

NORWAY: Statement on Chemicals - IPM CSD 19

Norway agrees with the report of the Secretary General¹ that ensuring the sound management of chemicals is an important element of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Much has been done to reduce the health and environmental risks associated with hazardous substances. The area of chemicals and waste is one where significant progress has been made the last 10-20 years. For Norway, the entry into force of the Stockholm Convention in 2004 was particularly significant. We place a similar importance on the ongoing negotiations of a new mercury treaty.

Norway also considers the overarching policy framework provided by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management a milestone. This constitutes an important policy framework to promote chemicals safety, capacity building, as well as a tool to achieve the 2020 goal of “using and producing chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment”.

Nationally, Norway has implemented a precautionary, ambitious chemicals policy. An important building block is the REACH Regulation, which we share with the EU.

Still, our efforts are not sufficient to deal with the long term problems.

We therefore welcome the on-going processes to improve the international management of chemicals. We have mentioned the mercury negotiations. We welcome the focus on synergies in the chemicals and waste cluster, and believe these can be deepened and strengthened even further. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the UNEP Governing Council this year to take this process further. Norway also wishes to highlight the process of developing the Global Chemicals Outlook. This will be an important source for considering further action in the field.

There is a need to strengthen the chemical safety in developing countries, and further national and international financial resources will be necessary to achieve this. We therefore welcome the UNEP consultative process on financing options for chemicals and waste, which in our view provides a process whereby a path forward towards a strengthened financial regime for chemicals and waste can be achieved.

Norway in particular wishes to underline that chemicals policy is not only an environmental issue. As emphasized in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, many sectors are involved, not least the health, agriculture and worker protection. We need a broad cross-sectoral effort if we are to move to a truly safe management of chemicals, both nationally and internationally.

¹ E/CN.17/2011/5 Policy options and actions for expediting progress in implementation: chemicals