

FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009

Agenda item 7. Waste

Intervention by the Eco-Accord (Russia)¹

A. What strategies could countries apply to address problems related to growing volume of waste such as e-waste, energy and material efficiency problems and related pollution?

Greater waste reduction and diversion could be achieved by:

- Landfill bans of recyclable materials;
- Landfill disposal levies, penalties, certification, etc. ;
- Green procurement to drive markets for recycled materials;
- Waste reduction programs at the source level with specific target to be achieved;
- Promotion the development of special programs focused on - collection of hazardous municipal waste such as single use batteries or mercury contained lamps, paints, etc..

Cost-effective substitutes are not yet available for some mercury-containing products such as fluorescent light bulbs which are in great demand due to energy saving and energy efficiency needs. Growing amounts of used and broken bulbs is a big problem in developing countries and economies in transition where there is no proper system of waste diversion and waste collection. Used and broken bulbs are stored at schools, day cares or are disposed at landfills as solid waste. According to preliminary estimation an average school can keep up to 1,5-3 thousand used or broken bulbs in its basement.

C. What is the most effective way of changing perceptions about waste in business and civil society?

Recycling of POPs waste

Two commercial mixtures of brominated flame retardants, known as pentaBDE and octaBDE, were added to the Stockholm Convention on POPs at its last Conference of Parties in May, 2009. Under the Stockholm treaty wastes that contain POPs cannot be recovered, recycled, reclaimed or directly reused. The listing of pentaBDE and octaBDE was accompanied by an exemption that will allow their recycling to continue until as long as 2030.

The results of this decision, will for example permit foam in furniture containing 18% pentaBDE to be chopped up, used as backing in new carpets, and returned to our homes where exposure will continue.

One more issue we would like to emphasize is the issue of obsolete pesticides stockpiles which are toxic wastes containing POPs. Inadequate awareness of health hazards of obsolete pesticides,

¹ On behalf of the women major group. The text is presented as received from the author.

poor quality of storage facilities, unprotected storages in developing countries and economies in transition - all these factors result in a situation when local residents illegally apply unidentifiable mixtures of obsolete pesticides at their private land plots. As a result, pesticide pollution of food products and environmental media continues, causing adverse health impacts. In some countries, banned and obsolete pesticides are sold at the local markets by women and children. Urgent measures should be undertaken to stop this illegal waste use even though it could be costly.

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