(Comments from the International Council of Chemical Associations)

Ministerial declaration of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”

Sources for the preliminary draft of the ministerial outcome document
released on 21 September 2017

Paragraph 2

As the representatives of all countries, we believe that, regardless of age, gender or culture, faith or wealth, no one should die from dirty water or poor hygiene. Yet, nearly 2,000 children below the age of five will do just that every day.


No one should choke because they walk down a street or cook a hot meal in their home. Yet every day, 9 out of 10 of us will continue to breathe air that is unsafe and 20,000 people will die because of it.


No community should be contaminated by hazardous chemicals and waste. Yet of the thousands of chemicals on the market, only a fraction is properly tested, labelled or tracked. Yet far too many communities lack adequate knowledge and information about the chemicals that they use or are exposed to; where communities have this knowledge, they often lack the capacity to manage chemicals safely.

The International Council of Chemicals Association states that based on REACH registration data and data from the USEPA, the number of chemicals in commerce is around 20-30,000 and data for those is available (e.g. on the European Chemicals Agency Website). The number of chemicals that remain on registries is a fraction of the number of chemicals that remain in registries because they were produced at one point in the past but are not produced today. This number relates to chemicals in commerce above 1t; the remaining are no longer on the market or are R&D substances not used outside of the lab.


and 50 million tonnes of electronic waste on our land.

Paragraph 6

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<th>We must recapture and reinvest the 300 tonnes of gold buried in electronic waste every year;</th>
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<td>The report “Valuing Plastics: The Business Case for Measuring, Managing and Disclosing Plastic Use in the Consumer Goods Industry. 2014, United Nations Environment Programme” states that, “the total natural capital cost of plastic used in the consumer goods industry is over $75bn per year.” In an updated report, “Plastics and Sustainability: A Valuation of Environmental Benefits, Costs, and Opportunities for Continuous Improvement. 2016” the same consultants found that the environmental cost of plastic had increased to $139 billion; and the cost of replacing plastics in consumer products and packaging with a mix of alternative materials that provide the same function was $533 billion, or 3.8 times the cost of using plastics.</td>
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The immense economic loss from exposing children to lead in paint;


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<th>the US$8.7 billion annual cost of intelligence quotient loss from exposure to by-products emissions of mercury,</th>
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<td>and the US$5 trillion spent on healthcare because of air pollution.</td>
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