



State Secretary

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High Level Segment of COP 1 POPs, 05.05.2005

Speech of Swiss State Secretary Philippe Roch

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Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues and friends,
Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour to participate here in Punta del Este, Uruguay, at the ministerial part of the first conference of the parties to the Stockholm (POPs) Convention. This pleasure is especially big because this conference is the culmination of an excellent cooperation with our host country Uruguay and UNEP during the preparation which made this conference possible.

World leaders attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 asked us to ensure, that the Stockholm Convention would take effect at the earliest possible date. Now, two and a half years later, this instrument is in force and its first Conference of Parties is in session.

The Stockholm Convention has a big goal towards human health and the environment as it bans and aims to firmly reduce the negative effects of 12 of the most important POPs. During this week some countries have indicated their intension to nominate additional substances for consideration by the POPs review committee. An early and active policy towards the enlargement of the scope of the convention by including other substances meeting the POP criteria is an important step which should be given high priority. It should, however, be kept in mind that for those substances that are already covered by marketing and use prohibitions, many sources of releases into the environment are not yet eliminated: the substances are still present in wastes, as obsolete pesticides, in transformers and other articles, or in contaminated sites such as landfills. A lot of implementing work also remains to be done to eliminate the sources of halogenated dioxins and other POPs that are not intentionally produced. Practical measures that are required to ensure the timely implementation of the convention should therefore be given equally high priority as to the inclusion of additional substances in the convention.

Dear colleagues I believe we all agree that the key to a successful future implementation of the Stockholm Convention lies in a coherent and integrated approach. The close proximity of other international environmental organizations and institutions is central to chemicals and waste issues and an effective and cost efficient way of implementing this important Convention. Switzerland has already

established the International Environment House, that is home to one part of the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, the Basel Convention, UNITAR and UNEPchemicals to name just a few of them. Other key players dealing with environmental issues such as the WHO, WTO, the IFCS are furthermore headquartered in Geneva. My country had the privilege to host and support the interim POPs Convention Secretariat during the whole negotiation period and we would be very honored if you decided us to be the home for the permanent POPs Secretariat as well.

For Switzerland, as one of the world's major chemicals producing nations, the sustainable management of chemicals has always been an important priority, at the national as well as the international level. My country is therefore proud to work closely with UNEP, UNITAR and other partners in order to fulfil our firm ongoing commitment towards multilateral political processes (SAICM), bilateral projects (GHS), and regional seminars (e.g. NIP seminars). We shall seek to address the capacity building and other problems our partners from developing countries and the economies in transition face in implementing the international instruments in this field. In this context, I would like to highlight the crucial role that GEF is playing as financial mechanism of the convention. Within the GEF, Switzerland has always strongly supported an approach that ensures that the GEF is an adequate financial mechanism for chemicals policy and especially POPs-implementing activities of developing countries and countries in transition. I would like to assure you that we will continue our efforts in this regard.

We also would like to imply more the private sector in the implementation of the convention, because on one side the private sector bares part of the responsibility of the dissemination of POPs and on the other side it possesses the knowledge and the capacity to eliminate the existing POPs and to avoid the creation of new POPs. We call for partnerships with the private sector for the transfer of knowledge, BATs and BEPs and for the financial support of the Convention and the regional centers.

Thank you for your attention.