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Uncertainty still hovers over the future of SAICM beyond 2020

Abidjan, Cote d' Ivoire

For 3 days from 6th – 8th February 2018 Abidjan hosted the SAICM Africa Regional Meeting at Hotel Belle Cote where delegates from 54 countries and several CSOs from the African Region deliberated on the future of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) beyond 2020.

One thing was certain: a framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste is needed beyond 2020 in order to ensure attainment of sustainable development in the Region.

Another issue that was certain was the fact that majority of delegates (government and non-governmental) are not involved in other processes that have far-reaching implications on SAICM beyond 2020. There was a clear knowledge gap on the status of other processes such as the African Development Agenda (Agenda 2063) and the Paris Agreement (through the Nationally Determined Contributions). Some proposed measures and actions in these processes may bring additional chemical and waste management challenges on a huge scale.

It was also clear that there are still divergent views amongst stakeholders on different issues that are of importance to Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste (SMCW).

For example though HHPs were identified as one of the critical Policy Emerging Issues (EPIs) the chemical industry delegation led by CropLife Africa questioned whether this categorization is backed by scientific evidence and whether safer alternative do exist. Other diverging views that can undermine SMCW were related to how the future institutional and financial mechanisms should be designed in order to overcome past challenges e.g. accessibility of funds to all stakeholders, ensuring stronger and predictable financial contribution from the industry, strengthening coordination at the regional, sub regional and national levels and ensuring stronger participation by other UN Agencies such as WHO, ILO, FAO and others.

WELFARE TOGO is a non-governmental organization representing 4090 youths (87% girls) dealing with a wide range of sustainable development issues. The NGO has a web TV dedicated to ecological issues at www.ecoconscience.net. It is accredited to SAICM, BRS, UNFCCC, UNEA, UNCCD, ECOSOG (UN and African Union) and is current official representative of the UNCCD CSO Panel on behalf of African CSOs.



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However the meeting registered some success in laying ground for further elaboration of future objectives, policy principles, securement of high level political commitments, governance and implementation arrangements.

More work has to be done and hopefully the end intersessional meeting that is scheduled to take place in Stockholm Sweden in April 2018 is expected to carry these positive outcomes from the African Regional meeting to a fruitful conclusion.

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