

**Fourth meeting of the Intersessional Process considering
the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste
Beyond 2020 (IP4)**

Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

**Opening statement from the President of the fifth session of the
International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5)**

Co-chairs Kay Williams and Judith Torres,

Your Excellency, Minister Tanczos,

Dear Colleagues

It is a great pleasure to be invited to participate in the Fourth Meeting of the Intersessional Process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4).

As President of the Fifth Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), and on your behalf, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Romania for hosting this first **full** in-person Intersessional process meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our work in 2020.

Under the COVID-19 restrictions, we have managed to maintain momentum through a series of Virtual Working Group working sessions, followed by regional briefings, and more recently, five regional meetings that were held to

prepare ourselves for the successful and unified outcome of **IP4 as a critical milestone** in our collective journey towards ICCM5.

In this regard, I must express my gratitude to the Governments of Uruguay, Czech Republic, Ghana and Jordan for hosting their respective regional meetings, as well as to the EU-JUSSCANNZUK focal points, who organized the WEOG regional meeting virtually.

And of course, my special appreciation goes to all Co-facilitators of the Virtual Working Groups and all participants for sharing their views and concerns and for their commitment to reach a greater understanding of the issues at stake at IP4 this week in Bucharest.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me begin my remarks with a brief strategic perspective of the broader global context and challenges that directly influence our work on the Beyond 2020 instrument.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not only disrupt our work since 2020, but more importantly, it has changed the world we live in.

The pandemic, together with major shifts in global geo-political tensions and dynamics, has deepened and further exposed the severe social and economic impacts of the underlying triple planetary crises of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

These global dynamics and planetary level challenges have also exposed the fragility of international governance, trade, and financial systems, which

is now evident as a cascade of international health, food, energy, and security emergencies.

It is now abundantly clear that there is no alternative but to urgently and rapidly transition towards just, inclusive, and resilient sustainable development pathways.

Achieving the 2030 SDGs is an absolute “global must”.

Given this context, I would like to briefly reflect on the contribution that our Beyond 2020 instrument should or could make to the broader global sustainable development agenda.

Our work to achieve sound chemicals and waste management can play a significant role in overcoming the global pollution crisis. However, our efforts should also be designed and implemented in a manner that maximizes solutions and benefits to related social and economic challenges, such as those in the health, food, and energy sectors.

At the same time, our Beyond 2020 efforts should also complement and support the implementation of actions being undertaken in terms of the many other international chemicals and waste Conventions, codes, or standards, such as those under the WHO, ILO, FAO and our chemicals- and waste-related Conventions, BRS and Minamata.

In addition, we should recognize that achieving the vision of sound management of chemicals and waste is a necessary prerequisite to addressing the climate change and biodiversity loss planetary crises.

In summary, our “Beyond 2020” agreement can be a powerful international framework that engages, and further generates, multi-sectoral and stakeholder commitment to deliver ambitious and concrete action that is integrated across sectors and value chains. This vision goes way beyond filling gaps left by existing mechanisms and instruments. It would be a significant contribution to the just transition that is inherent to the overall vision of the SDGs.

Colleagues,

In concluding my remarks, I briefly share some reflections on what our Beyond 2020 framework needs to achieve and do to be successful.

Ultimately, the aim of this Beyond 2020 sound chemicals and waste management framework is to deliver results. Among other outcomes, the Beyond 2020 instrument should ensure that:

- Our children are safe from harmful exposure.
- Our workers have safe workplaces.
- Everybody’s health is protected, and consumers are aware of exposure risks.
- Our natural environment is protected.

It is an unfortunate reality that chemicals and waste management are technical and specialized fields. As a result, the public and our political decision makers often do not fully understand the risks, or the priority need to improve sound management of chemicals and waste worldwide. Conse-

quently, sound chemical and waste management usually has a too low political priority, which, in turn, is reflected in wholly inadequate finance and resource allocations for implementation.

To this end, it is important for our Beyond 2020 framework to be framed in clear language, that sends easily understood messages reflecting both risks and benefits and the international political priority and urgency for action and resourcing.

Another aspect for us to consider is the fact that chemicals and waste sectors are dynamic and growing, with production projected to double by 2030. In this regard, it is important for our Beyond 2020 framework to be durable over the longer term.

Therefore, it must be structured in a way that it is flexible, adaptable, and able to respond to new developments and priorities. For example, the design of our recommendations here in Bucharest must take account of and respond to the recent global decisions to establish a Science Policy Panel, as well as a Plastics Convention.

Dear colleagues,

yes, we are facing great challenges and a lot of work that we aim to address at this meeting. However, it is not all doom and gloom. We must acknowledge and appreciate important steps achieved:

- the already mentioned highly relevant decision to establish a Science Policy Panel on chemicals, waste, and preventing pollution

- the efforts of many of you in facilitating agreement on an extension of the Special Programme for another five years, as well as a significant increase in the GEF 8 allocation to chemicals and waste and particularly for activities related to SAICM.
- And importantly, the level of expertise and commitment in this room for sustaining work on a global framework on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, regardless of the challenges that come with such a wide-scoped endeavor.

I have the highest regard for all of you joining in this enormous effort. I am confident that, with your open and constructive participation, our main goal of finalizing recommendations for a Beyond 2020 instrument, can indeed be met. I am very impressed and proud of the spirit shown by you over the last few days: I see we are ready to move ahead!

I wish you all a very fruitful discussion.

Thank you.