**Opening Remarks**

Distinguished guests, respected participants, friends & partners,

Good [morning/afternoon/evening] to you all.

It is my great honor to welcome you today as we gather to reflect on an essential and timely topic — how the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions have advanced the cause of environmental justice around the world.

Environmental justice is rooted in the simple yet powerful idea that all people — regardless of race, nationality, or economic status — have the right to a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment. Yet, for too long, vulnerable communities, particularly in developing countries, have borne a disproportionate share of the harm from hazardous chemicals and wastes.

The BRS Conventions have played a critical role in addressing this global inequity.  
 Through the Basel Convention, we have seen greater control over the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, protecting communities from becoming dumping grounds for toxic materials. The Rotterdam Convention has empowered countries with the right to Prior Informed Consent, ensuring that governments — and, by extension, their people — have the knowledge and authority to make informed decisions about the chemicals entering their borders. And the Stockholm Convention has targeted some of the most dangerous persistent organic pollutants, working toward their elimination to safeguard both human health and the environment.

Together, these Conventions have strengthened international cooperation, built capacity in nations most at risk, and raised the global standard for responsible chemicals and waste management. They have recognized that environmental harm is not just an ecological issue — it is a human rights issue.

Today, as we continue our journey towards a fairer and more sustainable world, the principles embodied in the BRS Conventions serve as powerful tools to close the gap between privilege and vulnerability, between exploitation and empowerment.

Let us use this occasion not only to celebrate the progress we have made but also to renew our commitment to ensuring that environmental justice is not a distant goal — but a living reality for all.

Thank you.