

Final Intervention / BAN on behalf of the NGOs at COP10

On behalf of all NGOs including Greenpeace, Basel Action Network, International POPs Elimination Network, the Center For International Environmental Law, and the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, I would like to say a few words.

Ladies and Gentleman, this week has been historic. This week in Cartagena is a turning point for the Basel Convention. First, we have at last succeeded in allowing the most important decision of the Convention – the Basel Ban Amendment to be liberated and to come into force quite at an early date. Very special thanks go to Indonesia and Switzerland for their tireless and miraculous diplomacy to bring this about. We also want to thank those countries that have had difficulties with the Ban in the past and yet have set aside their concerns for the greater environmental good here on planet earth.

By our calculations 17 more Parties from those countries that were Parties during COP3 are needed to bring entry into force. We expect that with resolve we can do this in just two to three years. We urge those Parties and indeed all Parties that have not yet done so, regardless of when you became Parties, to commit to return home with the intent to work diligently and relentlessly to ensure that your country is added to the growing list of 71 countries that have achieved this landmark on the homefront.

We are also thrilled to note that it was at this meeting that many Parties, particularly those from developing countries, as well as legal experts in attendance, affirmed that the Basel Convention has its unique and vital competency on the issue of shipbreaking -- as it is the only instrument that can prevent a disproportionate burdening of developing countries with shipborne hazardous wastes. Basel's role in this issue has been reinstated and can now be reinvigorated. Both the Basel Convention and the Hong Kong Convention have a role to play and indeed both need to be improved. We cannot in good conscience be complacent on this issue which is at the peak of its urgency with toxic ship disposal rates at an all time high, and workers continuing to die every month on the beaches of South Asia.

Finally, we are overjoyed with the *true* paradigm shift that has been signaled by the Cartagena Declaration on Waste Minimization and Prevention. The true paradigm shift is one that sees hazardous waste as an *unnecessary* evil that we can respond to most usefully by not producing it in the first place. Now that we have liberated the Basel Ban we know now that the Convention can finally turn the corner and begin to seek to make this a Convention primarily about eliminating all hazardous waste through hazardous material substitution, Green Design and Clean Production, rather than being one that concerns itself primarily with the thankless task of controlling its movement and disposal. At this meeting we have not only set the pathway through the Cartagena Declaration but have set the path in an operational way by virtue of a new key objective in the 10 year Strategic Framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen. At the outset of this meeting I asked you all to think long and hard about why you all came to this fair city. I asked you to consider the words of Dr. Frank Pearl, the new Environment Minister of our host – Colombia when he reminded that the next generation will at some point come knocking at our door. Distinguished delegates, we exalt in the fact that you have taken this question to heart. We have heard the knock, we have opened the door, we have looked into the faces and eyes of our future progeny and we have answered their plea. And for this we all must be proud.

In closing we would like to express our most heartfelt and appreciative “thank you” to the host country of Colombia. We have never seen a meeting run better and we have never seen a meeting achieve so much.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Parties, Signatories and Others, It is a new day at the Basel Convention, we should all be very proud. Thank you,