

Thank you Madame President

I am speaking on behalf of IPEN; a group of more than 700 civil society organizations working globally on issues of chemical safety.

IPEN believes that the issue of chemicals in products is critical for consumers worldwide. To raise public awareness, IPEN participating organisations have carried out research in many countries on chemicals in consumer products including toys, school products, and cosmetics.

IPEN played an active role in CiP Steering Group. And I would like to thank UNEP and Sweden for support and effective work on this important project.

IPEN supports the need of cooperation between all stakeholders involved in generating information on chemicals in products with the goal to develop chemicals in products program throughout the value chain including communication about chemical hazards and risks, which will become an efficient tool in providing such information to consumers, especially in developing countries and economies in transition which face rapid development of the production, use, recycling and disposal processes.

The OEWG draft resolution on chemicals in products contains many useful elements. However, we believe the draft could be sharpened and shortened while still retaining the guidance necessary to advance this important project. For example, elements from the Overarching Policy Strategy could be simply referenced and repetitive elements could be removed.

A key principle of chemicals management is public right to know. The chemicals in products project should fully support and operationalize this principle, especially with regards to the needs of the consumers. Labeling would help provide informed choices and protect consumers throughout the life-cycle.

We believe the resolution could be strengthened by greater inclusion of consumers. Chemicals in products information systems can provide consumers with the information they are looking for, information which is clear, credible, up-to-date, and comparable, that helps people to make informed decisions about the products that they purchase, use or dispose of. We believe that a broad international consumer awareness campaign would greatly increase understanding and create a driving force for safer products.

The chemicals in products programme will also have another challenge which is possible dumping of products containing hazardous chemicals in developing and transition countries; Consumers in these countries are usually driven by price rather than by their knowledge and interest in cleaner products. As a result there is a possibility of recalled products from developed countries being sent to developing countries where there is minimum or no control.

Finally, before discussion on this item begins in a contact group, we would like to remind delegates of the consensus agreement among governments, private sector and NGOs regarding confidential business information. In both the Dubai Declaration and the Overarching Policy Strategy there is clear agreement that information on chemicals relating to the health and safety of humans and the environment should not be regarded as confidential.

IPEN looks forward to working with other delegates in a contact group on this topic to achieve a project that truly advances provision of information.

We would like to thank the EU for the CRP and would like to use it as the base for discussion in the contact group.

Thank you Madam President.