

Thank you President.

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International, an international network of more than 600 public interest groups and people's organizations, is coordinated by regional centers in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America and is a network partner of IPEN. PAN has been involved in the implementation of SAICM particularly the reduction and elimination of highly hazardous pesticides and in the promotion of safer alternatives. We are engaged with local communities, governments and various stakeholders to raise awareness, build capacity and share information as well as to advance the rights of marginalized groups spanning the globe. We are also working with increasing numbers of farmers, rural women, indigenous and local communities to advance safer alternatives particularly agroecology.

We are very pleased that Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Achim Steiner said that the fundamental rights of citizens need to be protected which we feel are crucial, and rights that we are also advancing.

While we have been encouraged by SAICM and its implementation and commend the FAO for its efforts to reduce the risk and dependency on the highly hazardous pesticides including its commitment to the progressive ban on highly hazardous pesticides, however the reality is very few highly hazardous pesticides have been phased out – there has been no significant change and we are lagging behind in achieving our 2020 goals.

Surveys have shown that the highly hazardous pesticides are in widespread use, in unsafe conditions exposing and poisoning people and the environment particularly the vulnerable groups. There remains a major discrepancy between developed countries on the one hand, and developing countries and those with economies in transition on the other, with regard to the types of pesticides commonly used and the manner in which they are handled and applied. In developing countries, there is a close link between pesticides and poverty: It is the most marginalised, that are often forced through economic necessity to accept work spraying pesticides. Vulnerable groups particularly agricultural workers and peasants, women, children, and the poor who have often been exposed to pesticides, suffer these as part of their work requirement, or in the environment or are unknowingly exposed, and have no avenue to either complain or access any protection or health care. Their lives and those of their children are irrevocably damaged by highly hazardous pesticides.

Given this reality we are disappointed, and very concerned by, the deliberate efforts by certain stakeholders, particularly industry and a few developed nations, to prevent Highly Hazardous Pesticides being included in the International Code of Conduct on Distribution and Use of Pesticides and we hope that there will be more concerted, open and transparent collaboration to ensure its inclusion.

Management of endocrine disrupting pesticides is still in its infancy in developed countries and not at all in developing countries, and not yet even incorporated in SAICM. As suggested the GRULAC region, we hope that will be incorporated in SAICM this week. Acknowledging that much is still not known, but that the precautionary approach covers such situations, the time has come when concrete activities are needed to reduce risk from EDCs. For example at least 98 pesticides are recognised as endocrine disruptors, many still in use. Yet there are much safer alternatives available now including

agroecological approaches to pest management, now supported within the UN system. These practices should be given priority and supported with an enabling environment through knowledge-sharing and capacity building, and the implementation of supporting policies on land, food, technology, and credit to promote the transition towards ecological agriculture. We know that much is needed to be done to ensure that we meet our 2020 goal and we in PAN are committed to work together this week and the future towards meeting this goal.

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