

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Warmly welcome to Solna and Sweden!

First, I would like to thank the SAICM Secretariat for their organization and preparation of this meeting. I would also like to thank the Bureau, co-chairs and the ICCM 5 President Ms. Gertrud Sahler for their work on the intersessional process.

During the coming days we will discuss issues that will be crucial to protect the planet, our children and our common future.

The SAICM offers an arena to discuss and manage chemicals. Looking beyond 2020, we seek to go further and include waste. This beyond 2020 process provides an opportunity to set chemicals and waste in the context of sustainable development. However, I think we need to look even further than that. I encourage you all to widen the perspective and to be bold.

Sound management of chemicals and waste is a tool to save lives and is part of the solution to achieve a sustainable development.

In order to raise the political engagement, I have already had fruitful discussions with colleagues about the need for ambitious and concrete action. It is clear we need to act now and we need a broad involvement from all concerned stakeholders. I see a political readiness to step up the work and be ambitious.

I am therefore very glad to see the involvement from so many governments and stakeholders here today. This process can make a change for achieving sustainable development. Communication with a clear message is key. We need to communicate in order to explain the positive effects that the sound chemical and waste management will have for the health sector, agriculture, the economic growth etc. Further, there is a need to cooperate nationally as well as globally to achieve sound management of chemicals and waste-

I hope that we all use the opportunity to step up the efforts. Let's use the Sustainable Development Goals as a role model to create a vision for

beyond 2020, which is both aspirational and understandable. We also need to make the vision understandable by defining practical objectives and milestones that are possible to follow up.

Why the need for an international regime for a sound management of chemicals and waste?

In my view, the main reason is that the water in the tap or well need to be safe to drink, the fish on the market safe to eat and the toys our children play with, safe to use. It is not acceptable that hazardous substances can make for example groundwater and fish unsuitable for human consumption and toys not suitable to play with.

The harm that chemicals and waste may cause concern everyone and make it more difficult to end poverty and safeguard the environment.

What are the main changes needed to ensure that people are not harmed by chemicals?

All countries need to act on the knowledge we have on how to achieve risk reduction for chemicals and waste. However, there are wide differences today in the capacity of the world's countries to manage chemicals and waste. A crucial point is the need for transfer of capacity and knowledge.

The international trade with chemicals and articles is steadily increasing. Chemicals can spread globally by air and water, and also through the growing global trade. Nowadays, consumers also buy products directly from other countries via internet. And as trade changes, our international work needs to change with it.

This leads to global spreading of chemicals which calls for global action - for some issues our national efforts are simply not enough.

With the ongoing shift in production patterns, increased number of substances, we also need to consider enhanced global cooperation for the generation and dissemination of knowledge and information. Here industry is a key player with responsibility for chemicals produced and used.

Companies need access to information throughout the supply chain. Consumers need access to relevant information to be able to make informed

choices This needs to be accessible to consumers and it should not require an academic degree to understand what you buy in the supermarket. It should be understandable for everyone.

Furthermore, many chemicals in circulation have highly hazardous properties, but only some of those are managed on a global level. To address the hazardous substances that spread globally and warrant global action we need to start discussing further mechanisms. No country alone can rely on national or regional efforts to safeguard human health and the environment; here international cooperation is needed as well as the development of national chemicals and waste management capacities.

Nowadays, everybody agrees that climate needed the Paris deal. Heading on 2020 and beyond I see a need for an ambitious global deal for chemicals and waste, taking Paris as an inspiration. I look forward to further discussions on what that could contain.

The pollution caused by hazardous substances has never been worse than now. The impact on our children has never been deadlier. We have a moral responsibility to protect the planet and future generations. The time to act has never been better. Let's start today!