

THE PARIS APPEAL

International Declaration on diseases due to chemical pollution

I.

PREAMBLE

Recalling that, according to the *Constitution of the World Health Organization* (WHO) of 7 April 1948, Health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”,

Recalling the commitment to the universal principles of human rights, asserted in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 10 December 1948, and in the two International United Nations Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and specifically Article 12.1, which sets out the right for every human being to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Recalling the *Stockholm Declaration* of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment adopted 16 June 1972, stating that "Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being", and that the right to life itself is acknowledged as a fundamental human right,

Recalling the *Declaration of the Hague* on the environment signed by representatives of 24 countries on March 11, 1989, reasserting that remedies to be sought involve not only the fundamental duty to preserve the ecosystem, but also the right to live in dignity in a viable global environment, and the consequent duty of the community of nations vis-à-vis present and future generations to do whatever needs to be done to preserve the quality of the atmosphere,

Recalling that the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* signed on November 20, 1989, sets out in Article 6 that States Parties shall “recognize that every child has the inherent right to life” and shall “ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child” and in Article 24 that States Parties “recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment

of the highest attainable standard of health (...)" and "shall take appropriate measures (...) to combat disease (...) taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution”,

Recalling the *European Charter on Environment and Health* adopted 8 December 1989, according to which every individual is entitled to an environment conducive to the highest attainable level of health and well-being,

Recalling *Resolution 45/94, passed on 14 December 1990, by the General Assembly of the United Nations*, on the need to ensure a healthy environment for the well-being of individuals declaring that everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for his or her own health and well-being,

Recalling the *Convention on Biological Diversity* of 5 June 1992, stating in its Preamble that “where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat”,

Recalling that the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* of 13 June 1992, proclaims in Principle 1 that “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development (...) and are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature”, and in Principle 15 that “in order to protect the environment, the **precautionary approach** shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation”,

Recalling that, under Article 2 of Annex V of the *Ospar Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic*, signed on 22 September 1992, Contracting Parties shall fulfil their obligation and take “the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of human activities so as to safeguard human health...” with a view to eliminating the discharge, emission or loss of hazardous substances found in the marine environment by the year 2020,

Recalling that the consolidated version, dated October 2, 1997, of the *Treaty establishing the European Community* specifies in Article 174, regarding the environment, that Community policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following purposes: preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment, protecting human health, prudent and rational utilization of natural resources and promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems. In § 2, the same article makes it clear that Community policy on the environment shall be based on the **precautionary principle**, and Preventive Action Principle, on the Correction Principle, aiming at correcting, first and foremost, the sources of environmental degradation, as well as on the Polluter-pays Principle.

Recalling that the *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* with regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity of 29 January 2000, reasserts in its Preamble and Article 1 **the precautionary approach** contained in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, (...) taking into account risks to human health (...)",

Recalling that the *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)* of 22 May 2001, recognizes that "Persistent Organic Pollutants possess toxic properties, resist degradation, bioaccumulate and are transported through air, water and migratory species" and specifies, in Article 1, its objective, which is to "protect human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants",

Recalling that the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development of 4 September 2002, denounces the continuing loss of biodiversity, desertification, the adverse effects of climate change, more frequent and devastating natural disasters, and air, water and marine pollution (...)
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II. SCIENTIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

§1. **Whereas** the sanitary situation is deteriorating worldwide, and considering that this deterioration, though different in nature, affects developing as well as industrialized countries,

§2. **Whereas** chronic diseases registered by WHO, especially cancers, are increasing alarmingly; whereas the global incidence of cancers is on the rise worldwide; whereas since 1950, the incidence of cancers among the populations of highly industrialized nations has increased steadily; whereas anyone, young or old, can be affected by cancer; whereas chemical pollution, the magnitude of which remains to be assessed, could largely contribute to the onset of cancer,

§3. **Whereas** exposure to some substances or chemicals cause a rise in the incidence of some congenital anomalies,

§4. **Whereas** infertility, and particularly male infertility - whether it be consecutive or not to congenital malformations or due to a decline in sperm quality and/or sperm counts – is on the rise, especially in highly industrialized areas; whereas, in some European countries, up to 15% of couples are now infertile, chemical pollution being one of the causes of infertility,

§5. **Aware of** the fact that human beings are now exposed to a widespread chemical/toxic pollution caused by multiple substances or chemicals; that this pollution affects human health; that these effects are often due to a poorly regulated marketing of chemicals, but also to inadequately controlled management and monitoring of production, consumer use and disposal of these chemicals,

§6. **Conscious of** the fact that these substances or chemicals are more and more numerous : Polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), organo-halogenated derivatives such as dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos, toxic metals including those qualified as hazardous heavy metals such as lead, mercury and cadmium, pesticides, food additives and others ; that some of these products resist degradation and are persistent in the environment; that many of these products contaminate the air, water, soil and food web ; that man is constantly exposed to persistent toxic substances or products, including Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) ; that,

among these substances or products, some bioaccumulate in living organisms, including the human body,

§7. **Whereas** most of these substances or products are currently being marketed without prior and sufficient toxicological testing and risk assessment for human health,

§8. **Whereas** these numerous chemical substances or products cause a widespread dispersed contamination throughout the environment ; whereas they interact with one another thus causing additional and/or synergic toxic effects in the environment and/or living organisms; whereas it is therefore extremely difficult to produce evidence, at the epidemiological level, of a direct link between exposure to one and/or the other of these chemical substances or products, and the development of these diseases,

