

**Statement by Mr. Michel Amand, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Releases and Transfer Registers**

**”GET YOUR RIGHT TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY”  
SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE PROTOCOL ON POLLUTANT RELEASE AND TRANSFER  
REGISTERS FOR COUNTRIES IN EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA  
3-4 NOVEMBER 2011**

- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I am pleased that I can be present as Chair of this two-day sub regional Workshop, which aims to promote the implementation and ratification of the Pollutant Release Transfer Registers (PRTR) Protocol in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).
- **The main objectives of the workshop are to:**
  - i) Improve knowledge of legal, institutional and technical requirements for introducing PRTRs;
  - ii) Identify key players for introducing PRTRs in your countries;
  - iii) Identify technical and capacity building specific needs
- Achievement of these objectives is expected to create a favourable political environment to foster the ratification and accession of the EECCA countries to the Protocol.
- **The Workshop will consist of seven sessions: Each session includes relevant presentation and time for questions and answers.**
- We encourage you to identify what challenges and needs are ahead; and to discuss those challenges, and suggested actions so that you can get support from experts and colleagues in finding possible ways to deal with implementing PRTRs in your countries.
- At the end of each day you will be assigned the task of preparing the conclusions in working groups.
- **The main outputs of the Workshop** will include background materials and presentations, and the report with a set of conclusions and recommendations. The outcomes of the workshop will provide a ground for identifying priority needs for future work in the countries concerned.
- After the workshop, you are encouraged to continue networking and acquiring profit from available resources in order to implement PRTRs and ratify or accede to the Protocol.

## About the Protocol

- The PRTR Protocol is the first legally binding tool for strengthening the public access to environmental data. So, the Protocol facilitates public participation in matters relating to the environment.
- Since the adoption of the Protocol, in 2003 in Kiev, it has been ratified by 27 Parties. The Protocol entered into force on 8 October 2009.
- When looking at our experience of the implementation of the Protocol, we can proudly say that it has become an important tool for strengthening environmental democracy in the UNECE region and throughout the world.
- The Protocol is an 'open' global treaty, which means it is open to all members States of the United Nations, irrespective of the fact that they have or not ratified the Aarhus Convention or are UNECE member States.
- I encourage other countries in their endeavours to become Party to the Protocol. At the same time that will support achieving the targets set in the Global Plan of Action of the Strategic Approach to the International Chemicals Management, which called for development of national PRTRs in all countries by 2015.
- In that sense, we must strive for the broadest possible promotion of the Protocol in as many countries as possible.
- As we applaud the accomplishments over the past nine years, we also acknowledge the implementation challenges ahead.
- For example, the process towards ratification or accession sometimes lacks either political will, or there is not enough technical capacity to develop a PRTR system.
- To facilitate such process, the ECE Guidance of Implementation of the Protocol on PRTR published in 2008 should be as soon as possible translated in national languages.
- Of course, sufficient funding is necessary to be able to further support PRTR development, especially in countries with economies in transition and developing countries.

- When looking for both national as well as international sources we have to have in our minds that resources devoted to the establishment of the register will very soon pay back, bringing multiple benefits for governments, the private sector and the public.
- Another value of the PRTR Protocol lays in its multi-stakeholder approach, which makes it a useful and effective tool in achieving goals in various areas of international environmental governance.
- It is important also that governments strive to develop compatible national PRTR systems where possible to enable synergies and cooperative approaches.
- **As part of our capacity building efforts, the event today has been organised at the decision of the Protocol's Bureau, by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Belarus, and I am very grateful for their excellent work and cooperation.**
- Ladies and Gentlemen, I am looking forward to the presentations and discussion and I wish you an interesting session!