

07 June 2021

Women and Gender at SAICM Beyond 2020

Dear Madame President,
Dear SAICM Bureau members,
Dear Co-Chairs of the SAICM Virtual Working Groups,

Thank you for your hard work in the Virtual Working Groups to engage all stakeholders and discuss further steps towards achieving meaningful and ambitious results at IP4 and ICCM5.

We, a group of NGOs and other stakeholders and individuals working on women and gender in the SAICM process, took an active part in all four Virtual Working Groups and have continuously brought the topic of women and gender into the discussions. We are glad to note that a number of women and gender considerations are mentioned in the final reports of all VWGs.

However, a clear commitment and a strategy for gender equality are still missing – the term “gender equality” is not even mentioned yet in any of the SAICM Beyond 2020 documents.

Our group, therefore, suggests that the following should be included in the SAICM Beyond 2020 discussions:

- Strategies for promoting gender equality in the SMCW. Such a discussion should take into consideration the following issues:
 - Establishment of effective institutional mechanisms for strengthening gender consideration in the SAICM process, e.g. nomination of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) at international, regional and national level. The GFP is the key staff member within an organization responsible and accountable for gender mainstreaming strategy and building capacities among his or her colleagues for incorporating gender into organizational management and processes. A starting point could be the nomination of a GFP at the SAICM secretariat.
 - Adopting a Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the promotion of gender equality in SMCW. This GAP should take into account the need to increase and strengthen the role of women in the work on SMCW, financing of actions that aim at promoting gender equality and women empowerment, specific gender responsive measures for protecting women from chemical exposure (in particular pregnant and nursing mothers), and capacity building and awareness raising for women.
- Strategies for improving access to justice and compensation for women who often suffer the most from unsound management of chemicals and waste.
- Strategies for ensuring the participation of women in decision making at all levels. Such strategies should inter alia include providing preferential leadership positions in the SAICM Process. A good starting point could be in the SAICM Bureau where a seat should be reserved for a representative of women and gender organizations.

We strongly emphasize the urgent need to deepen the discussion on women and gender within the governance and operational process to ensure that the future framework promotes gender equality

and human rights and empowers women and girls as required internationally (see [UNEA resolution 4/17., 2019](#)).

We suggest the following next steps:

- the re-examination of the negotiating text to ensure that gender and human rights are adequately addressed and in accordance with international practice; and
- the creation of a new multi-stakeholder VWG on women and gender to discuss a first draft of a gender action plan (following the examples of the Minamata Convention, the BRS Conventions, and other MEAS)

Gender equality, women's empowerment, and the integration of women's needs, capacities and knowledge are crucial for a healthy planet and healthy people and must be an integral part of the future framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste. We should use the time between now and the face-to-face meetings to ensure this.

We therefore request the SAICM President, the SAICM Bureau, and the SAICM Secretariat to develop a proposal on how to deepen the discussion on women and gender over the coming months to create and set-up a more gender-responsive governance and structural process. Our group would be delighted to offer our active support and our gender expertise in expediting the process.

Yours sincerely,
Anna Holthaus
MSP Institute

on behalf of

Asociación Colnodo - Red de Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia
Plácido Silva

ASSOCIATION WELFARE TOGO,
Yahya Msangi

Green Works,
Kamlesh Kumar Pathak

Groupe d'Action pour la Promotion et la Protection de la Flore et de la Faune (GAPROFFA),
Sounkoura Adetonah

Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport),
Olga Speranskaya and Alexandra Caterbow

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Africa,
Ndeye Maïmouna Diene

Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF),
Johanna Hausmann