Inuit Circumpolar Council Intervention on Endosulfan
(Supported by the Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the International Indian Treaty Council and the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus)
26 April, 2011

Thank you Mr. President. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you to your appointment, and would like to thank UNEP and Switzerland for the organization of the meeting and the great hospitality.

I am a scientist who works for the Inuit Circumpolar Council, an indigenous organization that represents 160,000 Inuit living in the circumpolar Arctic in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka, Russia. This intervention is jointly supported by the Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the International Indian Treaty Council and the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus representing Indigenous organizations, nations and peoples from the Arctic, Africa, the Caribbean, North, Central and South America, and the Pacific regions at COP5.

For those of you who have been part of the Stockholm Convention since its inception, you may remember the carving of an Inuit mother with child that was presented by then ICC chair, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, to the then UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer. The carving, which has been on display at each of the subsequent COPs since then [and I'm happy to see it on display now as well] was meant to remind the distinguished delegates of the importance of preventative action for human health and the environment.

We would like to take the opportunity during the discussions on endosulfan today, to again remind the plenary that the reason for the Stockholm Convention, as stated in the objective of the treaty, is to (and I quote) "protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants." If we want to achieve the objective of protecting human health and the environment, it is of crucial importance to ensure chemicals are banned BEFORE they reach concentrations that cause adverse effects.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities are affected at the point of exposure, which may occur at the source of application, as well as in the Arctic due to long-range transport. Capacity building for impacted Indigenous Peoples and local communities in all regions is a high priority.

As stated in the POPRC Risk Evaluation, endosulfan has been found in considerable levels in the Arctic environment. It is unquestionable that endosulfan is subject to long-range transport, and it has been found in traditional food sources of Arctic indigenous peoples, including fish, seabird eggs, seals, and other marine mammals. Endosulfan and particularly its metabolite, endosulfan sulphate, are persistent. Therefore, if endosulfan continues to be used, concentrations in the Arctic environment will further contribute to the already existing contamination of the traditional food sources that Arctic indigenous peoples rely on.

We would like to join the POPRC Chair in reminding the distinguished delegates that the additive effects of chemical mixtures on human and environmental health and the effects of climate change are not

being considered in the risk evaluations, but they are a very real concern. Therefore, adherence to the precautionary principle, as is stated in the preamble of the treaty, is of utmost importance and every effort must be made to ensure the total level of POPs in the Arctic is reduced.

Finally, the impact of dangerous toxics including endosulfan on Indigenous Peoples around the world violates a range of their human rights. Many of these rights are protected under International Laws, norms and Conventions, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
We therefore ask the distinguished delegates to follow the treaty's objective, and protect human and environmental health by adding endosulfan to Annex A of the Stockholm Convention, without any exemptions. Thank you.