

SCP Intervention from Women's Major Group
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Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Women's Major Group, representing more than 500 women and public interests NGOs in over 100 countries.

The current economic growth based on resource extraction and hazardous chemicals and pesticides use, has a negative effect on human health and the environment. Without good health, we are not able to enjoy the prosperity and the projected wellness, but it is also very costly for our health care systems. UNEP global chemicals report estimates close to 1 million death from harmful chemicals and pesticides each year! Not to speak of the many diseases and disabled.

We thank Dr. Ulrich von Weizsacker for his statement: that the global North should go ahead with the resource efficiency and decrease the environmental footprint, leading by example for the global South countries. Through capacity building, international cooperation and technology exchanges the South can modify and adapt lessons learned from the North so as not to repeat the same mistakes.

However, we would like to emphasize equity, including gender equity, as an essential additional dimension to decoupling in the SCP debate. Just a vague reference to Common But Differentiated Responsibility is not enough, we need to be closely aware of the differentiated impacts of unsustainable consumption and production patterns on different countries, and groups within those countries, including women and men. That is why we need to include gender-related targets and indicators in any targets and indicators related to SCP. We have listened with interest to the proposal by Colombia in this respect.

We want to emphasize the responsibility of governments in providing effective legally binding frameworks and economic incentives for SCP, including in particular in the fields of chemicals and waste. In fact, the chemicals sector is a clear example where legally binding bans, and targets, developed in full consultation with all major groups, have proven to work. We emphasize the need to integrate the SAICM targets as interim targets in the SDG framework in this respect, and to adopt a zero harmful chemicals target for 2030.

We also strongly emphasize the need to redirect perverse subsidies and other forms of financial support for unsustainable consumption and production in, for example, the food, energy and water sectors, like fossil fuels, agro-industry, large dams, nuclear energy, large-scale bioenergy and intensive livestock farming. These forms of support should be directed towards more sustainable forms of consumption and production based on food, water and energy sovereignty, taking fully into account the rights, role and needs of women in this respect through appropriate, gender-specific targets and indicators.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Chemicals substances and compounds are widely used in the manufacturing process of products and services. According to the Global Chemical Outlook 2012 published by UNEP, the chemicals industry is growing to become a USD 4 trillion business and has become a powerful sector in the supply chains. But with great power comes great responsibility. Therefore, the chemicals industry and its supply chains, must be liable and responsible with their products until the end of the life cycle of the chemicals. A very important proposal launched by governments is that of a very small – 0,1% – but globally applied tax on chemical sales, to provide funding for innovation away from hazardous chemicals and clean up of damage.

In order to sustain sustainable consumption and production patterns and to contribute to the future we want, we emphasise our call for Zero harmful chemicals by 2030. We also need to substitute carbon footprint for environmental footprint, encompassing all other resources.

Finally, to uphold the right to live in a healthy environment, we call for countries and all stakeholders to commit to the principles that underpin a global toxics-free future:

1. Precaution;
2. Right to know;
3. Substitution and elimination of hazardous substances;
4. Internalization of environmental and human health costs;
5. Full application of the polluter pays principle and extended producers' responsibility, and
6. Adequate long-term funding.

Thank you Mr. Chair.