



**EARTH's statement for the Ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor.

I am from Ecological Alert and Recovery – Thailand or EARTH, an NGO working with various communities affected by industrial pollution in Thailand, and a participating organization of the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN).

Chemical and waste pollution is a global crisis, but one that has a particular impact on local communities. Part of this is due to the lack of access to knowledge on chemicals at local levels. More often than not, the extent of local knowledge is that a nearby factory has released some dust, some foul smell, some strange-colored water. They may be stricken by sickness they cannot explain. When presented with scientific results containing terms like “Persistent Organic Pollutants”, “VOCs”, or “Heavy Metal”, alongside different measurement standards, they may be confused, rather than grasping the danger. Often, we find local authorities lack the knowledge to explain the dangers to them as well.

Lack of capacity to utilize scientific languages also mean locals cannot provide their valuable on-the-ground insights on environmental contamination to scientists and policy-makers. There is thus a disconnect between local communities and the scientific community that must be bridged.

Therefore, it is our hope that the panel's function on information sharing will include the dissemination of scientific knowledge to local communities. Vice versa, the collection of information should take into account local knowledge, indigenous knowledge, and citizen science efforts. The work of the Science Policy Panel should reflect democratization of science that aims to protect local communities by ensuring public participation and community right-to-know.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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