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UNCSD19 Roundtables 4 – Moving towards zero waste and sound managements of chemicals. By Lucy Mulenkei Indigenous Peoples caucus

Mr Chairman we thank all panelists for their good and interesting presentations. Indigenous Peoples follow this discussion with great concern considering the dangers our communities have been experiencing in handling both waste and chemicals. We are happy to say that the secretariat of the convention of the Stockholm gave us an opportunity to express our concerns on different aspects of different persistent organic pollutants (POP) and other waste in the recently concluded COP 5 of the Stockholm Convention, in Geneva. Among the few recommendations were the need for synergies of the three conventions (Base, Rotterdam and Stockholm) and capacity building for indigenous peoples just to name a few.

Mr. Chairperson, one of our greatest concerns in dealing with chemicals and waste has been the lack of information and capacity amongst a great number of the population of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Lack of awareness and information about the impacts and handling of these deadly chemicals and other hazardous waste has had a profound effect on the health of our communities.. For this reason, there is need to finance and implement a program of capacity building, awareness creation and information sharing with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in affected areas. In addition it is necessary to involve them in process for them to understand effectively moving towards zero waste and sound management and safe handling of chemicals.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, it is important to mainstream and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in response to dealing with the sound management and elimination of hazardous waste and chemicals. We urged governments to use human rights approach for sustainable management. Indigenous peoples will be even happier if they are fully involved at the country and regional levels in the process. And the principle of free prior informed consent be applied at all times in planning and implementation of activities and projects on chemicals and waste. Governments and other key players should involve indigenous peoples and their local communities on handling and safe management of both waste and chemicals.