

# 45min for gender

Webinar Series on Gender Equality  
and Future Chemicals Management

**Summary:**  
**Gender gaps and gender specifics,  
and how to address them  
in SAICM Beyond 2020**



## **Gender gaps and gender specifics in chemicals management**

### **Gaps in understanding gender:**

- complexity: multi-dimensional, cross-sectoral; understanding of gender continually evolves
- women's rights are human rights; gender equality is a precondition and indicator for sustainable development (SDG 5) → no achievement of SDGs without gender equality
- gender is rarely seen as a strategic opportunity
- gender mainstreaming is the internationally agreed strategy since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

### **Specifics in health and exposure impacts:**

- women and men are affected differently because of their body composition
- women and men are affected differently because of their gendered roles in society
- women are at particularly high risk during child bearing years and pregnancy

### **Gaps in knowledge and research:**

- huge gaps in research on gender and its interlinkages in toxicology and risk assessments exist
- the white male body is still used as prototype
- women's occupational diseases are often under-diagnosed, under-reported and under-compensated
- virtually no studies on gender diverse persons exist

### **Specifics in protection:**

- men tend to work in high-risk industries: more short-term but acute exposure
- typical "women's job": more indirect and long-term exposure presumed to be less hazardous → receives often less attention in terms of protection measures
- work tools and personal protective equipment usually fit women less well
- women sometimes have to combine childcare with work → risk: children can be exposed
- precautionary consumption & activities are seen as women's tasks, due to the feminization of reproductive labor

### **Gaps in representation:**

- women are underrepresented at all levels of political leadership
- women often have less decision-making power at work(place)
- women are rarely in leadership positions for implementation

### **Gaps in implementation:**

- women are often less well reached by projects and communication
- women's concerns, capacity gaps and proposals are often overlooked in project design and implementation activities

### **Gaps in opportunities for being agents of change:**

- women's specific experiences, expertise and feminist perspectives are often not acknowledged
- ethic principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities are hardly included in new concepts of green and sustainable chemistry
- many barriers and less funding for women's businesses and start-ups
- masculine image of chemistry – women and girls still face discrimination in the discipline

### **Gaps in the Strategic Approach of International Chemicals Management (SAICM):**

- Gender Mainstreaming is not included as an integral task of the work
- little participation of women, women's organizations and gender experts
- SAICM documents: participation and vulnerability of women included, but gender not mentioned
- women's role as agents of change is not officially acknowledged
- gender only addressed in a minority of projects (mostly by NGOs)



more information & webinars:  
[www.gender-chemicals.org](http://www.gender-chemicals.org)



### **How to address these gender gap and gender specifics**

- promoting women's participation at all policy levels and in all sectors
- making gender analysis and gender impact assessments of policy measures an integral part of the work
- increasing research that is gender sensitive
- ensuring gender-responsive project design, trainings and communication
- ensuring gender-based classification of hazards, carcinogens
- developing special reports on gender & chemicals (e.g. cost-inaction report on women & chemicals)
- promoting women's start-ups and businesses, as well as female scientists

### **Concrete policy suggestions for SAICM Beyond 2020**

- increasing participation & funding of women, women's organizations and gender experts
- holding gender trainings/workshops for stakeholders and secretariat
- establishing a gender focal point/gender working group & creating a gender action plan
- using gender indicators & gender-disaggregated data
- including women and chemicals as a funding priority issue
- including requirements on gender in project funding
- making women and chemical safety an issue of concern
- committing to gender equality and gender justice in SAICM Beyond 2020 documents and High-Level Declaration

This paper summarizes the webinar series "45min for gender", held by the MSP Institute eV from July - December 2020.

#### **We thank all guest speakers for their contributions:**

Nalini Sharma (SAICM Secretariat), Dr Jutta Emig (the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety - BMU), Halshka Graczyk (International Labour Organization - ILO), Susan Wilburn (Heath Care Without Harm - HCWH), Griffins Ochieng (Centre for Environment Justice and Development - CEJAD), Prof. Dr. Klaus Kümmerer (International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre – ISC<sub>3</sub>), Dr Hans-Christian Stolzenberg/ Regina Schreiber (the German Environment Agency – UBA), Susan Wingfield (Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions – BRS); Brenda Koekkoek (SAICM Secretariat) and Giulia Carlini (Center for International Environmental Law - CIEL).

We are grateful for the generous support by the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).