§9. **Whereas**, regarding toxicology, a number of these substances or chemicals are hormone-disrupting chemicals (*endocrine disrupters*), that can be *carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction* (CMRs) for human beings, and therefore susceptible to induce cancers, congenital malformations and/or infertility; whereas some of these substances or products can be, among other effects, *allergenic* resulting in chronic respiratory diseases, such as asthma; whereas some are *neurotoxic* chemicals, leading to degenerative diseases of the central nervous system in adult population and to intellectual impairment in children; whereas some are *immunotoxic*, leading to immunodeficiency, particularly in children, causing infections, especially viral infections; whereas pesticides are deliberately spread in large amounts in the environment, while a great number are toxic chemical pollutants for animals and/or human beings and for the environment,

§10. **Whereas** children are the most vulnerable and exposed to contamination by these pollutants; whereas a great number of these substances or toxic products are transported across the placenta and can pass through to the foetus; whereas they accumulate in human adipose tissue and are then found in breast-feeding mothers' milk; therefore acknowledging that pollutants have already entered the child's system as from his/her birth; whereas, in addition, children can ingest and/or inhale these substances or products and/or inhale the air polluted by the same substances, especially in our homes,

§11. **Whereas** these polluting substances or products can induce diseases in children population, such as those listed in §9 ; whereas one out of seven children in Europe suffers from asthma, whereas asthma is made worse by city and home pollution; whereas incidence in pediatric cancers has been on the rise for the last 20 years in some industrialized countries; and whereas these considerations all lead to the fact that **Children are now in serious danger**,

§12. **Whereas** the human being is a mammal consubstantial with the surrounding flora and fauna, any irreversible destruction or pollution of which endangers his own life; whereas man is responsible for the disappearance of several thousand species each year,

§13. **Whereas** the 28 July 1999 *Wingspread Statement*, signed by 22 U.S. scientific experts and NGO's, establishes a causal link between extinct wildlife and domestic animals and contamination of the environment by some of these chemicals; whereas man is exposed to the same products as these domestic or wild animal species; whereas these products caused diseases in these animal species (congenital malformations, infertility) leading thus to their extinction and considering that these diseases parallel those now found in human beings,

§14. **Whereas** chemical pollution in all its forms has become one of the main causes of current human scourges such as cancers, infertility, congenital diseases, etc; whereas contemporary medicine is unable to halt them and, despite great advances in medical research, could well never be able to eradicate them,

§15. **Whereas**, moreover, pollution triggered by the atmospheric release of greenhouse gases leads unquestionably to a worsening of global warming and serious climatic disruption; whereas, according to the less pessimistic scientific forecasts, by 2100, the average temperature could well have risen by 3°, which will contribute to the development and proliferation of viruses, bacteria, parasites and vectors of these infectious agents; and considering that consequently, the spreading of their ecological niche from the southern to the northern hemisphere would be likely to cause the dispersion of the diseases they induce and the recurrence of infectious and/or parasitic diseases, which had been partially halted in the last century, or even the appearance of new diseases, in northern hemisphere nations.

III. DECLARATION

Based on these considerations, We, Scientists, Medical Doctors, Jurists, Ethicists and Citizens, convinced of the urgency and seriousness of the present situation, solemnly declare that :

Article 1

The development of numerous current diseases is a result of the deterioration of the environment.

Article 2

Chemical pollution represents a serious threat to children and to Man's survival.

Article 3

As our own health, that of our children and future generations, is under threat, *the Human race itself is in serious danger.*

We call upon national decision-makers, European Authorities, international organizations, and specifically the United Nations Organization (UNO), to take the following measures:

Measure # 1

Banning all products that are *certainly* or *probably* carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMRs) for human beings, as specified by competent international scientific authorities and organizations, and therefore applying to these products the principle of substitution; exceptionally, whenever implementation of this principle is not feasible and the use of the product concerned is considered unavoidable, limiting its use to a minimum with particularly stringent measures of fixed quotas,

Measure # 2

Applying the precautionary principle to all chemicals that, regardless of toxicity characteristics specified in Measure # 1 (refer to §9 and §13), and because they are persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic (PBT) or very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB), constitute an allegedly serious and/or irreversible danger for human and/or animal health, and more generally the environment, without waiting for the definite proof of an epidemiological link, so as to anticipate and avoid serious and/or irreversible sanitary or ecological damage,

Measure # 3

Promoting the adoption of toxicological standards or international thresholds to protect people, based on the assessment of risks for the most vulnerable, i.e. mostly children and the embryo.

Measure # 4

With respect to the precautionary principle, adopting programs with scheduled deadlines and targets in precise figures so as to achieve elimination or strictly regulated reduction in polluting substances emissions and in the utilization of marketed chemicals, such as pesticides, modeling the reduction in use implemented in Sweden, Denmark or Norway,

Measure # 5

Due to the serious threats to mankind, calling upon States to require from every public or private entity to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions or their inefficiency to react;

whenever this is not the State's responsibility, it should be dealt with by an international jurisdiction;

Measure # 6

As for global warming and climate change, this responsibility requires nations to implement forceful measures to cut greenhouse gases emissions without waiting for prior effective implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Measure # 7

As regards Europe, reinforcing the REACH program (**R**egistration, **E**valuation and **A**uthorisation of **C**hemicals) that aims at regulating the marketing of chemicals so as to ensure substitution of the most dangerous for man with less dangerous substitutes; as regards the world, adopting international regulations to control the marketing of chemicals following the REACH program in a reinforced version.