



a toxics-free future

IPEN Intervention on PFOA

Given by Pamela K. Miller

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Honorable President and Distinguished Delegates. Good afternoon. I make this statement as Co-Chair of IPEN.

Global action to eliminate PFOA, PFOS, and the class of PFAS chemicals is urgently needed and essential to prevent further harm to health and violations of human rights of children, families, workers, and especially firefighters who are experiencing high levels of exposures, cancers and other adverse health effects.

PFOA contaminates the drinking water of millions of people around the world, caused by the manufacturing of fluorinated substances and dispersive uses such as firefighting foam. PFOA is ubiquitous in our environment not only in water, but in soil, air and our food. PFOA is linked with kidney and testicular cancer, high cholesterol, inflammatory diseases, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, immune effects, pregnancy-induced hypertension, and impaired neurological as well as reproductive development. Harmful health effects occur at background level exposures.

We have strong evidence from an international expert panel that fluorine-free alternatives are effective and available. Fluorine free firefighting foams are already in use in the gas and oil industry, major airports, and military facilities. Replacement of PFOA- and PFOS- with fluorine-free alternatives in firefighting foam and other applications is a moral and socioeconomic imperative given the long-term harm to environmental and public health, immensely high costs of clean up, and liability concerns.

The Stockholm Convention clearly mandates that Parties must decide on listing "*in a precautionary manner.*" This means prioritizing the Convention's promise to protect human health and the environment from POPs in the listing of new chemicals, including PFOA. PFOA should be listed in Annex A for global elimination with no exemptions. We don't want to be in the same position with PFOA as we are now with PFOS 10 years from now. The promise also applies to evaluating the listing of PFOS and the necessity of strengthening the listing by eliminating various acceptable purposes and specific exemptions. We urge delegates to consider listing with no exemptions however if exemptions are granted, there must be detailed technical and scientific information to justify any exemption.

We look forward to working in a constructive and collaborative manner toward global bans and the listing of PFOA in Annex A with no exemptions. Thank you.