



Statement of Hon. Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy, Sri Lanka

Distinguish Delegates, Member of international Organizations and colleagues,

I use this opportunity to thank the government of Switzerland and its people for hosting such an important global event in this beautiful country while giving all necessary facilities for each and every delegate. I also congratulate the secretariat for successfully organizing the conference of parties.

We welcome the newly developed synergy among Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam conventions. As a signatory to all three conventions, I am proud to say that Sri Lanka has taken up the challenge of complying with all three conventions to the best of our ability.

Under the Stockholm convention we have submitted the first National Implementation Plan to the secretariat in 2008. We have already taken necessary steps to upgrade the National Implementation Plan to include the 10 chemicals recently introduced by the convention. We take this opportunity to thank UNIDO and GEF for providing us the necessary expertise and funding for this exercise. In the year 2012, we banned the use of Lindane in the country. We have submitted a proposal to GEF for the environmentally sound management of PCB in the country.

We have set up a National Coordination Committee in the country to fulfil the requirements stated in the Basel convention. We have implemented the necessary legal measures to regulate the chemicals under the conventions in order to control their entry into the country. Sri Lanka has organized several national campaigns to collect e-waste. Our belief is that this is not enough to address this problem. I think this is a common phenomenon of most of developing countries. Therefore, I would like to stress that partnership of private sector, NGO and governments at local, regional and global level is a must if we want to address this problem correctly.

Sri Lanka has duly informed the convention secretariat the final regulatory decision for all pesticides stated in the annex iii of the Rotterdam convention. A country project on severely hazardous pesticides is being conducted with the financial support from the convention and we are hoping the results of this will lead to the betterment of the health of the farming community and the environment. We have also banned the use of any Paraquat formulation in Sri Lanka from 2010 and support the proposal for listing of this pesticide in the annex iii of the convention.

Even though it is not directly related to the interest of the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel conventions, I would like to inform you that Sri Lanka has already taken initial steps to regulate the use of Mercury in the country. The use of Mercury containing instruments is banned in the education sector of the country and steps have taken to phase out the Mercury containing instruments from the health sector. We are also participating in the meetings of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the proposed Minamata convention and hope to comply with the conditions of this convention also.

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Today we are living in a world that is aggressively progressing towards development. New chemicals and products are introduced day by day to make our life easy and to make us happy. But we should not forget about the side effects of those chemicals and products on all living organisms including humans and the environment. We believe that as global citizens we should get together to address the challenges we face irrespective of the cultural, economical and political differences among us. In such an attempt Sri Lanka is always ready to cooperate with the global community.

Thank you very much.