

Women statement on Strategies for Sustainable Chemicals and Waste Management 13 May 2010

Thank you chair, dear ladies and gentlemen

My name is Sakeena, from Ghana. speaking on behalf of the women major group.

We need to move to a Zero waste economy, where all products can be fully re-used and recycled, and where non-reusable substances - notably persistent toxic and radioactive substances - have been substituted and phased out. Hazardous pesticides need to be phased out, starting with the most toxic ones, for example endosulfan, which are creating birth defects in children. This calls for innovation by industry, and regulation by governments

“No-data no-market” and the precautionary principle should be the basic principles for underlying chemicals and waste policies.

We want our governments to ensure that children are born and raised toxic free and healthy, and that our workers do not die or get chronic diseases from working in a toxic environment:

To achieve this, we need:

- To phase-out all carcinogenic, mutagenic and reproductive hazards and all toxic synthetic chemicals in the environment.
- No more cradle-to-grave, but instead cradle-to-cradle mechanisms as the basis of our zero-waste economy
- To have strict controls and accountability for companies to ensure that toxic waste, disguised as ‘recyclable’ resource, is no longer dumped in developing countries; we refer to the chair’s draft summary on merging and strengthening the 3 chemical Conventions and demand that this be done **immediately**
- To ratify and implement ILO Convention on Occupational Health & Safety (155) and ILO Convention on Chemicals (170).
- To create a financing mechanism for chemicals and waste management and cleanup, paid for by the industry
- To ensure just transition policies for workers in the efforts to move to a green and sustainable economy.

Single country economic interests should not be a barrier to global commitment to control and phase out all hazardous substances in our economies. Multilateral agreements should not be held hostage by a handful of parties with short-term economic interests only.

We demand involvement of women and workers in all phases of policy setting and implementation processes concerning chemicals and waste.

Women are catalysts and actors, providing leadership in decision making at all levels, from the local and traditional communities to the global stage. To fulfil their roles, women need resources.

To conclude, we ask that governments facilitate and guide us to a better future: a zero-waste and toxic-free future.