

GPEA's intervention on EDCs as a new emerging issue at ICCM3

Thank you Madame President. On behalf of Greenpeace East Asia/Beijing office and of Greenpeace offices around the world, we would like to welcome and support UNEP/WHO's proposal for endocrine disruptors (EDCs) to become a new emerging policy issue within SAICM.

Besides the increasing body of evidence suggesting that EDC exposure may be linked to a number of serious health & environmental effects, the rapid increase of production and use of chemicals in developing countries, especially in Asia, coupled with a lack of capacity to control them properly, makes this proposal very timely and necessary.

Reactive measures banning a few well-known EDCs (like bisphenol-A in baby bottles) are already happening in some parts of the world and are welcome, but these cases represent just the tip of the iceberg. What is particularly striking is that even where certain hazardous chemicals have been subject to tight restrictions in some regions (like nonylphenols in the EU), we can still witness increased amounts being manufactured or exported to other regions. And despite restrictions in those Western countries, their environment still suffers from on-going contamination coming from imported articles, such as clothes, as documented in a 2011 Greenpeace report.

Therefore a systematic and harmonized approach by governments and industry is urgently needed to tackle this mounting problem at global level. This approach should be based on the precautionary principle and include a preventative approach by avoiding the use of and, therefore, exposure to hormone-disrupting chemicals. It must also have at its core the principle of substitution, such that EDCs are progressively replaced with safer alternatives, and include producer responsibility in order to drive innovation and elimination of EDCs.

As a vital first step to this process, a dynamic list of EDCs should be established for priority action. To information, the list should begin by consolidating existing, well-respected lists of suspected EDCs, such as those of the European Union, ChemSec and The Endocrine Disruption Exchange. SAICM has an opportunity to tackle the pervasive problem of EDCs that has so far largely eluded the grasp of policy-makers, and the time to act is now.

Thank you Madame President.