GENEVA (3 May 2023, 5:00 PM)

**Statement to the RC COP Plenary, Agenda item 5:**

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor. I speak on behalf of the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights.

The Special Rapporteur, along with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to water and the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, released a written statement in support of the proposal by Australia, Switzerland, and co-sponsored by other Parties, to add a new Annex VIII to the Convention.

This proposed amendment would restore and strengthen the science-policy interface mechanism of the Convention.

For too many years, a small number of States Parties have disregarded the recommendations of the Chemical Review Committee and blocked the listing of hazardous chemicals in Annex III. This has weakened the ability of the Convention to fulfill its core purpose.

The breakdown of the science-policy interface mechanism in the Rotterdam Convention undermines the realization of the human right to science. This fundamental right requires alignment of regulatory measures with the best available scientific evidence.

The breakdown of the science-policy interface also impairs the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This right has been firmly recognized by the UN General Assembly just last year, with no country voting against it.

The proposed new Annex VIII would allow a greater number of states to benefit from the Prior Informed Consent procedure of the Convention. This procedure promotes the right to information by facilitating informed decision-making in the international trade of hazardous chemicals. It further empowers States Parties to take measures for the sound management of hazardous industrial chemicals and pesticides.

The Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights welcomes the efforts of the amendment sponsors to strengthen the Rotterdam Convention and encourages the Conference of the Parties to adopt it.

Thank you.