

# Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs Treaty) and International Efforts to Ban PFAS

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**IPEN—Working for a Toxics-Free Future:  
A Network of Environmental Health, Justice, and Human Rights—  
500 groups from 115 countries**



# Overview of U.N. Chemicals and Wastes Conventions

- **Basel Convention**—to address management, disposal, and transboundary movement of hazardous waste (entered into force in 1992)
- **Rotterdam Convention**—creates legally binding obligations for Prior Informed Consent Procedure (entered into force in 2004)
- **Stockholm Convention**—legally binding international agreement on persistent organic pollutants (entered into force in 2004; now 182 Parties)

# The Language of the Stockholm Convention

- “Aware of the health concerns...in particular impacts upon women and children and, through them, upon future generations.”
- “Conscious of the need for global action...”
- “Acknowledging that precaution underlies the concerns of all the Parties and is embedded within this Convention...”
- “Determined to protect human health and the environment...”
- “Acknowledging that the Arctic ecosystems and Indigenous communities are particularly at risk...”



# Key Elements of the Stockholm Convention

- Focus is on elimination rather than managing risk
- Ensure addition of new chemicals beyond initial list of twelve
- Identification and inventory of contaminated sites for clean up
- Effectiveness evaluation
- Based on the precautionary principle



# New POPs—the POPS Review Committee (POPRC)



# PFAS Chemicals and the Stockholm Convention

- **PFOS** listed in 2009 with exemptions and “acceptable purposes”  
POPRC recommended closing of major loopholes in 2018
- **PFOA** nominated by the EU in 2015—POPRC made recommendation in September 2018 to list for global elimination and COP will make final decision in April 2019
- **PFHxS** nominated by Norway in 2017—advanced to final stage of review in September 2018, Annex F



# Independent expert panel convened by IPEN/ACAT

- *“The continued use of PFAS (per- and polyfluorinated substances) foams is not only unnecessary but would continue to add to the legacy and on-going contamination that is responsible for the substantial, widespread and growing socio-economic and environmental costs being experienced globally.”*
- [www.ipen.org](http://www.ipen.org)



## FLUORINE-FREE FIREFIGHTING FOAMS (3F) VIABLE ALTERNATIVES TO FLUORINATED AQUEOUS FILM-FORMING FOAMS (AFFF)

Independent Expert Panel Convened by IPEN  
Stockholm Convention POPRC-14  
Rome

September 2018



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# Conclusions and Recommendations from the POPRC 2018

- PFOA should be listed in Annex A for global elimination.
- PFHxS warrants global action and moves to the final stage of evaluation.
- Many PFOS loopholes in the current listing should be closed at the next Conference of the Parties (COP9) in April/May 2019.
- Firefighting foams containing PFOS and PFOA should be sharply restricted, (with time-limited specific exemptions for five years) and their fluorinated alternatives are not recommended. *“A transition to the use of short-chain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) for dispersive applications such as fire-fighting foams is not a suitable option from an environmental and human health point of view...”*
- 10 time-limited exemptions are proposed for PFOA. Most are for 5 years, but some are for 10 – 18 years.

# POPRC Recommendations on Firefighting Foams

At POPRC14, the Committee recommended that governments at COP9 adopt the following restrictions on firefighting foams containing PFOA, PFOA-related substances, or PFOS:

- No production.
- Use for 5 years only for liquid fuel vapor suppression and liquid fuel fires (Class B fires) already in installed systems.
- No import or export, except for environmentally-sound disposal.
- No use for training or testing purposes.
- By 2022, restrict use to sites where all releases can be contained.
- Ensure that all firewater, wastewater, run-off, foam and other wastes are managed in accordance with the treaty.

# Protecting the Health of Future Generations Engagement at the Stockholm Convention COP



- Conference of the Parties 29 April to 10 May 2019 in Geneva
- Decisions on PFOA, PFOS loopholes
- Join with international network of IPEN NGOs to influence these international decisions
- Action and engagement of community representatives affected by PFAS contamination—be the “conscience of the Convention”