Second Warsaw Conference

Reducing chemical threats and enhancing chemical safety and security

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Statementby

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In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

Mr. Chairman

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, please allow me to thank you for inviting me to attend this very important conference. It is my pleasure to address such an important gathering. I would like also to extend my appreciation to Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej for his tireless efforts that has devoted to the issue of chemical safety and security and for convening this meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The amount of efforts that has been put in this meeting highlights the importance of the chemical safety and security for the global community and clearly indicates the international determination to contain and eliminate the threats posed by the hazardous chemicals to the health and the environment of the present and future generations of human being.

Four decades of experiences in international efforts for safe and sound management of chemicals has improved our understanding of the difficulties and challenges ahead of us for reaching the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goal that, by 2020, chemicals will be produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment

and human health. We are optimistic that our current common understanding provides a good basis for discussion in this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Chemicals are an integral part of modern daily life. There is no single economic sector where chemicals do not play an important role. While chemicals are major contributors to national and world economies, their safe and sound management throughout their lifecycle is essential in order to manage them to serve rather than harm mankind and the environment.

In response to the growing demand for chemical-based products and processes, the international chemical industry has grown dramatically since the 1970s. Global chemical output was valued at US$ 171 billion in 1970; by 2010, it had grown to US$ 4.12 trillion. Further, global chemicals sales are projected to grow about 3 per cent per year to 2050.

The list of threats posed by hazardous chemicals remains large. The human health impacts include both disease and illness and death by poisoning. In fact, poisoning by chemicals globally kills almost as many people as tuberculosis[1] and traffic accidents, and exceeds the number of those killed by malaria.

In 2011, WHO reported that globally, 4.9 million deaths (8.3 per cent of the global total of deaths in 2004) and 86 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)[2] (5.7 per cent of the global total of DALYs in 2004), were attributable to environmental and occupational exposures resulting from the unsafe management of selected chemicals.

Occupational poisonings alone (those not related to air pollution or drinking water contamination), are at 1 million per year, corresponding to over 1.6 per cent of the total deaths and 1.4 per cent of the total burden of disease worldwide. To compare, among the global top ten leading causes of death in 2004, HIV/AIDS caused 2 million deaths, tuberculosis caused 1.5 million deaths, road traffic accidents caused 1.27 million deaths, and malaria caused 0.9 million deaths.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Chemicals management has become a much more complicated matter in the past years with the shift in chemicals production and use from developed to developing countries.

The Global Chemical Outlook Report that published by UNEP in 2013 shows that while chemical production, use and disposal continue to expand worldwide, this expansion is not

[1] - /tjuːˌbɜː(r)kjʊˈləʊsɪs/ مرض سل

[2] - The disability-adjusted life year (DALY) is a measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. It was developed in the 1990s as a way of comparing the overall health and life expectancy of different countries.The DALY is becoming increasingly common in the field of public health and health impact assessment (HIA). It extends the concept of potential years of life lost due to premature death...to include equivalent years of 'healthy' life lost by virtue of being in states of poor health or disability.

evenly distributed geographically. Growth in chemical production and use has slowed in many of the developed countries that previously dominated the market, while it has accelerated rapidly in a number of developing countries and countries with economies in transition where growth rates far exceed the growth rates for the chemical industries conventionally located in developed countries. Indeed, it is projected that by 2020, 31 per cent of global chemical production and 33 per cent of global chemical consumption will be in developing countries.

Changing patterns in the global distribution of chemical production and use, combined with limited capacity in developing countries and economies in transition for sound management of chemicals and the nature of most chemicals pollutants, which are travelers without passport, have increased the prospects for widespread and multifaceted exposures of communities and the environment in both developed and developing countries to chemicals of high and unknown concern.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made to improve chemicals safety since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, expected results have not yet been achieved. From the point of view of a developing country, this is because of the two important barriers: inadequate external finance and lack of political will for technology transfer.

Sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing is a key element for the safe and sound management of chemicals and waste in developing countries. Efforts to rise external funding for sound management of chemicals have been woefully inadequate and much less than the projected needs of developing countries.

Another important aspect of difficulty for safe and sound management of chemicals is lack of expertise and training, in particular, in developing countries. Here, international entities such as International Center for Chemical Safety and Security can play a significant role in building capacities in countries in need for such a trainings. I must express my grateful to Ambassador Paturej for his excellent initiative to establish such a center.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Technology plays a critical role in meeting the obligations and requirements under the chemicals-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (**MEAs**).

For example, three conventions provide an international framework governing the environmentally safe and sound management of hazardous chemicals throughout their lifecycles. These include (1) the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, (2) The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in Trade, and (3) The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Together the

We work Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions cover key elements of "cradle-to-grave" management of hazardous chemicals, most comprehensively in the case of POPs, which are covered by all three treaties.

The issues covered by the three conventions, such as existing and new chemicals, comprehensive waste management strategies, environmental releases, replacement of hazardous chemicals, are essentially facilitated by technology transfer.

Implementation of policies for the safe and sound management of chemicals in many developing countries will require access to cleaner technologies. Many developing countries currently lack the basic means to control hazardous chemicals, such as pesticides, even though they have come to rely on them to increase and/or maintain crop yields, and they will need access to technology transfer to make the transition to modern approaches to the safe and sound management of chemicals, including pollution prevention methods such as best available techniques and best environmental practices (BAT and BEP). This shift to pollution prevention is necessary to avoid the pitfalls associated with former practices that eventually require time- and resource-intensive efforts to address pollution problems after the fact.

As production shifts toward developing countries, policies need to be forged that encourage transferring to developing countries non-confidential technological approaches that are used in developed countries to minimize release of pollutants.

Further, chemical companies from developed countries operating in developing countries should help facilitate the transfer of technology to those countries, particularly in the context of industry voluntary Responsible Care Programmes.

From my own experience as a diplomat and international negotiator, I believe that an overriding barrier to the effective technology flows is the lack of political will among the developed countries for transfer of technology to developing countries and countries with economic in transition to assist them to meet the chemical safety requirements.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope that our discussions today will help to setting the world on the path to a future in which chemicals do not pose a threat to human health and the environment.

Thank you.