

**INTERVENTION BY UGANDA DURING THE THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS ON WASTE
MANAGEMENT, THURSDAY, 6TH MAY 2010**

Mr. Chairman,

I thank the panelists for their very enlightening presentations.

Mr. Chairman,

As a result of inefficient methods of consumption, waste management is becoming a nightmare for urban authorities in many developing countries. But the good news is that much of the waste is solid organic waste that decomposes quickly. However, before decomposition and absorption into the environment, usually the waste causes serious environmental and health problems.

New forms of chemical waste are also posing new management challenges in our urban centers. Plastic shopping bags are deceptively cheap and convenient to use but they have become very expensive to manage as a waste product.

In Uganda this is becoming unsustainable and posing serious environmental concerns for humans and animals as well as the soil. The solution is to ban the import as well as local production of those bags. We have found that providing alternatives and limiting consumption can be another way of saving on the cost of waste management.

Mr. Chairman,

After having listened to various presentations and statements yesterday and today, it is now clear that for many developing countries, lack of resources and infrastructure make the adoption of sustainable practices difficult to implement. Waste management in terms of reuse and recycling is a very expensive venture for urban authorities while recycling is a necessary component for the success of a waste management system. Establishment of recycling systems remains a big challenge owing to the relatively high cost of the initial set-up and maintenance. However, having the establishment in place is not always a guarantee. For example, urban water and sewage systems can be a source of serious public health hazards if not managed and maintained properly.

The other point is that much of the more difficult to manage waste in developing countries is actually waste products from developed countries that are passed over through imports of used products into developing countries. This is true for electrical and electronic products.

The export of these used products is actually an indirect way of waste management in those countries. This may be regarded as “*disguised waste transfer*”. The panelists may wish to give us their views if they think the solutions to this problem can be found in new international measures to regulate this type of disguised waste export? Perhaps the introduction of global trade in recyclable materials can also provide another opportunity for dealing with this problem in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude on a very positive note. In Uganda, efforts to transform abundant agricultural wastes into useful products by farmers, is a good example of best practices that can be shared. Agricultural wastes are treated using cheap methods and technology that are developed locally to turn the wastes into energy sources in the form of charcoal briquettes. These briquettes are then used for smoke-free and pollution-free cooking while at the same time reducing the need to cut down trees for firewood. This is environmentally clean and can be sustainable in most developing countries.

I thank you.