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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 15 March 2019**

4/8. Sound management of chemicals and waste

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling target 12.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment”,

Emphasizing the cross-cutting relevance of the sound management of chemicals and waste to achieve many of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, including those on health,

Expressing strong concern regarding the present situation and current trends and challenges, as reflected in the two editions of the Global Chemicals Outlook, in the Global Waste Management Outlook, in the regional editions of the Waste Management Outlook, in the 2018 edition of the Global Mercury Assessment and in the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook, which show that insufficient progress has been made and that target 12.4 of the 2030 Agenda is unlikely to be achieved by 2020,

Aware that the production and use of chemicals globally is expected to increase threefold and that it has been estimated that the global use of materials will more than double by 2050,

Recalling the need for effective implementation of the global chemicals and wastes conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and emphasizing the importance of the overall orientation and guidance for achieving the 2020 goal of the sound management of chemicals, entitled “The future we want for the sound management of chemicals”, as endorsed by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fourth meeting,

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface and the global evidence base for chemicals,

Stressing the urgent need to strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels to support and promote science-based local, national, regional and global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020; the use of science in monitoring progress thereon; and priority setting and policymaking throughout the life cycle of chemicals and waste, taking into account the gaps and scientific information in developing countries,

Noting the initiatives under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the activities conducted by the regional and coordinating centres for training and technology transfer of the Basel Convention and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants to address the pressing issue of marine plastic litter and microplastics,

1. *Urges* Governments, industry and the private sector, civil society, the scientific and academic community and other stakeholders to intensify and prioritize efforts relating to the sound management of chemicals and waste so that target 12.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved;
2. *Emphasizes* the need for urgent and resolute action at all levels to implement the 2030 Agenda as it relates to those matters, including through an improved long-term enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste, in line with Environment Assembly resolutions 1/5 on chemicals and waste, 2/7 on sound management of chemicals and waste and 3/4 on environment and health; and welcomes the initiative of the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste in that regard;
3. *Highlights* the importance of minimizing and preventing, when feasible, the use of hazardous substances in material cycles and managing chemicals in products throughout their life cycle, from design to waste, in order to adapt production and consumption models to achieve sustainable consumption and production, including but not limited to the circular economy and other sustainable economic models;
4. *Underlines* the importance of waste prevention and minimization at source through, among other things, minimizing packaging materials, discouraging planned product obsolescence and improving the reusability and recyclability of products and the efficiency of resources through improved design and the use of secondary raw materials;
5. *Welcomes* the publication of *Global Chemicals Outlook II: From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and highlights its potential to contribute to the chemicals science-policy interface;
6. *Looks forward* to the forthcoming publication of *Global Waste Management Outlook II*, which will include information on and consideration of the product, chemicals and waste interface, as well as the complementarity and interlinkages with relevant developments and policies – for example, in relation to plastics and marine litter;
7. *Welcomes* the analysis of best practice in sustainable chemistry produced by the United Nations Environment Programme and recognizes the value of developing a better understanding of sustainable chemistry opportunities globally;
8. *Also welcomes* the evaluation of the implementation of the integrated approach to addressing the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste; notes with appreciation the establishment and operation of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; encourages Member States in a position to do so, in particular developed countries, to scale up financing; and encourages countries to promote and further increase mainstreaming of the issue of chemicals and waste in national budgets and sectoral policies, as well as the involvement of industry and the private sector and the allocation of responsibilities to them;
9. *Encourages* the involvement of all stakeholders, including industry, in strengthening the science-policy evidence in this area, including consideration of socioeconomic aspects;
10. *Underlines* the importance of cooperation and coordination between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the joint secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, as appropriate and as agreed on by the parties to those conventions at the respective conferences;
11. *Welcomes* the decisions on coordination and cooperation between the Minamata Convention and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions taken by the conferences of the parties to those conventions, including Minamata Convention decision 2/7 on cooperation between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, which, among other things, requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to submit an operative proposal, prepared together with the Executive

Secretary of the Minamata Convention and with the support of the Executive Secretary of the Basel and Stockholm conventions and the United Nations Environment Programme part of the Rotterdam Convention, on a stable framework for the sharing of relevant services between the secretariats of those conventions, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at its third meeting, and also invited the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to consider such a proposal;

12. *Calls upon* Governments and all other stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as appropriate, industry and the private sector, civil society, and the scientific and academic communities, to:

(a) Take into account the overall orientation and guidance of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management for achieving the 2020 goal of the sound management of chemicals, entitled “The future we want for the sound management of chemicals”, in efforts to achieve the 2020 goal;

