

Intervention by European Eco Forum
Sascha Gabizon Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

Session 6: Future of the Process

We, the environmental NGOs, first of all want to thank the organisers in particular WHO, for this conference and for the opportunity that the NGOs could fully participate. Secondly, we welcome the ministerial declaration. Especially because the declaration sets 5 clear targets, on eliminating indoor air pollution, hazardous chemicals, water pollution, and improve hygiene and sanitation in children's settings, such as schools in the coming 5 to 10 years. This will allow member states to take concrete measures, which will make a real difference for children's environmental health.

We also welcome that the declaration states that asbestos is carcinogenic and the member states commit to national plans for the elimination of asbestos-related diseases by 2015. This is the first step which these countries that have not yet banned asbestos need to take.

However, we would have liked to see an even stronger commitment. Thousands of people will die a painful death whilst countries wait with phasing-out of chrysotile asbestos.

And there are other serious problems which need to be addressed, uranium mining tailings which are polluting water sources, obsolete POPs pesticide stocks, and as NGOs we are willing to help implement practical solutions, but also call on the international community to provide support and funding to make real progress.

Finally, we environmental NGOs commit to support and contribute to this process, through the new taskforce, whilst the Environment and Health process move higher onto the political agenda of member states.