

BAN Intervention on the e-Waste Amendments

14th OEWG, Basel Convention, Geneva, June 26, 2024

Thank you Madame Co-chair. The Basel Action Network is thrilled to know that very soon we will see the entry into force of the new e-Waste amendments, formerly familiar to us as the Swiss-Ghana proposal. So far there is no indication that Parties will not accept these amendments in their entirety -- that is with the exception of one country.

We regret to report that Japan has indicated that it will refuse to accept these amendments for trade in certain e-wastes with certain other OECD countries. This position was made apparent when they refused to join the consensus at OECD to accept these new e-waste classifications of Basel as is the normal procedure. Japan's refusal left the OECD no choice but to leave the new classification Y49 out of the OECD agreement. OECD members that are Basel Parties of course are obliged to continue to follow the Basel Convention for trade in e-wastes of all kinds.

Despite the OECD failure to adopt the new amendments due to the action by Japan, for most of the world, the e-waste amendments will serve to better control and stem the tide of what has been a long-term onslaught of e-waste moving across the globe to developing countries for the two decades since BAN first documented the e-waste dumping crisis in Guiyu, China in 2002 and later in Africa and other regions of the world. Despite much progress over the years in curtailing illegal and unsustainable e-waste trade, the trade is unfortunately very much alive and is in fact accelerating to the global dumping hotspots which according to our investigations include Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Today there is a report of more than 100 of containers of illegal e-waste exported from the United States, and just apprehended by the Malaysian government after having been tipped off by BAN when we sent them an alert about these containers.

The new amendments cannot come a moment too soon. In closing, we remind delegates of our previous statement, that with the entry into force of the e-waste amendments we now have but one remaining loophole placed in the e-waste technical guidelines as paragraph 32b that allows e-waste to be easily exported simply by making a claim of repairability. We fear that the advance of the e-waste amendments will be accompanied by a surge in traders making use of this last remaining avenue available for global e-waste dumping. Needless to say, our next task must be to correct this mistake in the Technical Guideline and close this final loophole. We thank you.

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