

UNDP's submission on essential elements for a possible ICCM5 High-level Declaration (HLD) on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

This submission is prepared in response to the letter from the ICCM5 President from 2 October 2020. The response is based on the questions in the letter but also includes other considerations which UNDP finds important.

Most important aspects

The declaration must re-affirm the commitment to achieve chemical safety as part and parcel of sustainable development. Reference to specific goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (e.g. 12.4) should be made.

It is important to base the declaration on the findings from the Global Chemicals Outlook II and the [SAICM 2006-2015 Independent Evaluation](#). For example, the commitments should highlight the uptake of circular economy, sustainable chemistry (green chemistry), eco-design of the consumer products, sustainable production and consumption, lifecycle management of chemicals and wastes, waste to energy, and other innovative principles. Consideration of the entire life cycle of chemicals should be the guiding principle as the successor to SAICM for strengthening the sound management of chemicals and waste (SMCW) to achieve a just and resilient world beyond 2020. A common and inspiring vision, clear milestones should be explicit in the HLD.

Considering the significant regulatory and capacity gaps in developing countries and emerging economies, it is important to highlight the issue of effective mechanisms (technology transfer, financial support, capacity building, knowledge dissemination) to address these gaps.

Risks from the unsustainable management of chemicals to public health, livelihoods (especially to poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups), biodiversity and ecosystems, and climate change should be acknowledged to demonstrate the urgent need for a renewed global commitment. The declaration should express the global commitment to address inter- and intrastate disparities in terms of capacity to manage chemicals for improved health and economic opportunities.

The declaration should also highlight the effectiveness and importance of coordinated implementation of international agreements for the management of chemicals of concern. A multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach is essential for the successful global action for the management of chemicals. Coordination and consultation at all levels for coherence should be emphasized.

Commitment to incorporate gender considerations in the sound management of chemicals and waste is essential. The experiences and views of women as well as men must be taken into account when designing, implementing and monitoring chemicals programmes. Women and men must benefit equally from the outcomes with the goal to achieve gender equality in sound chemicals management.

Scope

The comprehensive management of all synthetically produced chemicals throughout the life cycle of production, use, and disposal should be covered under the successor to SAICM. The declaration should be open for signature by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, academia, and civil society. Using digital platforms, the declaration can be put to be voted by all netizens in the world. Please, see the example of voting for climate action at <https://mission1point5.org/>.

The HLD should express the joint political will (vision) of SAICM stakeholders whereas the details, such as objectives, targets, implementation arrangements, etc. will be a part of the framework document being developed by virtual working groups.

Key elements, messages, structure and critical gaps to be addressed

Unlike the Dubai Declaration, the HLD should be a concise document referring to foundational documents such as the Agenda 2030 and Dubai Declaration. The declaration should express the commitment of all signatories to implement the instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for people and the planet.

Considering the estimates that up to 110 million people will be pushed to poverty and many more will see their incomes affected negatively due to COVID-19, it is imperative to highlight the positive role of sound management of chemicals and waste in human health, social protection, development and economic prosperity and in the efforts of the international community to build back better. However, the declaration should also point out that without innovative business solutions to apply circularity and green chemistry principles, the man-made chemicals are likely to bring more harm than benefit.

It is also important to highlight the need and commitment to tackle inequality in terms of disproportionately higher level of negative impact of unsustainable chemicals management practices on poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups. The HLD should highlight the need to fight for the illegal trade, dumping of hazardous chemicals and wastes to developing countries who may not have sufficient capacity to deal with that.

The HLD should emphasize the importance of supporting the capacity building of developing countries regarding risk assessment, standards and development and enforcement of regulations for all hazardous chemicals.

The critical gaps to be addressed include the reference to creating incentives for private sector to phase in extended producer responsibility, applying circular and green economy principles, and consideration of gender equality aspects. Science should underpin evidence-based policy responses.