



**Agenda item 4 - OHCHR Statement to the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (OEWG-3)**

June 2024

*Check against delivery*

Thank you, Chair.

Pollution and the unsound management of chemicals and waste negatively impacts the enjoyment of human rights, which all States have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill.

The right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (right to science, for short) requires that policies be based on the best available, generally accepted scientific evidence.

And there is a very simple reason for that: When science is compromised, it distorts and misinforms decision making, with devastating consequences for human health, well-being and the planet.

The new Panel should be insulated against those with vested interests seeking to sow doubt, delay action and undermine scientific fact.

To fulfil its goals, a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention should include the following elements:

1. A clear **commitment to respect and protect human rights**, which should be reflected in the preamble and operating principles, alongside principles of prevention, precaution, transparency, gender equality, non-discrimination, intergenerational equity and international solidarity.
2. A comprehensive **conflict of interest policy**, which ensures the disclosure and evaluation of potential conflicts of interest, including those from past engagements. Evaluations of conflict of interest should be public and independently monitored to ensure transparency and secure public confidence

in the work of the panel. Experts with conflicts of interest should not be associated with the Panel's work.

3. States and businesses should be guided by the principle of full disclosure, allowing secrecy only when the necessity and legitimacy of confidentiality are proved. Claims of confidentiality should be justified and periodically substantiated. **Information on environmental and health impacts should be subject to full disclosure** supporting informed decision-making in the public interest.
4. The **right to participation** must be operationalized throughout the different modalities of work of the Panel and its subsidiary bodies. The Panel should welcome submissions from observers and integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and citizen science in its work. Participation and inclusiveness improve outputs and builds political will.
5. The Panel should establish a system to **prevent and address intimidation and reprisals** against anyone engaging with the work of the Panel. Attacks against scientists aimed at discrediting and silencing them violate their rights and are contrary to the basic functioning and purpose of science-policy interfaces.
6. States have an obligation to **cooperate internationally** to advance all rights including the right to science. International cooperation, including capacity building, technology transfer, mobilization of resources and sharing of scientific knowledge, is essential.

Thank you.