

Thank you Madam President, I speak on behalf of Pesticide Action Network

We would like to commend all the speakers who have made the presentations this morning.

Chemicals used in agriculture have major human health and environmental impacts. Estimates of pesticide poisoning are up to 41 million people annually. Highly hazardous pesticides are creating intolerable burdens for thousands of vulnerable groups – particularly indigenous communities, including in the Arctic, adversely affecting their health and their livelihoods, robbing them of their dignity and their lives. Vulnerable groups- the poor – the peasant farmers, agricultural workers, children, rural women and agricultural workers are being continuously exposed to highly hazardous pesticides that are not just acutely toxic but also chronically toxic, creating health problems that are more difficult to document – and which affect our future generations.

We support the call to act decisively to progressively ban highly hazardous pesticides, as recommended by FAO – and to include Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the International Code of Conduct on Pesticides.

It is important to understand that right now we are simply just replacing one highly hazardous pesticide with another – for example endosulfan, now listed as a POP, is being replaced by chlorpyrifos which may also be a POP, is an EDC and a developmental neurotoxin; and chlorpyrifos may well be replaced by imidacloprid which is implicated in honey bee colony collapse disorder.

It is completely unsustainable that we replace one HHP with another. It is totally unfair to farmers to be treated in this manner. They deserve better from us. We need to advance safer alternatives including ecosystem-based agriculture or agroecology. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, has emphasised: agro-ecology is the best approach to agriculture for supporting the right to food for many vulnerable groups in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Agroecology is a science and practice that best serves the needs of most farmers globally, building on traditional farming knowledge and adding modern non-chemical methods of agroecosystem management. The UN Special Rapporteur's report reinforces the global findings of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) report that small-scale farmers and agro-ecological methods provide the way forward to avert the current food crisis and meet the needs of local communities.

In conclusion, we believe that the issue of Highly Hazardous Pesticides is of the utmost importance and needs to be elevated in the deliberations of SAICM, and we reiterate our support for SAICM to endorse the progressive ban of highly hazardous pesticides, as recommended by FAO, and their replacement with safer, farmer friendly non-chemical alternatives. We encourage SAICM participants to include the progressive elimination of Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the national SAICM implementation plans. Thank you madam president