$) among over 64% of Nepalese children, 54 % of tested children toys contain most toxic heavy metal like Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium and Bromine. High level of lead is detected in cosmetics, jewelry and mercury in skin whitening creams in almost all countries in the South Asia Region: Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Another study shows high level of Octa BDE ranges from 17 to 58 ppm and Deca BDE 19 to 243 ppm. So it is difficult to say that this is Toxic Toys or Toxic Waste, yet advocacy for circular economy is ongoing. Recycling of toxic chemicals into new products without any labeling or warning signs about CiP contributes to toxic exposure. Above all, I am very happy to inform all of you that the government of Nepal had enacted mandatory standard of children's toys, including some 12 heavy metals and chemicals in January, 2017. Soon before it comes into effect, business and trade enterprises, through our diplomatic missions based in developed countries, brought WTO (World Trade Organization) into the discussion to start building pressure on the government of Nepal to change the new standards and weaken them.

This leads to revoking of the first set of comprehensive standards for children's products and proposed new set of weaker and regressive standards, which have yet to be approved. This is very concerning, especially when in 2018, CEPHED, with the help of IPEN, tested Phthalates and heavy metals once again in the selected toys. Let it be a wake up call that we found high levels of phthalates (DEHP-37.1 %) and heavy metals (maximum Pb-4688 ppm, Cr-3348 ppm, Zn-78820 ppm) in children's products.

We would like to highlight a few points to be considered by this SAICM OEWG 3.

1. The UNEP Chemicals in Products (CiP) program should acknowledge workers as a key stakeholder group affected by chemicals during manufacture, recycle and disposal of products, and their need for full information disclosure about the chemicals they work with.
2. The CiP programme recommends that stakeholders identify, at a minimum, regulated chemicals contained in the products in question thus needs for countries to continue advancing national legislations and ensure their effective enforcement, monitoring and control to effectively address chemicals in products .
3. We urge companies to proactively move beyond a legally restricted substances list and disclose information on chemicals of concern in their products within and outside the supply chains throughout product life cycle.

We would also like to remind the delegates that the driver for safer chemicals and products comes from transparency, and that confidential business information should not undermine the key chemical safety principle that health and safety information should not be regarded as confidential, and should not be claimed for chemicals of concern, which are defined according to the Strategic Approach criteria based on hazards and targeting risk reduction.

Thank you.