

Stockholm Convention COP 5, Geneva, Switzerland April 25-29, 2011  
Statement by Danika Littlechild, International Indian Treaty Council  
April 26, 2011

Thank you Mr. Chair,

I am intervening on behalf of the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus for the Stockholm Convention COP 5 regarding this Item. Our caucus represents Indigenous organizations, nations and peoples from the Arctic, Africa, the Caribbean, North, Central and South America, and the Pacific regions.

The inclusion of lindane in Annex A signaled a positive step forward in recognizing that there are safe and affordable non-chemical alternatives for all previous uses of lindane including pharmaceutical and agricultural uses. However, we are concerned at the low level of compliance in this area.

We are gravely concerned about the health, environmental and human rights impacts of the continued use of lindane on Indigenous Peoples—particularly our children, local communities and the global environment. Given the alternatives available, as described for example in the report of the World Health Organization and the Secretariat of the Convention (UNEP/POPS/COP.5/INF-13), continued use or application is unnecessary and contrary to the goals of the Convention.

Our concerns about exemptions go beyond lindane. The Indigenous Peoples Caucus at COP 5 continues to be very concerned that too often discussions here regarding the addition of new POPs and of proposed exemptions seem to be based primarily on economic criteria and preferences expressed by industry, rather than addressing the central purpose of the Stockholm Convention - to eliminate POPs. We urge the delegates to ensure the full implementation of the spirit and intent of the Stockholm Convention - that when exemptions are requested, they be fully identified, supported by complete justification and evidence, and as limited as possible in scope. We also urge that forms required for notification and acceptable uses include requirements as set forth in the POPRC alternatives guidance document (Stockholm Convention POPRC (2009) Guidance on considerations related to alternatives and substitutes for listed POPs and candidate chemicals, UNEP/POPS/POPRC.5/10/Add. 1).

Finally, we are concerned that the discussions do not consider the human rights obligations shared by all member states of the United Nations. For example the U.N. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in Sept. 2007 affirms that "States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or waste disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent." – article 29, paragraph 2.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.