

IPEN COP5 OPENING STATEMENT

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I speak on behalf of IPEN and its 700 participating organisations. Many of us remember only 2 years ago, sitting at the end of COP4 at 4 in the morning exhausted, wondering about the fate of the convention. A compromise had been reached where the 9 substances recommended for listing were added, but with large loop holes to allow the continued use and recycling of new POPs. Unfortunately, this ensured the ongoing unquantified exposure of women, children and vulnerable indigenous communities to these hazardous new POPs.

We do not wish to be in a similar situation at the end of COP5. This week, delegates will have new opportunities to address the real and pressing problems of POPs. We hope that Parties will respect the POPs scientific process and ensure that private interests do not profit at the cost of harm to workers, women, children, and future generations.

While old POPs continue to be incorporated into new products, under the guise of recycling, we ignore the warning of the POPRC that the 'failure to stop this recycling will inevitably result in wider human and environmental contamination'. Currently, families are unknowingly bringing hazardous POPs waste into their homes and exposing their children. This week IPEN has released its carpet padding study showing just how serious this toxic POPs threat is to us and our children. We would not tolerate our children crawling around on carpets made of PCBs; why are we expected to accept the toxic PBDEs in our homes? Similarly, the exemptions for PFOS remain extensive and it is essential for all delegates to adopt the POPRC risk reduction recommendations.

At this meeting, delegates should also take the opportunity to eliminate endosulfan once and for all. There should be no hesitation. The COP's own scientific body has clearly shown that endosulfan is a poisonous POP, despite the recent vocal claims by some. Endosulfan contaminates the Arctic food chain, poisons our farmers, pollutes our breastmilk and contaminates our environment. Just like the old POPs pesticides dieldrin and heptachlor, it is time for endosulfan to go. Endosulfan must be listed on Annex A with no exemptions.

To conclude, IPEN understands the challenges for developing and transitional countries and acknowledges that new and additional finances must be found to assist countries to implement their obligations, and ensure chemicals are an effective part of their national development programs. These are the challenges for COP5 and we encourage all delegates to face and overcome these challenges and ensure we take one more step to a POPs-free world.