(b) Follow up on the conclusions and recommendations of the second edition of the Global Chemicals Outlook, building on the first edition of the Outlook, as well as on the first edition of the Global Waste Management Outlook and on the regional waste management outlooks completed to date;

(c) Address the importance of the product, chemicals and waste interface in relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks, where appropriate;

(d) Improve the information provided about chemicals in consumer goods and throughout the supply chain;

(e) Support technical assistance and capacity-building for implementation of the integrated approach to financing – for example, through contributions to the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as part of official development aid or through business-to-business cooperation;

(f) Encourage all stakeholders involved in the sound management of chemicals and waste to seek the establishment of permanent information programmes directed at consumers and the general public, highlighting the risks generated by chemicals and raising awareness of the responsibilities related to the management of chemicals and waste;

(g) Support relevant science-policy interface platforms, including input from academia; enhance cooperation in the areas of environment and health; and consider, at the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and in the intersessional process on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, ways of strengthening the science-policy interface, including its relevance for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level;

(h) Engage in the discussions launched pursuant to Environment Assembly resolution 1/5 on chemicals and waste and International Conference on Chemicals Management resolution IV/4, on the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, including the preparation of recommendations for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;

(i) Take note of the achievements of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions in contributing to the sound management of chemicals and wastes; take action to reduce waste generation at source; manage waste in an environmentally sound manner in the country in which it is generated; minimize the transboundary movement of waste; and develop and implement, as appropriate, national legal instruments to control the import and export of chemicals and waste;

(j) Join in the pursuit of an improved enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste, including through information of and consideration by United Nations bodies related to the 2030 Agenda, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the General Assembly, as appropriate;

13. *Invites* the Open-ended Working Group of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management to prepare the ground for resolutions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth meeting pertaining to a cross-cutting and holistic approach to the sound management of chemicals and waste in the long term, including enhanced involvement of all stakeholders, taking into consideration Environment Assembly resolutions 1/5 on chemicals and waste, 2/7 on sound management of chemicals and waste and 3/4 on environment and health;

14. *Requests* the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources and, where appropriate, in cooperation with the member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, to:

(a) Step up technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States to meet goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda as soon as possible, including for improved access to scientific information to strengthen the science-policy interface at the national level, taking into account the overall orientation and guidance of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management for achieving the 2020 goal of the sound management of chemicals, entitled “The future we want for the sound management of chemicals”, and the multisectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of the sound management of chemicals and waste;

(b) Strengthen cooperation and avoid duplication of action undertaken by member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals under their own mandates to achieve target 12.4 of the 2030 Agenda, and all other goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda that are affected by the sound management of chemicals and waste, as an essential element of improving the current multilateral framework on the matter;

(c) Enhance the support provided to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in preparation for the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, including through the provision of sufficient staff and resources for the secretariat of the Strategic Approach, in view of its role in the improved enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste, as designated by the International Conference on Chemicals Management;

(d) Synthesize the analysis of best practice in sustainable chemistry produced by the Environment Programme into manuals on green chemistry and sustainable chemistry, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, by the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, and continue to work on a long-term holistic approach for the sound management of chemicals and waste, taking into account both the importance of the sound management of chemicals and the potential benefits of chemicals for sustainable development;

(e) Follow trends in the design, production, use and release of chemicals and the generation of waste in order to identify issues of concern for future editions of the Global Chemicals Outlook and the Global Waste Management Outlook and catalyse sound management actions;

(f) Prepare, by 30 April 2020, a report on matters in which emerging evidence indicates a risk to human health and the environment, identified by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the Global Chemicals Outlook and under subparagraph (e) above, including an analysis of existing regulatory and policy frameworks and their ability to address those matters in the achievement of the 2020 goal, in particular for lead and cadmium;

(g) Prepare, by 30 April 2020, an assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste, taking into account existing mechanisms, including under the United Nations Environment Programme, and relevant examples in other areas, in order to maximize cost-effectiveness, make best use of new technologies, track progress and improve implementation of relevant multilateral environmental agreements at the national level, and make the assessment available for consideration by all stakeholders prior to the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management;

(h) Provide technical advice, policy support and capacity-building assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular to put in place the necessary legislative and regulatory frameworks and to mainstream the sound management of chemicals and waste in national development plans, domestic budgets and relevant sectoral policies; and to further encourage industry and private-sector involvement throughout the process, including through designated responsibilities and measures to promote cost recovery and the “polluter pays” principle;

(i) Submit a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution to the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management;

(j) Report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution and on the implementation of the programme of work activities with respect to chemicals and waste.