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Thank you, Guilherme, it is a pleasure to be here today. On behalf of The Dow Chemical Company, I want to say how proud we are to be a part of this collaborative process working to improve the international management of chemicals.

Today's array of speakers has demonstrated the benefits of working together. Much unites us as we move towards improving chemicals management.

By listening to you, we learn from you. In a moment you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists. But, before we get to that, I want to briefly reflect on where we've been, and what we introduced today.

We are an industry focused on continuous improvement. Our products address global needs – clean water, more efficient transportation and fuels, affordable and durable housing, health and medicine, and more.

But we know that producing useful products is not enough. Our behavior – how we operate – is just as important.

For the last twenty years, our industry has shown a **proven track record** of improving performance and building strong partnerships with governments and NGOs with our Responsible Care[®] program. Today we reaffirm our commitment to improving our environmental, health and safety performance by launching **two new initiatives** – the Responsible Care Global Charter and the Global Product Strategy.

First, the **Responsible Care Global Charter**. This agreement has already been signed by more than 70 CEOs of chemical companies and industry associations. It builds on the original elements of Responsible Care– setting a new and broader agenda for the industry.

As you heard, the Global Charter focuses on the new and important challenges facing the chemical industry. Let me highlight 4 of the key elements in the Charter:

1. Effective management along with safe use and handling of chemicals along the value chain.
2. Using resources efficiently and minimizing waste.
3. Developing greater industry transparency.
4. Increasing global harmonization and consistency among participating companies and programs.

The second initiative that we launched today is the **Global Product Strategy**. This is an area that I personally have spent a lot of time on in the past year, and I feel particularly passionate about.

The GPS was developed to improve product stewardship within our industry and with customers throughout the chain of commerce. It's all about how our products are used and what people know about them.

I'll summarize just 5 of the key elements of the GPS:

1. Guidelines for product stewardship, to share best practices within the chemical industry and with customer industries.
2. Exploration of potential partnerships with IGOs.
3. A tiered process for completing risk characterization and risk management actions for chemicals in commerce.
4. A special focus on working directly with downstream customers of the chemical industry.
5. Greater transparency, including ways to make relevant product stewardship information available to the public.

These two new programs, along with other initiatives, provide a vision and roadmap for us to follow.

But what they really mean is that our commitment is real. For the last three years, we've participated in the development of SAICM, working together with you to improve how chemicals are managed.

But just as important ... **we are not waiting** until SAICM is formalized to begin more improvements. We are moving forward with these initiatives **now**, in support of the goals and objectives of SAICM.

You also heard today about our work to help developing countries improve chemical industry performance. And you heard about our work on capacity building. The excellent examples described by Dr. Oels of Bayer are the types of contributions that many companies make. We pledge to **accelerate** our work in these areas, and to continue to work with you to tackle and solve tough issues.

We're very pleased that you could be here today as part of our public launch of these two programs.

The future of our industry is full of hope and promise. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve our goals.

Now, I would like to reintroduce Alain Perroy, our Council Secretary, who will conduct the question and answer session. Please welcome Alain Perroy.