



CALL TO ACTION FOR A TOMORROW WITHOUT TOXICS

Urgent call for a strong SAICM-Beyond-2020-Framework ensuring sound chemicals and waste management!

Increasing chemical production, use of harmful chemicals, pollution, and waste are turning into a third planetary crisis^[1], beside the climate and biodiversity crises, and at the same time exacerbating them. There is an urgent need for solution-focused actions along the whole lifecycle of chemicals and waste, addressing the threats to human health and the environment – from the enormous use of chemicals, poor chemicals and waste management, to the ever-increasing production and raw material extraction. The undersigned organizations stand together in urgently calling on governments, industry, and other stakeholders to work towards a tomorrow without toxics. We urge them to actively reduce their chemical footprint and make prevention, reduction, and sound management of chemicals and waste a priority issue.

The current levels of chemicals used in industrial processes, agriculture and daily life products massively expose people and ecosystems to harmful substances. Ubiquitous, excessive and often uncontrolled use of chemicals, their improper storage and disposal, and accidents, as well as the amount of waste in general and in particular mismanaged waste lead to harmful substances entering the environment, food chains, and human bodies. They poison air, soil and water, harm wildlife and cause biodiversity loss. Exposure to hazardous chemicals produces reproductive and neurological disorders, causes intergenerational effects, and the loss of livelihoods and food systems, among other things. The burdens fall disproportionately on the most financially oppressed, vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as Indigenous Communities, people in the Global South, workers in industry and agriculture, women and children. This makes chemicals and waste management a cross-cutting issue.

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Dubai Declaration, adopted in 2006 by the First International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1), aimed to achieve sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle by 2020.^[2] Now, at the beginning of the year 2022, we see an even more urgent need for action. SAICM has identified important issues and created a multi-sector platform and multi-stakeholder process for action, involving governments, civil society, businesses and academics. However,

the overall objective has not been achieved and progress made is insufficient and mainly limited to information collection, while only a few concrete risk reduction measures have been undertaken. Adverse impacts on human health and the environment from raw material extraction, chemical production, use and disposal continue.

There is no time to waste. We need an agreement for a strong SAICM-Beyond-2020-Framework that goes beyond the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management^[3] and secures ambitious reduction and prevention of harmful chemicals and waste globally, bringing about real change, including the implementation of safe alternatives. **Our vision is a world where chemicals and wastes are no longer a source of harm and where all people live in safe and healthy environments, free from toxic threats to ecosystems and to future generations.** We call upon all stakeholders to commit to this goal and to increase engagement, expressing a concrete will to end the poisoning of our world. Put a SAICM-Beyond-2020-Framework urgently into practice as follows:

- Recognize and implement the **precautionary and sustainability principles** as basic principles and rationale behind all measures. Follow the hierarchy of prevention, elimination and minimization of hazardous substances.
- Include the possibility to **stipulate or initiate binding elements for chemicals and waste management throughout the whole lifecycle**, including raw material extraction, production, use and disposal of chemicals.
- Set **ambitious targets and milestones**. Make **national action plans binding** for all SAICM stakeholders, which particularly promote implementation and monitoring. Include concrete activities to solve the Issues of Concern in SAICM national action plans as well as education and awareness raising measures. Ensure that **groups of related chemicals are addressed** in the framework and in related action plans
- Establish mechanisms for **implementation and progress reporting, and independent monitoring**, as well as **mechanisms for compliance**.
- Realize global **implementation on all levels** (i.e. local, national, regional and international levels) and ensure this through national action plans. Make a SAICM-Beyond-2020-Framework **compatible with other global treaties** including a future legally binding Plastics Treaty^[4] or a future international regulation on pesticides^[5].
- Secure the multistakeholder and multisectoral character of SAICM. Ensure that the **negotiation process is carried out in a way that guarantees equal and fair participation of all stakeholders and right holders**, as well as the possibility to bring in contributions, especially from the civil society.
- Guarantee **solid, sustainable, and reliable financing by the internalization of external costs**, according to the **Polluter Pays Principle**. This could be achieved through a coordinated tax on chemical feedstocks, levied by the

national governments where the chemicals are produced^[6], ensuring and prioritizing the support for developing and emerging countries. Especially civil society organizations, Indigenous Communities, and science, including citizen science, should be eligible for funding. Further options to implement the Polluter Pays Principle are to be explored and implemented.

