

**The Speech H.E. Minister Maged George Elias,
Egyptians Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs**

- **Mrs. Fatoumata Kita Owani, representative of the United Nation Environmental Program.**
- **Dr. David Pier, representative of the Global Environmental Facility.**
- **Mrs. Gabriella Ester Lou, representative of the Swiss Agency for the Environment Forests and Lands.**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

First, I would like to thank the UNEP, the GEF, the Swiss Agency for the environment, Forests and Lands, all the Arab participants attending today and all the guests from different ministries and competent authorities, Thank you all for your participation in our "Regional workshop on the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and Synergies with other chemical related Agreements" This workshop represents our hopes to achieve the goal of Article 23 of the implementation plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 to use chemicals in away that guarantees the reduction of hazardous effects on human health and the environment. This ultimate goal is to be achieved through co-operation among all national , regional, and international organization and authorities enhanced by technical and financial support from the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Lands. In this sense, we all have great aspirations for. involvement of concerned authorities on national regional and international levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Rio de Janeiro announcement that was issued by the first world summit in Brazil in 1992 is considered to be corner stone in the environment development relationship. By the time the Second world Summit of Johannesburg was held in 2002, many perceptions had changed and developed to specify sustainable development as part and parcel of the environmental protection system on all levels. Consequently, there was a need to take legal measures, on the international level, to reach a compromise between sustainable development and environmental protection with regard to the reduction of poverty.

Ladies and gentlemen , it is a fact that industrial chemicals and pesticides are essential elements in the process of developing national economy as they contribute effectively to removing obstacles to development and also to the reduction of poverty. However, the use of those substances throughout their life cycle is associated with a variety of risks to human health and the environment. Therefore, the real challenge facing the international community is the necessity to balance the use of chemical needed for development and the protection of environment for future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the integrated management of chemicals for the purpose of achieving sustainable development by 2020 requires co-ordinating efforts to implement concerned environmental agreements through the "Strategic Approach on International Chemicals Management" (SAICM). The second meeting of the preparatory Committee on (SAICM) that was held in Nairobi last year during the

period from 4-8 October 2004 ended with positive resulting. We are strongly involved in these meeting and are awaiting for the third meeting due to be held next September.

The main points of concern during the coming stage include:

- 1) Identification of present problems and setting priorities.
- 2) Assessment and analysis of these problems and their causes.
- 3) Finding the best viable and practical solutions, taking the effects on Social and economic conditions into consideration.
- 4) Providing technical and financial support.
- 5) Measurement of monitoring, assessment and guidance process.

Lately, different national authorities and organizations and funding states have effectively participated in supporting environmental protection at international level, searching for technical solutions, through profound, integrated studies to protect the environment from different polluting sources. All these efforts together represent co-ordinated , global work aiming to face all environmental challenges at present.

The linkage between environment at national the level on the one hand and at the regional and international levels on the other is defining strong as each affects and is affected by the other. Moreover, this linkage plays a vital role in creating a coherent framework for man's activities to keep the environment safe and sound for a better, and prosperous future for humanity.

Ladies and gentlemen: In the framework of co-operation at the regional level, we had our meeting with different Arab states on which we discussed mechanisms and plans for sustainable development as well as the role of civil society associations in carrying out this initiative, that is considered to be a basis for establishing the environmental action system and aims at realizing economic development. We also discussed participation in a workshop on building capacities in co-operation with the United Nations Sustainable Development Department to exchange information about the regional and international experiments in the field of sustainable development and the establishment of infrastructure.

Ladies and gentlemen, In the framework of this workshop on the implementation of Stockholm Convention and synergies with other related agreements, the Stockholm convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants specifies the requirements needed to reduce / eliminate the production and use of industrial chemicals and pesticides under the convention (10 substances). The convention also specifies obligations related to the import and export of these substances and the reduction of unintentionally produced substances, i.e, Dioxins and Furans.

It is the objective of the Rotterdam Convention to support mutual responsibility and to enhance cooperative efforts among member states in the international trade on certain hazardous chemicals for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment from the hazards of these substances and contributing to their environmentally sound use through exchanging information on them. In other words, the Convention provides an "early alarm system" to help states to increase protection against illegal traffic in banned hazardous chemicals in the international trade. It also aims at integrating other agreements in the life cycle of chemicals management.

While the Rotterdam Convention focuses on international trade and not on the production of the substances in question, the Stockholm Convention is concerned with the production, export and monitoring of persistent organic pollutants. In the framework of the national effects to implement both convention it is necessary to take all the related obligations and procedures into consideration in an integrated manner to avoid repetition of work.

Concerning the Basel Convention on the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal, it specifies the obligations related to the boundary movement of hazardous wastes. The three mentioned Conventions are all taken into account when working out the national strategy for hazardous chemicals and wastes.

But in order to implement and fulfill the obligations of these conventions, it is necessary to build the capacities of developing countries that face incredibly limited financial resources. Therefore, providing technical and financial support is needed to carry out the related agreements, Being basic elements in the process of transparency and participation of the civil society are basic elements in the process of implementing laws and related conventions, they were taken into consideration by the national committee and the National Implementation Plan Project to be integrated in all concerned activities.

Realizing the importance of environmental protection, the A. R. E. represented by the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs and other competent authorities, has introduced some measures for implementation taking strategic planning into account as a basic method for the integrated management of chemicals and related environmentally agreements.

These measures include :

- Issuing environmental law 4/94, that includes a whole chapter on hazardous substances & wastes , and its executive regulations.
- Ratification on Basel Convention.
- Ratification on Stockholm Convention.
- Taking the necessary administrative steps to ratify on Rotterdam Convention.
- Ratification on Montreal Protocol.
- Establishing a ministerial committee related to international environmental agreements to meet periodically.
- Establishing the hazardous substances Management and Information System in Egypt with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. with a huge database of 5400 of chemical substances. This is updated every four months and is available to all ministries and competent authorities, including the Customs Authority.
- Establishing and implementing the Agricultural Pesticides Integrated Protection Program, that resulted in the reduction of the use of pesticides in Egypt from 26 thousand tons to 4.5 tons annually.
- Banning the use of 80 chlorinated pesticides since 1996.
- Establishing the strategy of "cleaner production" the sources of persistent organic pollutants release.
- Establishing a strategy to air quality.

- Commitment to the preparation of the National Implementation Plan on Persistent Organic Pollutants, in accordance with Article 7 of the convention.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the success achieved in preparing the NIP related to Stockholm Convention and other related work, we all meet together at the national, regional and international levels to assess our gained and exchanged experience as a preliminary completed stage moving toward a greater stage that is about to begin .

This greater stage is a pushing – forward power meant to achieve the objective of the implementation plan, in accordance with the recommendations of the world summit 2002. We are honored to be here working together by all means of success, keeping in mind an image of a prosperous future for our dear country, our Arab nation and the international community as a whole. We do believe in the necessity for communication, coordination and participation and in the right of future generations all over the world to have a new, clean environment .what is being achieved here of developed thinking clear vision and the national regional and international participation witness to the fact that the future would be God's willing much better than the present and the past.

Finally, I am confident that our discussions on this workshop would result in important recommendations that would lead to more development towards building the capacities of Arab nations in chemicals management, in accordance with related environmental conventions for a better future of sustainable development.