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Sustainable Consumption and Production, including Chemicals and Waste
MNE–SI speaking points for 7th meeting of OWG SDGs

- With the increasing pressure of population and economic growth, we are all witnesses that many of the current environmental challenges as well as economic and social imbalances result from unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Continuous pressure on ecosystems, inefficient and inequitable use of resources and uneven distribution of negative effects of pollution and environmental degradation directly influence and undermine development efforts in many countries.
- Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) has universal relevance for all countries, irrespective of their level of development. In addition to environmental benefits, stimulating SCP practices is set to bring great economic benefits especially in increasing the amount of natural, physical and human capital available, creating decent jobs and economic opportunities and contributing to poverty eradication. One of the key effects of SCP policies is the increased efficiency and stimulation of innovation, which can act as an engine for overall development.
- However, as with all other topics we have discussed so far in OWG, in this area as well, we need to be particularly careful to bear in mind that a uniform approach in our attempts to alter the existing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production would not result in the best possible outcomes. As we face different challenges to sustainable development and SCP in different parts of the world, one-size-fits-all approach is not sufficient to achieve progress in promoting SCP.
- In designing the future SDG agenda, our focus needs to be on decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation through technological innovation, eco-efficiency, and advances in information and communications technology, especially with regards to addressing increasing air and water pollution, waste generation and the use and disposal of harmful chemical substances. At the same time, we must foster behavioural change in consumption patterns, which will be essential for moving towards a circular economy and encouraging wider populations to make more sustainable lifestyle choices.
- We are aware that mainstreaming SCP in decision making at all levels and designing integrated policies and legal frameworks is a precondition for the implementation of SCP in practice. Equally important will be the support for the engagement of all stakeholders in this process with actions ranging from consumer education and awareness raising on issues such as resource scarcity, waste utilisation (from end of pipe approach to cradle to cradle approach and 3R) to the strengthening of the existing capacities of producers and building partnerships with businesses through education and enabling access to environmentally sound technologies.

- We believe that our attention should remain on the promotion of efficient, responsible and clean production systems and, in this regard, we attach great importance to the cooperation among countries in exchanging the examples of best case practices. We strongly support the existing global commitments made to the SCP related actions, including the 10YFP and the establishment of networks such as UNIDO/UNEP supported Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (especially establishment of national Cleaner Production centres).
- Designing and implementing SCP policies is a complex challenge, however, we remain convinced that this should not be a reason for inaction. Reiterating the need for a strong focus on science and evidence-based approach in building and monitoring of the future SDG agenda, we remain convinced that sustainable consumption and production will remain one of important mechanisms for the overall achievement of sustainability agenda.
- On the issue of chemicals we would like to point out that minimization of significant adverse effects of chemicals on human health and the environment is of paramount importance in sustainable development endeavours. Attention should also be given to new concerns (e.g. endocrine disrupters, nanomaterials), as well as vulnerable groups.
- Reduction of dangerous chemicals production and use, replacement of dangerous chemicals with less dangerous alternative materials or technologies, with emphasis on reducing differences is of great importance. In determining and reducing chemicals impact, a whole life-cycle and cross-sectorial influences should be taken into account and fair share of benefits and burden between all countries needs to be achieved. Product stewardship initiatives should be promoted and encouraged. 3R (reduce, recycle, reuse) principle should become the guiding principle not only on a large-scale and industrial level, but on an individual level, thus directly and indirectly reducing the needs for materials and chemicals used in their production. New economic practices need to be developed, enabling people in developing countries to secure their existence by means other than having their natural resources and their habitats to be over-exploited. Allow me to point out our position that SDGs should be formulated through human rights based approach. As we have stressed already at previous sessions, that respect for human rights is an important prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.
- Before I conclude, I would like to recall our general position towards the elaboration of SDGs that should be evidence-based and have measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators that will help to ensure full implementation of the visions we are certain we will create together in this process.