

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The chemical industry plays an important part in Israel's economy. As such, safe use and regulation of chemicals is an essential component of Israel's environmental policy.

The management of chemicals in Israel is carried out through a strict permit regime that oversees and regulates facilities that produce or use hazardous materials. Both business licenses and hazardous substance permits manage the production, processing, importation, transportation, storage, and disposal of chemicals.

Such stringent requirements reflect Israel's policy that chemicals must be dealt with through a "cradle to the grave" approach.

In Israel, separate registration systems exist for pesticides and biocides which require the submission of relevant information, such as toxicological files, on the impact of the material in question on human beings, on the environment, as well as on flora and fauna.

In order to strengthen controls of the licensing of industrial chemicals, a new mechanism is being developed and will be introduced in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

While regulation and prevention remain Israel's highest priorities, preparedness for chemical emergencies also stands as a pillar of Israel's policy towards chemicals.

In this context, the Ministry of Environmental Protection established an Information and Response Center for Hazardous Substances, which supplies information on a 24/7 basis.

Through such work, Israel has accumulated a great deal of knowledge on the prevention, preparedness and response to incidents involving hazardous chemicals.

Such experience guided the establishment of an integrated emergency master plan that aims principally to save lives, prevent and reduce risk to the population, and to minimize environmental damage.

The plan also delineates the responsibilities of government bodies and agencies, including the Ministry of Environmental Protection, as well as first responder units, such as police, paramedics, fire, and search and rescue services.

During a chemical emergency, the primary task of on-site professionals is to conduct a preliminary assessment of the accident and issue guidelines to the affected population.

Simultaneously, the Information and Response Center plays an essential role as it coordinates among the various response forces, collects data from the scene and from the Meteorological Service, performs risk assessment, and provides vital information to the public and the emergency services.

Mr. Chairman,

In line "the polluter pays" principle, chemical facilities are obliged to lead any clean-up efforts and environmental restoration in the aftermath of a chemical mishap.

In addition, chemical plants and facilities are charged with implementing risk reduction measures while maintaining "industrial plant files" that outline all relevant information necessary to prevent and treat accidents.

In addition, substantial resources have been allocated toward the implementation of Israel's integrated emergency master plan with special emphasis on training exercises and simulation techniques, as well as on the review of possible scenarios.

For these purposes, a special training center for hazardous substances was established by the Ministry of Environmental Protection to promote education and information among the different stakeholders.

Israel is proud to share its experience with others and engage in a fruitful dialogue on the important issues related to chemicals.

In this spirit, Israel invites all delegations to a side event on Friday at 1:15PM on prevention, preparedness and response to chemical accidents.

Thank you.