

IPEN Intervention on PFOS

26 April, 2011

PFOS is perhaps one of the most serious of the new POPs, and with no possibility for break-down, this reproductive toxin will be with us for generations to come. We urge parties to both welcome the recommendations of the POPRC on PFOS risk reduction and, most importantly, implement them.

For Parties making use of the specific exemptions and acceptable purposes listed in Annex B it is essential they notify the Secretariat. As so many of these exemptions involve consumer products, such as textiles and paper, this notification is currently the only source of public information of their use and presence in consumer products.

We stress that for those using these exemptions they also have a moral imperative to make sure workers and communities are made aware of the real and pressing dangers of PFOS-containing products and processes, and are given adequate information to reduce their exposure.

IPEN urges parties to take proactive steps to identify and address environmental contamination of PFOS in their countries. The practice of applying sewerage sludge to land has already resulted in appalling PFOS contamination of agricultural land, and we urge parties to never allow this to happen again.

The POPRC has strongly recommended that parties cease using stocks containing PFOS, such as fire-fighting foams and carpets. The recommendation to stop using new POPs was also reiterated in the recent UNEP Climate Change and POPs report, yet we have heard the criticism that the POPRC's recommendations are somehow 'impractical'. In response, IPEN would like to stress that to continue to use such an extremely persistent, toxic, bioaccumulative chemical that contaminates our environment, our biota and even our new born babies, is in itself the most 'impractical' approach to POPs. To conclude, we urge all parties to implement the recommendations of the POPRC and to ensure that by COP6 these exemptions are simply no longer necessary.