

STC Major Group Intervention on Ministerial Roundtable 3

Chemicals and Waste Management

May 12<sup>th</sup> 2011 – 15:00 to 18:00 hs

With reference to Chemicals, the Scientific and Technological Community considers that the development and use of safe, environmentally benign substances -in replacement of more hazardous ones- should be enhanced. Governments and industry should encourage this “green chemistry” through increased research, education and incentives.

There is a great need to increase international cooperation in the development and transfer of technology for safe chemical substitutes, and in capacity building for their production. We have already detailed practical measures to be taken at the international level in our intervention of yesterday. At the national level, priority areas for action should address aspects like:

- strengthening national legislation, with international cooperation and training, on enforcement and compliance;
- integrating chemical management into national development priorities and budgets, and
- establishing mechanisms for inter-sectoral cooperation with other countries.

Regarding Waste Management, stakeholders should enhance significantly their efforts in maximizing the “3Rs” of waste management, having -as an ultimate goal- a zero waste economy of closed material and nutrient cycles. Policies and measures must include:

- the setting up and operation by national and city governments of “integrated sustainable waste management systems”;
- the extension of responsibility and accountability to waste producers, and
- the application of special care to the management of hazardous wastes.

Poorly designed and maintained landfills represent an ongoing challenge, even in developed countries. Seepage of effluent, sometimes into water courses, and the escape of greenhouse gases -such as methane- are surmountable technical problems that can be addressed with known and available technologies.

(Jorge Spitalnik, WFEO)