

Swiss intervention on chemicals and waste management including financing and enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and waste cluster

in the Committee of the whole on agenda item 4a) Policy issues: state of the environment

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Madam President

- Chemicals are crucial for our daily life and sustainable development and they offer important opportunities and benefits, but they may also pose a challenge and risk to the environment and to human health. International policy and cooperation to promote the sustainable management of chemicals and wastes is important. Therefore, it is not surprising that the chemicals area has been and we hope continue to be one of the flagships and key successes of UNEP.
- Madam President, let me assure you that Switzerland as home to an important chemicals industry, a leading place in related research and host of numerous relevant international institutions and convention secretariats will maintain its strong commitment to this important issue.
- Let me begin with thanking UNEP and UNEP Chemicals for the excellent work they have accomplished with regard to chemicals and waste management, since the last regular session of the Governing Council.
- The team of UNEP Chemicals organized and facilitated three key meetings on Mercury (AD hoc open ended WG in Bangkok end of 2009, the INC1 in Stockholm 2010 and the INC 2 in Chiba beginning 2011) in a extraordinarily competent manner: This excellent support is crucial in

order to meet the ambitious goal set by UNEP GC 25 to complete the preparation of a global instrument on mercury prior to the next regular session of GC/GMEF in 2013.

Lead and Cadmium

- We would like as well to thank the Chemicals Branch of DTIE and the Working Group on Lead and Cadmium for their reviews of the scientific information on cadmium and on lead, which have been finalized as of December last year.
- Both reviews clearly show a dimension to the environmental and human health problems of these two heavy metals that go beyond the local and regional scale. The reviews have for example
 - shown intercontinental transport by air,
 - shown that waterways and oceans are important transporters and
 - above all have shown that lead and cadmium released by human activities can provide an important contribution to remote areas that do not have natural high levels of these metals.
- The reviews provide important information on the consequences of anthropogenic activities such as mine tailings and on the products containing these metals such as batteries, paints, petrols, childrens' toys or jewellery. It has been clearly shown in the scientific assessments as well as in the reports on trade that many issues are specifically relevant to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- For Switzerland it is a clear conclusion that national actions, including legislation on lead and cadmium is often missing or fragmented, addressing certain issues but not others that are equally relevant.

- When taking all of this into consideration, we believe it is appropriate to address these issues and to fill those gaps. But we do not believe that this should be an excuse for delaying actions as this is an issue of both regional and global concern and that there is at this moment a need for global action on lead and cadmium.
- We therefore believe that the findings of the different scientific reviews and studies on the lead and cadmium should be turned into practical policy guidance not only a national but as well on a regional and global level.
- We have to agree: lead and cadmium are a international problem that requires international action. Lead and cadmium are of global concern.
- This requires further action, namely:
 - We have to close remaining scientific gaps;
 - A process to analyze the different options should be launched. This process should take into consideration the conclusion from the different studies, the identified data gaps, and the information gathered from the national actions and legislations, and it should feed back with concrete proposals to the next governing council. Thus we would support launching a government-led process to analyze the different option.
 - And, we should launch concrete actions as those proposed by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. Switzerland supports in principle the establishment of a partnership on mercury and the other concrete actions presented by Nigeria and we are looking forward to discuss the concrete text.

Mercury

- We welcome the progress that has been made in the development of a legal binding instrument on mercury in the two negotiation sessions and we hope that the constructive atmosphere of the first two negotiation sessions remain until the INC 5.
- While elaborating such a legal binding instrument we should keep in mind our overall vision: developing a most efficient, effective, coherent and comprehensive chemicals and waste management regime that is responsive to new and emerging issues and challenges of global concern.
- There exist several approaches how to achieve this. While Switzerland is willing to look at these different options to achieve this vision, Switzerland focuses its effort on a bottom up approach trying to embed the new convention into the existing chemicals and waste cluster.

