

ROUNDTABLE: **Strategies for sustainable chemicals and waste management**

Australian Statement – 13 May 2010

Thank you Chairman and thank you to the Panel members for the stimulating set of presentations.

Australia is actively engaged in international efforts to address chemical and waste management issues. We recognize the strong linkages between these two themes and believe there is significant potential to pursue strategies that build on the linkages to generate coherent programs of action at local, regional and international levels.

At the national level we have adopted a new national waste policy and are in the process of reforming our approach to chemicals management with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our regulatory framework with a particular focus on achieving better governance whilst reducing red-tape.

Over the last nine days we have heard a wide range of ideas, policies and programs being implemented in many countries around the world – these experiences are a potent resource which we must draw upon if we are to effectively address chemical and waste management issues. I wanted to highlight five strategies that we think have potential:

1. comprehensive governance including national and local regulatory frameworks on both chemical and waste management as well as appropriate compliance and enforcement regimes;
2. investment in research and development and drawing on the experience of others to generate appropriate, fit for purpose waste and chemical management regimes;
3. transfer of appropriate technologies and know-how (especially region relevant technology) for chemical management and waste treatment, including recycling, re-use and disposal;
4. building capacity and providing policy makers with innovative financing tools and other economic instruments; and
5. ongoing early identification and assessment, across the life-cycle of emerging chemical and waste risks, including electronic waste, plastics, used oils and new chemical streams.

Mr Chairman

I also want to make two observations where cooperation is promoting better outcomes:

In relation to chemicals management we fully support the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). An important outcome of the strategic approach should be the minimization of duplication by taking account of existing areas of activity and identification of synergies in building programs of work.

A common objective of these agreements is to improve the management of chemicals, particularly in developing countries.

Secondly, Australia has been working in the South Pacific region in partnership with twelve countries to address a range of chemical and waste management initiatives. Our experience from these initiatives is that regional partnerships are a good strategy to enhance practical implementation. These partnerships have promoted:

- Education and training;
- Information exchange;
- Capacity building; and
- Identification of relevant best practice approaches (including regulatory and governance activities).

Australia believes that pursuing these strategies, with the objective of embedding action within mainstream development plans, will be crucial factor in achieving sustainable development in the area of chemical and waste management.