Intervention by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
21st Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, 5. April 2017
Thematic session on Public Participation in International Forums

Subject : Public participation in international processes related to Chemical Management
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Dear Colleagues,

I want to discuss the opportunities to reinforce the use of Aarhus principles in the context of a number of international & global processes related to one of the main factor of environmental health impacts, namely, the sound management of chemicals.

SAICM – the Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management - is an international multi stakeholders and multi sectorial process bringing together the health and environmental sectors to ensure that negative impacts of all chemicals throughout their life cycle are minimized by 2020. Because this objective will not be met, SAICM stakeholders have launched a process to reframe and define an appropriate global framework for the sound management of chemicals management beyond 2020.

This process provides a unique opportunity to infuse the Aarhus principles and good practices into the main global instrument bringing health and environmental sectors together for the sound management chemicals.

Similarly, in the context of the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (each dealing with specific health and environmental impacts of chemicals and whose COP will take place at the end of the month just across the street from the Palais des Nations), a number of key topics under discussion would greatly benefit from being infused with the principles of the Aarhus convention. The topics include the possibility for NGOs to raise issues before the compliance committees of these conventions as well as the role of observers in the enforcement and implementation of these instruments.

According to WHO, non communicable diseases, often arising as a result of the exposure to hundreds of toxic chemical substances, kill approximately 38 millions people /year.

These processes present a unique opportunity for Aarhus parties to share their experiences and good practices at the global level and have a positive influence on these critical processes.

In that regards, we would like to :

- Invite all Aarhus Parties to consider how to infuse each of these processes with the Aarhus Convention principles as a way to make them more efficient in protecting human health and the Environment from the negative impacts of toxic chemicals ;

- Encourage informal discussion of this topic in the context of the MOP in September;
Recommend that the opportunities to promote the Aarhus principles in the chemical management processes be specifically discussed during one of the events dedicated to PPIF to be organized during the next intercessional process.