Good afternoon everybody,

my name is Sascha Gabizon, of Women in Europe for a Common Future, and representing the environmental NGOs in this process, both our networks represent more than 300 NGOs. Our position paper is available on the tables over there in Russian and English..

In my introduction I would like to address 2 questions which we have been asked for this session 1) **lessons from** cooperation amongst sectors and with civil society and 2) **have sufficient actions been** taken to implement the Parma declaration

We will start with a short video message from one of our partner projects with the NGO Kaws in the Isikyl region of Kyrgyzstan

Q) lessons learned from projects like these in the video

I want to stress the importance of best practices like these, the Parma commitments are about sharing and scaling up these best practices, and a lot , really a lot of very positive achievements have resulted from this Environment & Health Process.

But more is needed. What lessons?

The solutions are there, and they are affordable. An efficient stove as off 50 Euro, a safe toilet building as off 500 euro, a home Solar collector as off 200 Euro – you see them here in Haifa on all the roofs. It's an obligation by law to safe energy I understand.

But the current means and channels of funding sustainable development in rural areas are inadequate, the development banks are not the right vehicles, nor are the large international corporations, - we need to build on cooperatives and local authorities and NGOs.

The film also talks about energy efficient stoves, which reduce firewood and burning of waste in doors by often 30 to 50%

- as we heard from UNECE, outdoor and indoor air pollution kills more than 7 million people p/y – it's on the increase – China Central Bank est. 330 billion euro **annually** to address costs of air pollution, 3% of their GDP

- **Monitoring of pollution in e.g. Poland** show that main concern in colder climates are **not only industry emissions**, but also **households, burning cheap coals and WASTE** – plastics !

- Our Kyz projects show that w**ith minor investments in efficient stoves, insulation and solar heating,** great increases of **wellbeing** can be achieved, - warmer houses, schools – and **reduced indoor** and outdoor air pollution.

- **Problem, there are no large-scale investment programs** for the household level

- **With some exceptions e.g. in Georgia** the government is working with our NGO network and we have **proposed to donors and investors a NAMA** (National Appropriate Mitigation Action under the Climate Convention) to **install 10,000 energy efficient stoves and 10,000 solar collectors** – like the ones you saw in the movie, and you see here on the rooftops of Haifa. But, the NAMA still unfunded.

- the economics are clearly overwhelming, very little invest, great return and benefit for health – but a**s we learn from these actions, it's is very very diff to get funding to the rural and domestic level.**

We need a recommendation from this conference to the 6th Ministerial conference to **ensure ministries of finance commit to working with the min. of health and environment** to ensure local investment in environmental health solutions to rural and household levels.

The 2nd Q) Have activities called for in Parma been sufficiently implemented? I will look specifically at the Parma commitments relating to addressing hazardous chemicals, asbestos, and EDCs – hormone disrupting chemicals.

On Asbestos:
have the activities being called for been sufficient?

Very very good work by WHO on capacity building on health and chrysotile asbestos was done in many countries these last year, and **some of our experts have** contributed to awareness raising on asbestos and health – our partners also demonstrated alternative non-asbestos building materials - locally produced, good quality and low cost

But… we **continue to see far too much use of new asbestos in building** sector in the Eastern European region – and al**most not control on what is done with asbestos waste** – in many of our projects we see children playing around with waste pieces of asbestos laying around in playgrounds and home yards

Lesson: WHO and all countries to **scale-up and speed up** capacity building on asbestos risk, awareness of home owners and consumers, national programs on elimination of asbestos related diseases, and support for dealing with asbestos waste, and add chrysotile to the PIC list so that governments at least are a aware when some company imports asbestos,-- if no data on this, then in the dark

on nanotechnology :
have the activities being called for been sufficient?
NO.
More and more nanotechnology is being applied, nanomaterials are being used in consumer products including food products and cosmetics, **also in baby food and products**, such as nano dioxide and nano silica.

Scientists admit that there is a **growing knowledge gap** .
We don't **know the health and environment effects** of the majority of the nano-applications in products and in production processes/
The **public has almost no information** about possible health risks **. Labelling is** almost non-existent.
For **very vulnerable groups of pregnant** women and children, we cannot make informed choices.

Lessons: need regulatory measures to prevent harm and to apply the precautionary duties of authorities and industries when there is still so much uncertainty about the risks. Particularly for preventive protection during pregnancy and early childhood
WHO needs to provide support.

On EDCs
A preventive regulatory framework is still lacking although use of EDC chemicals in consumer products has increased steeply during the last decennia, as is the evidence of risks of reproductive disorders and cancers, breast cancer, prostate cancer, but also disorders such as obesitas and diabetes. Especially exposure of children is shown to be very problematic.

Lesson learned: we need to speed up Parma commitments, and take immediate measures to avoid exposure of children to hormone disrupting chemicals, which means also protecting women from exposure before and during pregnancy, as they chemicals are transferred from mother to child. We are glad that Israel has also mentioned this as a priority in their opening speech, and propose that this meeting calls :

- on WHO to update its state of science report on EDCs
- launch a specific program to inform pregnant women & new parents on EDCs through health professionals

We suggest the **member states and WHO take one specific action** till the 6th ministerial conference, and that is **immediate protection from EDCs of new born children in hospitals**. As many of you know, hospitals use enormous **amounts of PVC** in medical devices, tubes and bags. This PCV in great majority contains EDC phthalates and bisphenol-A. Early born babies get these EDCs in their body, as they leach out of the PVC plastic.

More and more hospitals want to avoid these EDCs, but their purchasing rules often due not allow them to buy the PVC-free alternatives, which are sometimes a few cents more expensive. Therefore, we call on WHO to make this a priority in their "environmentally sustainable health system" program.

The **European Commission's Scientific Committee on new and emerging Health Risks** (Scenhir) has published a report in which they say this is indeed a real risk for these babies in neonatal intensive care, as they are exposed up to 3000 nano-gram of

BPA per kilo bodyweight per day.

Today, our partner NOG HCWH Health Care Without Harm published a new report: 'Towards toxic free medical devices'.

And WECF and HCWH brought out a **press release today**, and are sending a letter to the Minister of Health, to call for a specific action to eliminate EDCs in neo-natal departments of hospitals.

Highest priority needs to be given to substitute EDCs in medical devices for premature born babies in intensive care and patients on dialysis. BPA exposure of babies in intensive care is according to the recent SCENIHR opinion report too high, in relation to the EFSA safety norm of 0.4 microgram p Kg bodyweight. This means that these babies run a great risk of health effects later in life. Substitution with safer alternative is already possible as the new report on alternatives for BPA and phthalates by HCWH shows.

Give info from the PR by HCWH on this new report: 'Towards toxic free medical devices'.

2nd session

I just want to say a word for the civil society organisations present here, from HEAL, EcoForum and WECF, representing the health and environmental NGOs in this process – since it very early days, including at the ministerial conferences in Budapest and Parma.

Our networks representing over 200 organisations working on environment and health in the region, wish that the meeting will come with strong conclusions and recommendations for the accelerated implementation of the Parma declaration.