

IPEN nano Intervention GPA

Thank you Madam President,

IPEN, a global network of over 700 public interest non-governmental organizations committed to achieving a toxic-free future, fully supports the pursuit of intercessional activities to address nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials (MNM) as an emerging policy issue under SAICM as well as the inclusion of specific nano activities in SAICMGPA (on which we will provide comments when this point comes on the agenda).

Based on the comments received in preparation of ICCM3, I would like to make a few points.

First of all, let me stress that as indicated by the name given to this emerging issues, and contrary to some of the comments provided in preparation of this conference, nanomaterials, as a class of chemicals, share a number of physical characteristics that make them a class of chemical as a whole that warrant that they are addressed as such. This position is reinforced by statements from the most prestigious scientific institutions in the world (including the UK Royal Commission on Pollution, and the European Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks).

Second of all, according to Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration adopted in the 1992 Earth Summit, the lack of scientific certainty should not prevent the adoption of measures in case of suspected risk of causing harm to human health or the environment. Considering the existing information about risks relating to the manufacture and use of manufactured nanomaterials, more than 100 countries requested that this principle be implemented to the management of nanomaterials in resolutions adopted unanimously during the SAICM regional meetings of the African and GRULAC regions.

We also would like to stress the importance of collecting more information about the current production and dissemination of nanomaterials. At present, no one is able to say how much MNM are being produced nor which products contain nanomaterials in the world. As risk is a function of hazard and exposure, collecting information on exposure is critical to establish a proper risk management mechanisms. In this we wholly support the creation of mandatory registers of produced MNM, as the only means to collect sufficient information about the exposure of workers, the public and the environment to MNM to lead to adequate risk management procedure.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the important work carried out in the context of the OECD Working Party on MNM to advance the knowledge on MNM hazards and risk management. We would however want to stress the importance for all regions and all countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to take an active part in the discussions relating to this issue and development of global approaches and policies. SAICM is the only truly global arena existing to discuss the future of nanomaterials and nano policies and should remain the main fora for this discussion. In this respect we welcome the involvement of OECD as well as other IOMC organizations in the SAICM discussions.

Thank you, Madam President.