

IPEN Opening Statement at IP4

Dr. Tadesse Amera

Thank you, Madam CoChair.

I am CoChair of IPEN, a network of over 600 public interest organisations from more than 125 countries. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of the other public interest organizations here that you will hear from during this plenary session. We have participated actively in SAICM negotiations and implementation since the very beginning twenty years ago.

The UN General Assembly recently adopted a resolution establishing access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, a universal human right. At the same time, recent scientific evidence shows that the global threat of plastic and chemical production has exceeded the “planetary boundaries” for chemical pollution. In addition, the global chemical industry is projected to double by 2030, with rapid growth in emerging economies.

I come from Ethiopia, a country that does not produce any of these chemicals, similar to most other African countries, and many other countries represented in this room. Still, Africans are heavily and disproportionately impacted by the harm of chemicals and waste exported to our countries.

SAICM is the only instrument we have today to address most chemicals and waste but its goals were not met although progress was made. We have to learn from this experience and make sure the new framework that we started negotiating 6 years ago will succeed in creating meaningful change on the ground, that goes beyond a focus only on management systems. We need an even higher ambition this time to meet the increasing planetary crisis caused by chemicals.

It is therefore important that the new framework addresses the entire lifecycle of chemicals and all wastes, to mirror what is already agreed to by the UN General Assembly in SDG 12.4, which states the importance of achieving “the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their lifecycle...”.

Meaningful, open, inclusive and transparent in person participation is the only way to make the new framework to address chemicals and waste successful. Without broad stakeholder buy-in, we will not be able to make any progress towards meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. So, while we welcome the discussions during the Virtual Working Groups that kept the attention high on the need for an ambitious new framework, we also acknowledge that the process was not inclusive and accessible for many stakeholders. Starting from the IP3 outcome document is therefore the most fair way forward, and any text suggestions from the Virtual working groups can be introduced in the thematic group discussions.

Finally, the framework must also be accompanied by new and additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable funding accessible to all relevant stakeholders to address chemicals and waste issues.

Madame Co-Chair, in closing I would like to assure you that IPEN is committed to continue to do everything possible to make this meeting and the Beyond 2020 process meaningful and successful.

Thank you.