

21 October 2020

Dear SAICM Secretariat and BMU:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into a possible ICCM5 High-Level Declaration (HLD) on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

Below, please find the **Global Alliance on Health and Pollution's** responses to the questions posed:

1. What would you consider the most important aspects and key messages for strengthening the sound management of chemicals and waste and political commitment for a just and resilient world that require anchoring in an HLD?

The enormous impact on human health is one of the key reasons the global community should be concerned about chemicals and waste issues. An HLD should reference the burden of disease from pollution – pollution causes 9 million premature deaths per year according to the Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health (2017).

Further, not polluting is inherent in the notion of sustainability itself. Strengthening the sound management of chemicals and waste, and thus preventing and mitigating pollution, is key if the world wishes to attain the SDGs.

An HLD should highlight that:

- a) SDG Target 3.9 has not been met and therefore needs significant attention,
- b) Although the Target 3.9 references all types of pollution including chemicals and waste, there is no health indicator for chemicals and waste, and that one should be set,
- c) The existing Burden of Disease from pollution could be used as a reference level; and
- d) Specifically, average blood lead levels (BLLs) in a country could serve as an excellent indicator as well. The Institute for Health Metrics Evaluation (IHME) that calculates the Global Burden of Disease also calculates average BLLs (see www.lead.pollution.org).

2. What should the scope, key elements and messages of the ICCM5 HLD cover? Considering, *inter alia*: o The current context (COVID-19, economic recovery interventions, and the need to make significant progress on SMCW).

UNICEF and Pure Earth recently issued a report called the Toxic Truth that found that 1 on 3 kids are lead (Pb) poisoned (800 million kids) globally, permanently limiting their potential to live healthy productive lives. Additionally, childhood lead poisoning is costing the global economy \$1 trillion dollars each year. Lead permanently reduces intelligence, thereby draining economic growth, hindering prosperity and reducing lifetime earnings. In some countries these costs exceed total overseas development aid. Lead also damages brains so that people are more likely



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to be violent. Murder, rape, and violent crime all go down by over half when lead exposures are reduced. Last but not least, lead kills 900,000 people each year. This is on par with deaths from COVID. Programs to halt lead exposures are do-able and inexpensive, and can have an enormous impact on health, economic growth, and security. ¹

An HLD should highlight lead (Pb) as a specific an issue of concern.

3. The enhanced contribution of the SMCW to implement the 2030 Agenda and address present and future needs.

An HLD could also reference the recent Leader's Pledge which references pollution and SAICM specifically (although primarily in the context of biodiversity)

4. Progress in efforts undertaken to date, and critical gaps to be addressed.

An effort to create an HLD should raise the issue of pollution chemicals and waste to the G20 level. If we can get a commitment in the G20 communique, studies show that there is a 75% chance that G20 countries will meet/deliver upon their commitments.

5. How should the ICCM5 HLD be structured, including participation, responsibilities, and processes to address current challenges?

GAHP supports continued multistakeholder engagement and inclusion of the non-profit non-governmental sector.

¹ The Toxic Truth. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/toxic-truth-childrens-exposure-to-lead-pollution-2020>)