Africa Group on Financing the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes beyond 2020

November 13, 2020

THE AFRICAN REGION,

Reaffirming that the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) comprising of the Dubai Declaration, the Overarching Policy Strategy, and the Global Plan of Action, is critical in the environmental sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle and value chain,

Reiterating the position of the African Region on implementation of SAICM from the first ICCM, also reaffirmed during ICCM2, ICCM3 and ICCM4 that SAICM has been significantly underfunded for its ambitious mandate,

Recalling the outcome of the SAICM independent evaluation that clearly indicates the fact that many objectives were not achieved, despite the fact that all the stakeholders committed themselves to SAICM’s implementation according to their own needs and capabilities to do so, which resulted in the widening of the gap between high income countries and low-and middle-income countries concerning the sound management of chemicals compared to 2006 when SAICM was, ironically, adopted to narrow the very same gap,

Convinced by the fact that the failure to achieve the 2020 goal in Africa, and in developing countries at large, was primarily due to lack of efficient, predictable, sustainable and accessible finances and the transfer of up to date technology for the effective implementation of the SAICM national implementation plans,

Reiterating that industry initiated awareness programs such as “Responsible Care” are alone not sufficient to address the challenges of chemicals and waste management and thus their ineffectiveness,

Recalling that at its fourth session in 2015, ICCM recognized the need to start considering arrangements for the period beyond 2020 in Resolution IV/4 to prepare recommendations on SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and wastes beyond 2020, when SAICM is ending,

Recalling Principle 16 of the UN Rio Declaration of 1992 (A/CONF.151/26(Vol.I) to “...promote the internalization of environmental costs». In that the polluter should in principle, bear the costs of pollution,

Recalling the UNEP's Integrated approach to the sustainable financing of sound management of chemicals and waste of 2013 (UNEP/GC.27/7), that the three components (mainstreaming, industry involvement and a dedicated external finance) are mutually reinforcing and are all important for the long-term and sustainable financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste,
Welcoming the initiative by the Ministers of Environment from Sweden and Uruguay to launch the High Ambition Alliance (HAA) on Chemicals and Waste with the aim of ensuring an ambitious new global framework on the management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, to which the African Region responded positively by creating the African Friends of the High Ambition Alliance (HAA) on Chemicals and Waste Management that held its first meeting in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in order to bring African views into the High Ambition Alliance and encourage more stakeholders in the region into the Alliance,

Underscore the critical need for SAICM post 2020,

(1) to have sufficient, predictable, sustainable and accessible finances and the transfer of up to date technology for the effective implementation of the SAICM national implementation plans,

(2) to have robust, practical and monitored private sector commitment and engagement in the chemicals and waste management management, particularly for the establishment of a financial mechanism at global level for sufficient, predictable, and sustainable finances for sustainable sound management of chemicals and waste is important,

(3) No matter how good the vision is, the principles are, the governance regime is, - the effective implementation of SAICM beyond 2020 will critically depend on the availability of sufficient, predictable, sustainable and accessible financial resources internationally and nationally,

(4) Manufacturers of chemicals have to significantly contribute towards providing the much-needed sufficient, predictable, sustainable and accessible financial resources to enable the effective implementation of SAICM activities informed by the internalization of the environmental costs of their pollution (Principle 16 of the UN Rio Declaration of 1992 (A/CONF.151/26(Vol.I), the extended producer responsibility and polluter pays principles, and in line with the UNEP’s Integrated approach to the sustainable financing of sound management of chemicals and waste of 2013 (UNEP/GC.27/7).

The firm position of the African Group on behalf of its 54 member states on financing chemicals and waste management beyond 2020 shall be to lead and support the implementation of the industry involvement pillar of the integrated approach in financing the post 2020 era. Given the above rationale, we propose the following structure to implement the industry pillar or component:

a) The Chemical Industry shall contribute just 0.5% of the industry’s annual revenue to fund the implementation of SAICM National Implementation Plans which will include but not limited to chemical and waste management activities, clean-up of hazardous waste and remediation of contaminated areas. Such activities include for example, raising awareness and providing training on chemicals and waste management dangers and establishing precautionary measures to minimize exposure and incidents throughout the life cycle and value chain;

b) The Africa Group believes that the proposed 0.5% is insignificant cost relative to the total annual turnover of chemical industry is unlikely to affect the product prices, but
will certainly generate the required amount of the much required financial resources to complement other funding sources for the sound management of chemicals and waste;
c) The Africa Group further believes that the proposed 0.5% industry contribution is insignificant compared to the priceless price paid by the countries that find their environment contaminated, their flora and fauna, and humans exposed to toxic and hazardous chemicals and waste resulting in adverse effects and significant negative and in most cases life time impacts as the environment cannot be remediated to the original state and chemicals and hazardous waste exposure often result in life altering and threatening outcomes.
d) the Africa Group supports to use the proposals set in the Thought Starter Paper “Financing the Sound Management of Chemicals Beyond 2020 ” developed by IPEN, as a basis for discussion on industry involvement.
e) the Africa Group is ready to contribute constructively to negotiations on this critical matter for its region.