SAICM

- Several important events are on the meeting agenda of SAICM in 2011 and 2012: the third session of the international conference on chemicals management ICCM 3 and its preparation meetings (OEWG, regional meeting)
- For ensuring a sound preparation and successful outcome the continued support to SAICM from UNEP is crucial.
- Three issue of major importance should be considered in view ensuring the further progress of SAICM:
 - 1) SAICM offers an ideal international governance structure for addressing new emerging issues such as manufactured nanomaterials and nanotechnology. This particular feature should be used in effective and efficient, complementary manner by the SAICM stakeholders.
 - 2) Identify options for financing the implementation of SAICM is another key issue. A first step has been made with the opening of the GEF POPs window for chemicals management. In addition

the deliberation and results of the consultative process on financing chemicals and waste under the leadership of the Executive Director may contribute and complement the financing discussion in SAICM.

3) Finally, we appreciate the development of a draft strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of SAICM and look forward to its adoption at ICCM 3. Then an enhanced commitment of this sector for SAICM is of great importance for the further development and implementation of the Strategic Approach.

Waste management

- There are several important activities and initiatives ongoing within the Basel Convention with the aim to ensure the sustainable management of waste in applying the life cycle approach.
- For example the Indonesian-Swiss Country-Led Initiative to improve the effectiveness of the Basel Convention that is going to present its results at the COP 10 of the Convention this October.
- And the Partnership on Computing Equipment in co-chaired by Switzerland.
- WE believe that this two among others play an important role in ensuring the implementation and further development of the Basel Convention.
- A close cooperation and coordination of all ongoing initiative but as well in the elaboration and launch of new ones is of great importance.
- Then only with such a coherent approach can an complementary, efficient and effective development and implementation be ensured and result in a sound management of wastes.

- Taking all this into consideration, we doubt if the launch of a global e-waste assessment would be complementary and provide additional insight in this issue.
- Finally, we believe the two draft decisions on waste management are interlinked and complement each other thus could be combined in one.

Financing chemicals

- Financing is crucial for ensuring a sustainable management of chemicals and waste at international, regional and national level.
- This important issue needs to be addressed comprehensively
- Therefore the UNEP initiative on financing chemicals and waste is most significant,
- We welcome the comprehensive and inclusive approach taken by this UNEP lead initiative aiming at identifying and analyzing concrete options for financing the international chemicals and waste management.
- The process has to be directly linked to the ongoing work in the chemicals and waste Conventions, the new legally binding instrument on mercury and SAICM
- Switzerland has pushed several times to address the challenge of long term financing within SAICM, including with presenting concrete options.
- We are deeply concerned that this crucial issue was not yet taken up;
- We hope that the UNEP Initiative will be helpful to find a timely answer to that urgent challenge...

Synergies in the chemicals and waste cluster

- We would like to applaud the review of the ED on efforts undertaken to enhance cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and waste cluster.
- This study provides an excellent basis for further exploring synergies from a broad perspective.
- Switzerland supports a further study as proposed in the draft decision.
- It contributes to the deliberation on a long term strategy for the development of the chemicals and waste regime which goes beyond and complements the important ongoing process between the existing conventions.
- Let us remind: the synergy process is not an aim in itself, it shall help us:
 - to fulfill the needed tasks in a more effective, more efficient and more comprehensive manner
 - to help for coherence at the international, but also at the regional and national level
 - to help and facilitate effective implementation at the national level
 - to ensure that the international chemicals and waste regime is responsive in an effective, efficient, coherent and coordinated manner to new and emerging issues and challenges
- We should therefore use the study to further analyze different options on how to ensure that the synergy process is going to provide us what we are expecting from it.
- Such an analysis is ideally carried out through a process facilitated by the UNEP but under the leadership of governments.

Final remarks

- In conclusion, taking all ongoing activities and initiative of 2011, it can be said the international year of chemicals has started in a very productive way.

- And within this week we have the opportunity to complement it with additional contribution.
For example with further global action on Lead and Cadmium
- Switzerland will be happy to submit concrete proposals in the contact group on chemicals and wastes to strengthen the parts of the current draft decisions.
- We suggest that all these issues are dealt with jointly since they are interlinked and complement each other.
- In addition we propose to develop one decision covering all draft decisions on chemicals and waste management sent to the contact group.
- Madam President, dear colleagues, let me stress again our commitment to contribute to a positive outcome of this Governing Council that will help us to make another important step to ensure a further development of the chemicals and waste regime that ensures an efficient, effective and comprehensive management of old and new substance of global concerns.