

Africa Group Statement on SPP

Thank you, Madam Chair!

1. First of all, the African Group, representing 54 countries, welcomes UNEA Resolution 5/ 8 that mandated this open-ended working group on the very timely issue of institutionalizing the Science-Policy Panel on the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.
2. We thank the government of Kenya for hosting the first segment of the open ended working group.
3. We appreciate the Secretariat, the government and the people of Thailand for efficiently organizing this meeting and for the warm hospitality. Our special thanks go to the local organizing team here in Thailand for assisting us in tackling logistical and visa challenges .
4. Africa is a net importer of most of the hazardous chemicals, but the capacity for proper management of these chemicals whilst in use and after they become waste is quite inadequate. To this end, we aspire to have a panel that has a broad scope and that sees to the issue of chemicals across their lifecycle and along the global value chain to further enhance our objective of protecting human health and the environment from their harmful impacts. The SPP should therefore endeavor to develop the nexus between the global value chain and the life cycle approach of sound management of chemicals and waste.
5. The Africa region supports the integrative approach in defining the scope of the Science Policy Panel via the lens of the global value-chains. Such an approach should focus beyond current chemicals in use and their waste. It needs to extend to legacy pollution. In this regard, the Africa region calls for a re-orientation of focus on the prevention of pollution before it happens while also tackling future pollution..
6. To this end, Madam Chair, we would like to see the vital role of states in coordinating actions in their jurisdiction whilst also recognizing the critical role and the active participation that the industry and other actors play. Africa calls for the involvement of the private sector during the design of the panel as well as during the implementation of its various

- work programmes. Other UN bodies and members of the IOMC, particularly WHO, ILO, FAO and others, should identify the specific roles they can play in this global call and become part of it.
7. The Africa region also recognizes the vital role of scientists during the Science Policy Panel negotiation process and therefore calls for their involvement in the OEWG. The region proposes the involvement of three scientists from the academia and research institutions from each of the UN region.
 8. Our region does not have sufficient technical capacity, including the required scientific basis, the skill sets, the infrastructural capacity (such as laboratories), the needed research acumen, as well as financial resources to execute national research that can directly feed into global assessments. Because of this challenge, there is an enormous information asymmetry, that has sidelined Africa and other low- and middle-income countries from global assessments. To make the work of the Science Policy Panel efficient and not repeat past mistakes, we urge us all to overcome this challenge of information asymmetry and address the data gap that is characteristic of our continent.
 9. To this end the functions of the SPP should extend to ensuring that capacity is consistently built globally, regionally, and nationally, as we implement the outputs of the panel.

Madam Chair!

10. We underscore the need for an ambitious Panel (SPP), backed by an equally ambitious means of implementation to support, not only the work of its secretariat and work programmes, but also to bridge the information gap to ensure data inclusivity in its assessment. Linking financial support to each of the functions of the Panel (SPP) will ensure that information generation and dissemination, research data and evidence-based policy-making are actioned in low- and middle-income countries. Otherwise, we will perpetuate the usual risk of being sidelined from global assessments that will fail our collective ambition of tackling one of the triple planetary crises – **pollution** .

11. The Africa region wishes to see the recognition and incorporation of location-based knowledge and traditional know-how, as this is highly critical in addressing the common challenges of chemicals and waste management in the region. The panel needs to devise a system for accommodating this knowledge sets in its expert pool.
12. The science-policy panel should be designed in such a way that the needs of highly vulnerable populations, such as the youth, children, women and health-compromised are met.
13. Madam Chair, we recognize that we are not here to reinvent the wheel but to restructure it in such a way that we can effectively overcome future environmental and health challenges related to chemicals and waste. In so doing, we have to pay attention not to duplicate existing efforts and anything that may clog the wheel of progress of multilateralism and global harmony.

Thank you Chair!