

CSD19 IPM

**Statement by Australia during the thematic discussion on Chemicals
(1 March 2011)**

Thank you Mr Chairman

As we have heard, chemicals management is an area of increasing international concern and activity, and Australia welcomes its inclusion on the agenda for CSD 19.

Australia is conscious of the issues raised in the Secretary General's report, and the need for continued international efforts to address these challenges.

Australia is actively engaged in a range of United Nations chemicals agreements, including as a Party to the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Waigani Conventions, and the Montreal Protocol, and as a participant in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Australia will continue to participate actively in these fora, and supports continued and strengthened cooperation and coordination of existing efforts.

A common objective of these agreements is to improve the management of chemicals, particularly in developing countries – a priority that is highlighted in the Secretary General's report, and one that we also support.

Australia has demonstrated its commitment to this objective, particularly through work in the Pacific region. Australia has invested significantly in the collection of hazardous chemicals from countries in the region and ensuring their environmentally sound disposal as part of our efforts under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. We are also providing support through SAICM for Pacific Island countries to improve their chemicals management.

The scope of work being undertaken on chemicals issues through the United Nations Environment Programme is increasing. An example is the listing of nine new chemicals in the Stockholm Convention in May 2009 and the UNEP

Governing Council's decision in February 2009 to initiate negotiations on a new legally binding instrument on mercury.

As a number of countries have mentioned, some of the chemicals-related outcomes of the UNEP Governing Council held last week are relevant to our discussion today, and to the text of the Resource Paper prepared by the Bureau, and distributed yesterday. In particular, a process to identify further financing options within the chemicals and wastes cluster will support strengthening of the implementation framework and enabling environment. In addition, a country-driven consultation process to consider further and stronger cooperation on chemicals and waste is relevant to the call for an examination of broader chemical legal instruments and the development of international structures for chemicals management after 2020.

Mr Chairman, Australia supported an expanded mandate for chemicals management during the fifth replenishment negotiations of the Global Environmental Facility. We are pleased that the GEF is now supporting mercury related activities ahead of completion of negotiations on a legally binding instrument on mercury.

Australia continues to support a risk assessment based approach to chemicals management grounded in sound science. Australia supports the adoption of approaches to chemicals management that take into account the full life cycle from production, through use, and to disposal. As highlighted in the Secretary General's report, this is critical to ensuring a comprehensive approach that addresses all risks.

Australia looks forward to continuing to contribute to the international community's efforts to improve chemicals management around the world.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.