

BAN Intervention on the Norwegian Proposal to Change the Listings for Plastic Wastes

September 4, 2018. Thank you, co-chair and distinguished delegates.

We find ourselves very much in the throes of a global plastic waste crisis and discussions rage about what it is we can do. The Basel Convention has within its unique mandate the regulation of trade in hazardous and other wastes with a view to minimizing it. And, it has within its mandate the obligation to minimize the generation of hazardous and other wastes. With but the political will, and a small amount of adjusting Annexes, the Basel Convention can be pivotal in beginning to address this issue and do so in a matter of months.

The Norwegian proposal will do just that. It is a modest but very effective first step. It will not halt the sustainable trade in plastic scrap. But will remove solid plastic waste from Annex IX and place these wastes on Annex II. This firmly places plastic scrap within the framework of the Convention and its prior informed consent regime. It does this without wasting time discussing whether it is hazardous or not. The Prior Informed Consent Procedure will provide much needed transparency on trade flows and give countries the right to halt shipments on case by case and a multilateral basis. They can then monitor the trade and stop that which is unwanted or unsustainable.

Distinguished delegates, it is one thing to express grave concern for a problem and attend numerous conferences and meetings about the problem. It is quite another to act on the mandate given to us by the Basel Convention -- and actually do something about it.

The Basel Convention awaits being put into the service of humankind and all life increasingly adversely impacted by plastic pollution. The only remaining question is whether we have the political will to walk our talk and not just talk and talk and talk. Let us show the world that this political will does indeed exist.

BAN, CIEL, GAIA and the #BreakFreeFromPlastics Movement will be holding a side event tomorrow night to further discuss this important matter. We welcome your attention.

Thank You.