

Women and Gender in SAICM Beyond 2020

A statement for the discussions of the VWGs

Dear SAICM Community,

We, **a group of NGOs and other stakeholders and individuals working on women and gender in the frame of the SAICM process**, would like to take the opportunity of thanking the SAICM Secretariat for establishing and providing guidelines for the Virtual Working Group process - we are very much looking forward to the discussions!

The NGOs and other stakeholders and individuals, having contributed to this statement, are working as SAICM Stakeholders on comprehensive issues of women, gender and chemicals. We met first during the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group in Montevideo, Uruguay to discuss steps towards achieving gender-responsible sound management of chemicals and waste. Since then, we are connected via a mailing list and regular strategy sessions, and have submitted joint position papers for the third and fourth meetings of the Intersessional Process to prepare recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

What brings us together is that we strongly believe that gender equality is crucial for a healthy planet and healthy people and that gender equality has to be an integral part of the future framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste.

Until now, SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy underlines the specific importance of women as stakeholders. However, knowledge of the impacts of chemical exposures on women, as well as gendered dimensions and inequalities that impact sound management of chemicals and waste, is lacking because gender-disaggregated data is scarce or even absent. In addition, comprehensive gender mainstreaming within the management of chemicals and waste is not well recognized and accepted.

A future framework should be in line with the principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls reflected in many key documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically in SDG5, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the 2017 Global Environment Facility (GEF) policy on gender mainstreaming, UNEP's gender mainstreaming strategy, and others. Furthermore, gender considerations have been increasingly incorporated into global multilateral environmental agreements, including the BRS and the Minamata Conventions. It is obvious that gender should become an essential element of the successor to SAICM as was strongly highlighted during the discussions held within the Chemicals and SDGs Community of Practice.

With this, we would like to encourage you all to include gender in the discussions of the Virtual Working Groups:

- Gender equality considerations need to be included in the **targets**, and sex-disaggregated and gender responsive data are needed for the **indicators**,
- the strategy of gender mainstreaming must be part of the **governance and mechanisms to support implementation** at the national level and become part of the work of the national SAICM focal points,
- gendered health risks need to be considered within the **issues of concern**, and
- gender mainstreaming activities need to be reflected in **financial considerations!**

The Covid-19 crisis has widened existing gender inequalities and shown that gender responsive approaches should be prioritized going forward¹.

It is our task to fight back by building a more just and resilient world. It is now time to recognize the importance of ensuring gender equality – let's unite for a fair and gender-responsive future where chemicals and waste are managed in a sound manner and where gender equality and human rights are well recognized and protected.

This statement is being submitted by the following organizations and individuals:



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¹ From insights to action: Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19, UN Women (2020). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>