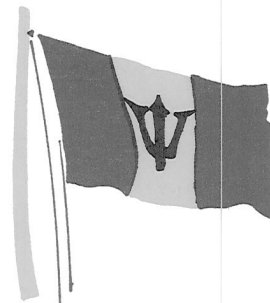




*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



INTERVENTION BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE
ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

AT THE

CSD-19
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING

ITEM ON
CHEMICALS

1 MARCH, 2011

United Nations Headquarters
New York

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Intervention by the Alliance of Small Island Developing States on Chemicals

Mr. Chairman,

I have the distinct honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) on the important issue of the sound management of chemicals.

The use of Chemicals continues to be necessary in the economic development of all countries, including small island developing states (SIDS). Therefore, the need to manage chemicals in an environmentally sound manner as highlighted in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation remains relevant to this day. Given , the special situation of small island developing states, the following issues are especially critical:

- Harmonisation of classification and labeling of chemicals;
- Information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks; and
- Strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals.

We submit that the upcoming Rio+20 Conference presents an important opportunity for our governments to highlight the progress made in our national chemicals management agenda and to obtain further commitment for enhanced action in this area.

Further Mr. Chairman in 1994 the Barbados Programme of Action raised transboundary movement of hazardous waste and the passage of ships carrying toxic waste, chemicals and radioactive materials through territorial waters as of immediate concern to SIDS. This remained a priority in the Mauritius Strategy and we re-stress the need for this issue to be considered going forward. .

Mr. Chairman,

As we continue to work towards the achievement of the JPOI 2020 goal, it will be important for small island states to accelerate and further strengthen our national and regional risk-based chemical assessment, management capabilities including through the development and institutionalization of national implementation plans. It is also critical to enhance decision makers' understanding of the importance of chemicals management to sustainable development. Importantly SIDS should be supported in their efforts to strengthen the regulatory structure for the life cycle approach to chemicals management.

Though small island developing states are not significant contributors to global mercury pollution we are vulnerable to exposure from mercury containing products. It is therefore important for us to continue to actively participate in sessions of the inter-governmental negotiating committee for a global legally-binding instrument on mercury. In negotiating the provisions of the instrument, we request that the international community take into account the

relevant Rio principles, particularly the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibilities and the precautionary principle. In this regard, we request that the special case of SIDs be recognized and the necessary support be provided to enhance the implementation of the relevant national policies and programmes. Particular issues important to SIDs include our limited capacity for long term environmentally sound storage of mercury and mercury waste. All efforts should also be made to prevent duplication with other MEAs particularly the Basel Convention.

We note the work undertaken to date by UNEP on lead and cadmium, as well as the mercury negotiations and request that particular support be given to the governments of small island developing states to identify and quantify the anthropogenic sources of these elements at the national and regional levels as well as to undertake the requisite exposure assessments to determine the level of risks to vulnerable populations.

We applaud the progress made to date at the global level through the implementation of the Strategic Approach on International Chemicals Management (SAICM). We also commend the outcomes of the 2nd session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, including the work on emerging policy issues, a number of which are of particular importance to small island developing states. We also welcome the effort being made to further the engagement of the health sector in SAICM implementation through the Health Sector Strategy.

The real progress made by small island developing states in furthering their national chemicals agenda, towards the achievement of the 2020 JPOI goal, through the continued support provided by the Quick Start Programme (QSP) to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is commendable. However, we note the imminent closure of the QSP Trust Fund in 2012 and request that the international community establish a more robust funding mechanism, to replace the Trust Fund, which will facilitate the financing of activities other than 'enabling activities' as is presently facilitated under the Fund.

We reiterate our support for the notion of an emergency fund to assist developing countries, particularly SIDs, in the event of any incidents related to toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes

Mr. Chairman,

We continue to support the effective implementation of the main chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), namely the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions as well as the Montreal Protocol. However, the fulfillment of all the obligations under many of these treaties remains a major challenge for developing countries, including small island developing states. In this regard, we request that a comprehensive global financing strategy for chemicals be developed as a matter of priority to support implementation of these MEAs by developing country Parties. It is also necessary to further enhance the support given to regional

technical centres designated under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions so that they can effectively respond to the needs of their constituents.

The management of wastes, including chemical wastes, remains a major challenge for small island developing states. In this regard, developing countries, including small island developing states, are encouraged to pursue an integrated approach to wastes management, including through the application of effective policies and programmes and economic instruments as well as the promotion of wastes prevention, recycling and recovery strategies. In addition, the disposal of chemicals and chemical wastes continues to be problematic for SIDS. There is a need for comprehensive, long term regional initiatives, in all SIDS regions, for treatment and disposal of chemicals given SIDS isolated nature and associated prohibitive transportation cost to meet obligations of various MEAs.

Mr. Chairman,

We submit that the wide scale dissemination of information on highly toxic chemicals, including at the community level is imperative. It is necessary to have information on the possible sources of exposure (products and processes) as well as impact on human health and environment from such exposures. In order to facilitate phase out of the use of hazardous materials access to information on alternatives to these substance is needed. Information which is continuously updated, informed by research and development, appropriate to the target audience, readily available and accessible will empower the individual and by extension the country and region to better reduce exposure to toxic chemicals.

Mr. Chairman,

We support the continued work on synergies between the Basel, Stockholm, and Rotterdam Conventions. It is hoped that this framework will incorporate the upcoming Mercury Instrument, to avoid *inter alia* onerous reporting requirements.

In closing , we would wish to highlight the need for enhanced financial and technical support to SIDS from developed countries, in the areas of research, capacity building and improved information management systems to support sustainable chemicals management

I thank you Mr. Chair.

