

Your Excellency Mrs. Karolina Skog, Minister of the Environment,
Mrs. Ligia Noronha, Director of the Economy Division of UNEP
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm pleased to welcome you to our second intersessional meeting here in Stockholm.

I would like to thank the Swedish government for hosting this important conference. And I would like to express particularly my gratitude to you, Madam Minister, for your participation in our meeting this morning and for organizing the high level dialogue yesterday afternoon. This underlines the commitment of your government for a sound management of chemicals and waste as an important topic on your political agenda.

I would also like to thank the SAICM Secretariat for its excellent preparation and organization of this meeting. And finally, I would like to pay my respects to our colleagues from the Environment Ministry in Sweden for their outstanding support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have been intensively discussing the future shape of the chemicals and waste cluster since we met in Brasilia last year for the first intersessional meeting. The SACIM regional meetings which took place in January and February this year are also an important contribution to the intersessional process. Their task was to provide input on sound management of chemicals and waste beyond to this conference. But they also offered a relevant opportunity for stakeholders to share experiences made in the regions in the implementation of SAICM. I can assure you that a lot of meaningful projects developed under the SAICM Quick Start Programme were presented by stakeholders, governments as well as non-governmental organisations. My impression was that SAICM is more than just a useful policy framework to implement a sound management of chemicals and waste and to complement the work, which is done under the conventions of Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata. This is the encouraging part of my analysis.

Due to the findings of the independent evaluation we know that all efforts in the past will not be enough to reach our 2020 goal. Therefore it's so important to analyse the findings of this evaluation. It is necessary to know what has worked in the past and to identify the gaps so that

we are able to develop a future approach which is even better and broader in scope than the one we have in place.

Our discussions so far have shown the following three points:

- There is a need for an enhanced strategic approach beyond 2020 covering both chemicals and waste management.
- This strategic approach should remain a voluntary, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform.
- And the sound management of chemicals and waste is essential for reaching many of the sustainable development goals.

A successful element of SAICM is the multi-stakeholder approach. This was a common opinion in all regional meetings. Non-governmental organisations have a strong role in implementing sound management of chemicals and waste. I would like to encourage them not only to keep up but also enhance their efforts as we move towards 2020 and beyond.

The independent evaluation has revealed that the multi-sectoral approach must be strengthened. This is also my observation. Besides UNEP, only WHO, UNITAR and OECD participated in the regional meetings. I missed especially FAO, ILO and UNDP. This sentiment was also expressed by many governments and other stakeholders.

The Emerging Policy Issue “Highly Hazardous Pesticides” was the most discussed issue in all regional meetings aside from the WEOG region. I know FAO is really engaged in this topic. Therefore it would have been a good opportunity to present their efforts for finding alternatives to the use of highly hazardous pesticides in the regional meetings. The issue of occupational health and safety must at last be more recognized. And the chemicals and waste cluster must be an integrated element on the UNDP agenda. Mainstreaming of sound chemicals and waste management into the broader development agenda must continue to be a priority for all. The WHO Road Map is an example for other UN Organisations on how sound management of chemicals and waste can be used for pursuing the sustainable development goals of the Agenda 2030.

The strategic approach for a sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 should remain voluntary. This is the common view. Nevertheless, I heard voices during the regional meetings which advocated the use of more legally binding elements. The question is what elements and how to have a comprehensive and holistic approach to sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 that covers both legally binding and voluntary elements. I would like to call your attention to the relationship between a voluntary strategic platform and the legally binding conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster. From my point of view we should combine all these elements for a strong and successful global overarching approach to sound chemicals and waste management.

The discussion about the future vision, policy principles, objectives and milestones as well as implementation and governance will start tomorrow in break out groups. The desirable outcome of these discussions is to reach draft elements that can be negotiated at the Open Ended Working Group next year.

I don't want to anticipate the outcome, but I would like to call your attention to one important result of the discussions in the regional meetings. Participants were asked, what are our priorities beyond 2020? One answer was to reach a better visibility for the chemicals and waste cluster. This is correct. And therefore the discussion about the future vision, objectives and milestones is so important. A better visibility is the precondition for more political and societal attention. We will not succeed in implementing a sound chemicals and waste management in all countries and in acquiring the necessary financial resources, if we can't reach more awareness for our issues.

Concerning the vision I suggest learning from others. UNEA 3 for example formulated "A pollution free planet". And the vision of the Agenda 2030 is "To leave no one behind". These are strong messages. Our current vision of SAICM is the 2020 goal. This text as a stand-alone vision is unsuitable for communication to decision makers and the public. The second field where we can learn from others is organizing scientific support. The issue of climate change wouldn't be so successfully considered without the reports and without the urging findings of IPCC.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We should use this meeting to identify what we would like to address in the future and how we can fulfil our views. This second intersessional meeting is well prepared through the regional meetings and the information papers the Secretariat has provided and the important contributions that stakeholders have submitted. I thank you for that.

I'm convinced that we will have vivid discussions during the next days. I would like to invite you to keep your engagement for a sound management of chemicals and waste and wish us a successful meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.