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IPEN Intervention on green chemistry and sustainable chemistry

Given by Alexandra Caterbow

Thank you Mr. Chair-

Both green chemistry and sustainable chemistry are useful in the Beyond 2020 process, but neither concept replaces the need for sound chemicals management or dealing with legacy issues. Since the concept of sustainable chemistry is lacking clear definition, indicators, and best practice examples, it is premature to include it as a guiding principle in the Beyond 2020 process.

Green chemistry should be an obligatory part of sustainable chemistry. We heard from countries that they are working on integrating the concept of green chemistry in their economies, with great success. Because companies realize that this is what many consumers want and therefore they can increase their market share.

Key elements of either concept should be:
1) Full transparency, enabling consumers, citizens and workers to make full use of their right-to-know

2) Making the elimination of hazards a top priority, and not compromising that goal by balancing the use of hazardous chemicals with other elements of sustainability
3) Inclusion of non-chemical alternatives, which are very useful; for example, the implementation of agroecology
4) Emphasis on education and putting green chemistry in the curricula of related occupations and university courses.

We envision, as outcomes of this process, that:
a) UN Environment produces a report focused on practical steps for hazard reduction in chemical design with an emphasis on developing and CEIT countries
b) Capacity-building workshops at SAICM regional meetings will be held to inform about how green chemistry can lead to hazard reduction in terms of workers safety
c) The private sector implements benchmarking tools to assure hazard reduction in the design of new chemicals and assessment of current products, and reports on progress at each ICCM.

Thank you.