



a toxics-free future

IPEN Intervention on PCBs

Given by Lee Bell

1 May, 2019

Thank you, Mr. President,

PCB-contaminated liquids, equipment and waste is required to be completely eliminated by 2028, but with so little progress made so far, there is an urgent need to accelerate the process. Therefore, IPEN urges this COP to consider the following issues.

1. UNEP has estimated that 14 million tonnes of PCB liquids and equipment still remains to be destroyed, representing 83% of the total global stockpile that needs to be eliminated. Such slow progress on eliminating an original dirty dozen POP suggests that we must redouble our efforts to eliminate all POPs listed under Annex A and learn from the challenges of PCB elimination. This highly toxic POP has impacted heavily on the environment and human health, contaminating soil, waterways and aquatic ecosystems and especially sea mammals. Vulnerable Arctic populations depending on sea mammals for subsistence are now heavily exposed to PCBs through their diet.
2. Standardized inventories, banning of sale and distribution, and elimination of PCBs under Convention requirements needs to be aggressively expedited. Non-legacy sources, including open applications, also need to be inventoried and addressed.
3. To expedite PCB elimination the COP should request development and promotion of guidance on non-combustion methods for PCBs destruction as they do not generate unintentionally formed POPs and are consistent with protection of human health and the environment. Funding for capacity-building and technology transfer of non-combustion technologies for PCB destruction and dechlorination should be prioritized. However, it has to be questioned why taxpayers in donor countries should bear the cost of cleaning up global contamination by Monsanto's PCBs. Indeed, a fresh focus on the polluter pays principle could significantly expedite the elimination of PCBs.
4. COP guidance should discourage PCB incineration or co-incineration in cement kilns as they are a source category of POPs in Annex C. Regional cooperation on this matter should be encouraged.

Thank you, Mr. President.