

4th Meeting of the Intersessional Process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

Bucharest, Romania 29 August – 2 September 2022

**Opening Statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries
(GRULAC)
*Plenary Session***

Thank you Madam Co-chair,

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). Given that this is the first GRULAC intervention at this meeting, we would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Romania for the warm welcome and hospitality. We would also like to express our appreciation to the co-chairs for their outstanding work, to the donors for their contributions and recognize the efforts done by the SAICM Secretariat towards the preparation of this meeting and the virtual process.

At this stage, we have an important task ahead, to provide recommendations to ICCM5 to make informed decisions including the adoption of an enabling framework to address chemicals and waste in a multisectoral and multistakeholder manner. In this regard, we must continue working together towards a sound management of chemicals and waste and the interface between chemicals and waste, including the minimization and prevention of waste generation to prevent and minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

This can only be guaranteed with a human rights and science based approach, through the highest level of commitment among all relevant sectors and stakeholders. The new framework will be an important ingredient to tackle the triple environmental planetary crisis as well as major challenges we are facing in different sectors regarding chemicals and waste management.

With respect to discussion on strategic objectives, GRULAC stresses the importance to have ambitious, clear, concise, measurable, and palatable strategic objectives and targets that fosters a message of urgency to be conveyed to larger audiences, including those outside the chemicals and waste cluster. We look forward to agreeing on as much targets as possible during this meeting drawing upon our previous discussions which will help us to implement the strategic objectives.

GRULAC takes this opportunity to highlight the importance of including health priorities in the new framework. In order to ensure balanced representation, the health sector should be equally included in the decision making process and the governance bodies, at the national, regional and international levels.

As a region, we recognize the added value that SAICM has had with its multisectoral and multistakeholder participation. We would further like to emphasize the need of agreeing on an ambitious and comprehensive framework with a timeless vision and enough flexibility to adapt to new challenges as well as benefit from new scientific discoveries, innovation, and technology.

In light of the integrated approach to the management of chemicals we must not forget to look into the future bearing in mind other SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, which are anchored in the Rio Principles such as common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).

Moreover, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that financial resources are crucial to ensure the success of the new framework. Developing countries unfortunately are still far behind regarding capabilities for the environmentally sound and integrated management of chemicals and waste. Our region expects not only allocation of time for the discussion on this matter, but real will and commitment from all stakeholders in the provision of additional, sustainable, predictable, adequate, and accessible resources, accompanied by appropriate technical assistance, capacity building and technology transfer for multisectoral activities in developing countries.

This is a unique opportunity for fostering the creation of a fund dedicated to the new framework, as external financing remains critical for the achievement of such a complex and ambitious - though necessary - mission in developing countries.

Postponing this discussion without building real consensus and leaving it for the last minute of the ICCM5 will risk the adoption of the new framework. Without a clear signal of commitment, we would not be able to achieve our common goal, to implement the sound management of chemicals and waste.

As we know, the existing efforts have not been sufficient and the consequences can be seen in the lack of achievement of our goals. Thus, as we negotiate the creation of a fund, we are committed to highlighting the important role the private sector entities along the value chain have to play in this regard.

We understand that the new framework could benefit from up-to-date scientific data from the future intergovernmental Scientific Panel on chemicals, waste, and pollution (SPP). In this regard we encourage to avoid duplication of efforts and strengthen synergies and cooperation between UNEP, WHO, FAO, ILO and MEAs.

We should also take this opportunity to provide information on the current challenges faced by developing countries on the prevalence and impacts of hazardous chemicals and waste as well as on identifying existing gaps in data and statistics.

We are ready to reflect, think together, engage over the week with the needed ambition and the spirit of compromise that has always characterize our region. A commitment we expect from all.

Thank you very much