- Make sure that a SAICM-Beyond-2020 **addresses the identified shortcomings of the predecessor framework** and in particular, that solutions for all identified Issues of Concern (IoCs) are developed and new IoCs included when they are needed. Current IoCs must be kept until resolved^[7]. This includes e.g. a global phase-out of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) and their replacement with agroecology in line with ICCM4 resolution, measures to reduce endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC) exposure for humans and the environment, and transparency and traceability for chemicals in products.
- Guarantee **globally equal safety levels** for everyone and everywhere. States must ensure the protection of people and the environment through laws and regulations that **hold producers accountable** along the entire supply chain and throughout the whole lifecycle. **Eliminate unethical and unacceptable double standards.**
- Support the approach of a **binding Global Minimum Transparency Standard**^[8] as a first step for chemicals in products and the establishment of labeling according to UNEP SCP guidelines^[9]. This can ensure transparency and traceability, which are, together with the right to know, key requirements for a safe circular economy globally. It further helps to eliminate double standards and dumping of products in countries with less ambitious chemicals legislation, and to guarantee an equal level of safety for everyone everywhere.
- Ensure **sensitivity to the different exposition and vulnerability of people and groups of people** to hazardous substances, depending on their area of residence, occupation, social and economic status, age, and gender. Consider that children are particularly vulnerable to hazardous substances and must be protected from being born pre-polluted.
- Better **protect women from hazardous chemicals, by implementing gender-responsive policies, mainstreaming gender-equality and collecting gender-disaggregated data.** Recognize and encourage the **leadership role of women** in society, politics and science, and also in a SAICM-Beyond-2020-Framework. Consider that women are more susceptible to harmful chemicals than men and have different windows of vulnerability, e.g. during pregnancy. They are also exposed differently to toxic chemicals due to their gender roles.
- Recognize the principles and values of the **universal human rights**^[10]. Support all right holders, according to the respective international resolutions and declarations^[11].
- Recognize the principles of the **Rio-Declaration on Environment and Development** and the principles of the **Agenda 2030**, as **basic principles.**

- Acknowledge the **role of chemicals and waste in the biodiversity and climate crises and take action** to address these impacts through decreased chemical production, use and disposal, phase out of harmful substances and implementation of safe and non-chemical alternatives.

Sign the Call to Action here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecU8_1QRK983bsB1s92c0sHyVBvadDWW2dW--T_46_JiWjgg/viewform

[1] <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/acs.est.1c04158>

[2] <https://ipen.org/policy/chemical-safety-saicm>

[3] <http://www.saicm.org/About/Overview/tabid/5522/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

[4] <https://www.ciel.org/reports/convention-on-plastic-pollution-toward-a-new-global-agreement-to-address-plastic-pollution/>

[5] *Global Governance of Highly Hazardous Pesticides – A Proposal by PAN. (Version 3) SAICM/IP.2/INF.8*
http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/IP2/IP_2_INF_8_PAN_Global_Governance_HHPs_f.pdf

[6] <https://www.ciel.org/reports/chemicalstax/>

[7] <https://www.hej-support.org/saicm-needs-a-new-mechanism-for-action/>

[8] <https://www.globalchemicaltransparency.org/>

[9] <https://stg->

wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22395/product_sust_info_2017.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y

[10] See e.g. [OHCHR | Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights](#)

[11] [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), [The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), [Resolutions of the International Labor Organization \(ILO\)](#), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Initial Signatory:

- ALHem (Safer Chemicals Alternative)
- Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE)
- Association de l'Education Environnementale. pour les Futures Générations (AEEFG)
- Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA Kenya)
- BUND - Friends of the Earth Germany
- Center for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD Kenya)
- Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR)
- Ecocity
- Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO)
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- German NGO Forum on Environment and Development
- groundWork, Friends of the Earth South Africa
- Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport)
- Journalists for Human Rights
- Nexus3 Foundation
- Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE)
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Africa
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Aotearoa New Zealand
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Asia Pacific
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Germany
- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) United Kingdom
- Public Eye
- Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL)
- Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL) Uruguay
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- Toxics Link
- Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)
- World Future Council
- ZERO - ASTS