



PLASTIC WASTE NOW CLASSIFIED AS HAZARDOUS PER BASEL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON HAZARDOUS WASTE

Decisions on plastic waste have been reached on May 11 in Geneva, as approximately 180 governments adopted a raft of decisions aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the harmful effects of hazardous chemicals and waste.

Pollution from plastic waste, acknowledged as a major environmental problem of global concern, has reached epidemic proportions with an estimated 100 million tonnes of plastic now found in the oceans, 80-90% of which comes from land-based sources.

Governments this week amended the Basel Convention to include plastic waste in a legally-binding framework which will make global trade in plastic waste more transparent and better regulated, whilst also ensuring that its management is safer for human health and the environment. At the same time, a new Partnership on Plastic Waste was established to mobilise business, government, academic and civil society resources, interests and expertise to assist in implementing the new measures, to provide a set of practical supports - including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance - for this ground-breaking agreement.

Other far-reaching decisions from the two weeks included the elimination of two toxic chemical groups, which together total about 4,000 chemicals, listed into Annex A of the Stockholm Convention, namely Dicofol and Perfluorooctanoic Acid, and its salts and related compounds. The latter has till now been used in a wide variety of industrial and domestic applications including non-stick cookware and food processing equipment, as well as a surfactant in textiles, carpets, paper, paints and fire-fighting foams.

Important progress was also made under the Rotterdam Convention, which provides a legally-binding framework for information exchange and informed decision-making in the trade of certain hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals. Two chemicals, the pesticide phorate and the industrial chemical hexabromocyclododecane were added to Annex III of the convention, making them subject to the Prior Informed Consent Procedure, through which countries can decide on future imports of these chemicals. A further decision, to approve procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Rotterdam Convention - seen as a crucial step for further improving implementation of this key convention - was adopted with great appreciation by Parties.

Working for two weeks in Geneva under the theme of "Clean Planet, Healthy People: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste", approximately 1,400 delegates from around 180 countries converged for the meetings of the Conferences of Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Participants benefited from the numerous opportunities and events to exchange information on alternatives to these chemicals, as well as best practices.

Speaking at the closing session of the COPs, Rolph Payet, UN Environment's Executive Secretary of the three conventions for, said that "I'm proud that this week in Geneva, Parties to the Basel Convention have reached agreement on a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste. Plastic waste is acknowledged as one of the world's most pressing environmental issues, and the fact that this week close to 1 million people around the world signed a petition urging Basel Convention Parties to take action here in Geneva at the COPs is a sign that public awareness and desire for action is high."

"We were able to list two out of 7 candidate chemicals and will continue working closely with parties to identify

feasible alternative solutions to hazardous substances to account of food security and market access aspects" added Hans Dreyer, UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention.

The two new chemicals listed in Annex A to the Stockholm Convention are the pesticide Dicofol, and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) its salts and PFOA-related compounds (some applications with time-limited exemptions). Listing in Annex A to the Convention obliges Parties to eliminate these chemicals from use. The two chemicals are listed on the basis of a robust review process addressing risks, management options and alternatives by the UN's POPs Review Committee. Dicofol is used as a miticide on a variety of field crops, fruits, vegetables, ornamentals and tea and coffee and is known to cause skin irritation and hyperstimulation of nerve transmissions in humans as well as being highly toxic to fish, aquatic invertebrates, algae and birds. PFOA is a widely-used industrial chemical used in the production of non-stick cookware and food processing equipment, as well as a surfactant in textiles, carpets, paper, paints and fire-fighting foams. As a substance of very high concern, it is known to be linked to major health problems including kidney cancer, testicular cancer, thyroid disease and hypertension in pregnancy.

(Environmental Resource Center - 5-20-19)



Join Our Mailing List!

DIRECTORY

Corporate Headquarters
215 West Church Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Phone: (610) 265-1510 / FAX: (610) 265-0687

New Jersey
Pureland Complex, Suite 205
510 Heron Drive, P.O. Box 521
Bridgeport, NJ 08014
Phone: (856) 467-2276 / FAX: (856) 467-3476

Southwest Pennsylvania
2001 Waterdam Plaza Drive, Suite 202
Cannonsburg, PA 15317
Phone: (724) 206-0348 / FAX: (724) 206-0380

E-mail: RTENV@AOL.COM
World Wide Web: [HTTP://RTENV.COM](http://RTENV.COM)
24 HOUR URGENT LINE SERVICE 800-725-0593

Directory

Corporate Headquarters
215 West Church Road
Suite 301
King of Prussia, PA 19406

New Jersey
510 Heron Drive
P.O. Box 521
Suite 205, Pureland Complex

Southwest Pennsylvania
2001 Waterdam Plaza Drive
Suite 202
Cannonsburg, PA 15317

Phone: (610) 265-1510
FAX: (610) 265-0687

Bridgeport, NJ 08014
Phone: (856) 467-2276 FAX:
(856) 467-3476

Phone: (724) 206-0348
FAX: (724) 206-0380

E-mail: RTENV@AOL.COM / World Wide Web: [HTTP://RTENV.COM](http://RTENV.COM)

24 HOUR URGENT LINE SERVICE: 800-725-0593