



2 April, 2019

IPEN Intervention on PFAs

Given by Bikash Chetry, Toxics Link, India

Thank you Madam President.

I am Bikash Chetry, from Toxics Link India, a South Asia regional partner of IPEN.

Per and polyfluoralkyl substances, collectively known as PFAS, are often called the “forever chemicals” because of their extreme persistence. There is generally a low level of public awareness on PFAS, yet almost all of us have PFAS in our bodies.

There are efforts under way to add PFOA under the Stockholm Convention to the list of chemicals for elimination and to close some of the exemptions for uses of PFOS. But these measures are just a start. As the OECD has recently reported, there are now at least 4600 known PFAS and uses are expanding rapidly.

In light of the difficulty of removing them once PFAS enter the environment, and their potential to harm to human health, PFAS must be addressed as a class.

The PFAS have been recognized as an issue of concern under SAICM for many years now. However, things are not moving on the ground. In the South Asian context, there is a lack of data on PFAS and there are no policies in place to stop PFAS pollution.

Therefore, in the future of SAICM 2.0, we would like to set time-bound goals and targets to be able to follow up that things are actually happening on the ground. For example, we could consider phasing out all non-essential uses of PFAS so as to prevent additional permanent contamination of the planet. If no progress has been made when the time expires, we need to consider how to move the issue to consideration for a legally binding instrument.

Thank you, Madam President, for your attention.