

Intervention on the Thematic Area of Chemicals
CSD-18

Distinguished Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. We would also like to thank the Secretary General for the report on the subject. Permit me to make a few points.

The imperative of eliminating the production and use of harmful chemicals is well recognized. However, there is a need for cost-effective and environmentally-sound alternative products to be developed before initiating the phasing out process of such chemicals in developing countries. For example, DDT has an important role in vector control and has a public health interface. While India supports and has eliminated usage of DDT in agriculture, we continue to use it for malaria control. Similarly, the use of generic pesticides is a necessity in the Indian agricultural sector at present because of its food security implications. I am sure similar problems are faced by our fellow developing countries.

Clearly, the access and dissemination of enhanced technology by developing countries is a key pre-requisite in this process. Ways and means have to be evolved for technology transfer and flow of financial resources from the North to the South in order to accelerate the phasing out process.

Another issue relates to compensation for environmental damage. Let us recall that Rio Principle 10 talks of access to administrative and judicial proceedings, including redress and remedy. Chemical management is intricately related to public health concerns and chemical contamination is a major issue related to environmental justice. It is important that countries develop their own nationally appropriate legislations to provide for quick and effective compensation. In this context, I am happy to inform that India is taking concrete steps towards this goal. A draft National Green Tribunal Bill is under consideration by our Parliament and the lower

House has just passed the Bill. The Legislation seeks to provide a platform which would allow an individual to appeal for damages in an environment related accident.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Para 93 of the Secretary-General's report calls for reviewing, updating and strengthening national legislations and policies on chemicals. It is important to emphasize the reviews must naturally be undertaken by national authorities, rather than through international mechanisms.

Thank you.

* * * * *