

# WHY RATIFY THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION?

The biggest benefit of ratifying the Convention does not flow to just one country, but to all countries. The types of poisonous chemicals that the Convention deals with do not stay in one place. They do not recognize national borders. They travel on the wind, and on the water, and can poison people and the environment for many years after they were released. As more countries ratify the convention, then more countries have the ability to clean up these poisonous chemicals, so all countries benefit.

- ◆ **Financial and technical assistance:** The people who negotiated the Stockholm Convention realized that some countries need money and resources to clean up the chemicals in their countries. Without this help, they can not afford to ratify the Convention. The developed countries that have ratified the Convention have agreed to provide the help necessary.
- ◆ For instance, Belarus, a country that has just ratified the Convention, notes that it is now eligible for up to \$500,000 U.S. to complete its national plan for controlling and eliminating the chemicals identified in the Convention.
- ◆ The Convention makes it clear that providing assistance to countries that need it is essential to the Convention's success: "The extent to which the developing country Parties will effectively implement their commitments under this Convention will depend on the effective implementation by developed country Parties of their commitments under this Convention relating to financial resources, technical assistance and technology transfer. The fact that sustainable economic and social development and eradication of poverty are the first and overriding priorities of the developing country Parties will be taken fully into account, giving due consideration to the need for the protection of human health and the environment."
- ◆ **Stockpiles:** There are large and small stockpiles of poisonous chemicals in many countries. Some developing countries in particular received some dangerous chemicals that were banned in other countries. Many of these chemicals are now stored in old rusty barrels, and other unsafe conditions, and are leaking into the water and soil. The Stockholm Convention helps countries to identify, then safely collect, transport, and dispose of these stockpiles.
- ◆ **A voice in international decisions:** Many decisions on parts of the Stockholm convention have yet to be made. These decisions cover such things as how assistance will be provided to developing countries, adding new chemicals to the Convention, and best methods of dealing with existing chemicals. The decisions will be made at a meeting called a "Conference of the Parties" early in 2005. Only countries that have ratified the Convention at least 90 days before will have a vote at that meeting.