

ISC 3 Statement

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What is the situation we are facing and SAICM needs to find solutions – some facts:

97 % of children tested in frame of a study by the German Environment Agency show residues of plastic byproducts in their bodies, such as Phthalates and PFOA- Phthalates suspected to interrupt the hormone system, PFOA is toxic to the liver

A Canadian study shows that women working in plastic industry have 5 times higher risk to develop breast cancer

FIGO warned: Globally children are born pre-polluted - with a range of 50 to 200 harmful chemicals in their bodies.

We are facing a huge loss of biodiversity, including the terrifying loss of bees

Recent surveys by PAN, FAO and others indicate that about 70 % of farmers in Asia suffer acute pesticide poisoning every year; and the global significance of this is highlighted by FAO estimates that 74% of the worlds estimated 570 million farms are in Asia.

And we also know: The size of chemical industry will double by 2030.

Against this background...

Considering the fact above, we need all possible tools to address these challenges and sustainable chemistry can be one of them.

The baseline of the concept of sustainable chemistry must be “prevention first”. This includes hazard and risk reduction based on the precautionary principle approach, giving priority to non-chemical alternatives.

Agricultural is a good example to illustrate this: In agriculture the aim is to reduce the use of chemical inputs and maximize biological processes. SAICM has already agreed to agro-ecology as the priority replacement for HHPs. The success of the sustainable chemistry concept will depend on how it supports the ending of dependence on chemicals in agriculture.

At its best, sustainable chemistry could shift the entire industry, by providing transparency of information, phase out and substitution of hazardous chemicals in order to ensure environmental protection, consumer and occupational health and safety. This concept needs to be clearly defined in order to prevent greenwashing.

It is unlikely that a transformation of the chemicals sector will happen on a voluntary basis, only inspired by sustainable chemistry. Strict regulation is necessary to support this shift - SAICM can play a crucial role.

We have to be aware: The world is not only facing a climate collapse we are also facing a hazardous chemicals collapse. “We need to reboot the system. A new approach to sustainable chemistry, away from petroleum and mass production, is urgently needed. Policies need to increase the pressure: higher fines for per-pe-trators (polluters) and greater support for those moving to non-toxic alternatives.”