

Side event

Achieving Sustainable Development through the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

Key Outcome:

- Governments across the world recognize that chemicals are essential to overcome poverty and indispensable in many areas such as medicine, agriculture, consumer goods, and clean technology. However, chemicals and the pollution linked with their manufacture, use and disposal come with a cost and if not managed in a sound way with adverse impacts on the environment and on human health and therefore on sustainable development.
- Chemicals play an important role in human life, economic development and prosperity. Therefore the way that the world will manage chemicals and waste in the future as well as the legacy of the past will play a key role in the transition towards a sustainable 21st century.
- The success stories from the chemicals and waste cluster have in recent years been plentiful, in particular, with the birth of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the progress in synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions,
- Chemicals and waste is not a “technical issue” but a “policy issue” of significant importance.
- The costs of not acting now will be high for human health and the environment with significant consequences for public budgets and investing in preventive action will be much more cost-efficient and effective.
- There is general agreement that the link between sound management of chemicals and waste and a sustainable future is evident. Global chemical pollution is a serious threat to sustainable development, poverty eradication and livelihoods.
- Sound chemicals and waste management is at the crossroad between the three pillars of sustainable development. If soundly managed chemicals and waste
 - Are a key driver for economic development, have an impact on all industries and a high potential for green job creation;
 - Do protect human health and livelihood and drastically reduce environmental and social inequalities throughout the world; and finally
 - Do significantly contribute to reducing the pressure on the environment and save the scarce natural resources on which life relies upon.
- When developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the post-2015 agenda, it is fundamental that clear cross-cutting targets and indicators are set for the sound management of chemicals and waste as part of the response to the future challenges of sustainable development.
- The huge potential for sustainable development offered by the sound management of chemicals and waste must be used and leveraged by mainstreaming the latter into SDGs.