

Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

# Statement for the High-level Segment of the 6th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

By: Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary

Nairobi, 29 February 2024

Your Excellency,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address UNEA-6 on “*Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution*”, a topic that resonates deeply with the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as well as the Minamata Convention, and the newly adopted Global Framework on Chemicals.

As member states move forward to adopt a number of key resolutions - did you know that the uptake of pollution in the outcomes of cooperation frameworks developed in 2023 was only 9%, in comparison to 87% for Climate Change and 38% for Biodiversity loss. This is despite the fact that according to the United Nations the causes of climate change are pollution from energy production, transport and manufacturing, clearing of forests, agriculture, over-consumption and waste.

Indeed, thousands of chemicals and many types of wastes, some of which are hazardous, can be found in our homes and as part of our daily lives, whether in clothing, food, housing,

communication, transportation and so on – but we act as if those products are invisible.

However, whilst the Chemicals and Wastes MEAs have been instrumental in making them visible through the life cycle approach, the growing outputs of plastics wastes and e-wastes, the hundreds of toxic additives in products and the prolific use of highly hazardous pesticides remains a serious global concern.

Some say, all these environmental measures will affect my economy, increase inflation, and decrease jobs!

But I ask - is there a positive economic case for reversing this deadly trajectory? Indeed, I challenge you all - there is!

Especially when we take into account the economic losses arising from weakened biodiversity functions and services, economic losses for extreme weather events and droughts, economic losses from throwing away precious minerals at the cost of destroying more habitats for mineral extraction, economic losses arising from increasing burden of medical treatment as a result of pollution, cancers, rising infertility and so on.

Every two years, and for the past 20-30 years, more than 180 parties to the conventions on chemicals and wastes meet to take major decisions on those very 'invisible' dimensions that threaten planetary survival! Thus, your continued commitment to supporting the full implementation for stronger MEAs implies stronger national governance mechanisms that can allow members states and parties to drive more impactful measures for a cleaner and healthier planet.

Excellencies, colleagues and friends, let us make UNEA-6 and the MEAs the driving force in avoiding this looming precipice.

Thank you!