

JOINT STATEMENT

Agenda item 22.- Climate change, pollution and health

Thank you, Chair.

I deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, México, Monaco, Norway, Panama, Peru, the EU and its 27 member states and my own country, Switzerland.

We thank the Secretariat for preparing the report EB154/24, which analyzes diverse ways in which the WHO can contribute to UNEP's science policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (SPP); as well as the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to develop an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

We couldn't agree more that urgent action needs to be carried out to address the interlinkages between health and the environment and enhance the engagement of the health sector and the WHO in leading and supporting existing efforts to address the health risks and impacts of environmental issues, including through a human rights lens.

In this sense, we welcome the report by the Director-General on the 'Impact of chemicals, waste and pollution on human health' and its several proposals to enhance WHO engagement in the SPP and the INC and to further WHO action on chemicals, waste and pollution.

It is important to assure that inefficiency, duplication and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures are avoided. To do so, WHO can build on its extensive expertise for offering technical, administrative and practical support, in consultation with Member States.

Given the time constraints of developing these plans and activities, particularly in light of the WHO's busy meeting schedule and the already defined timelines for the SPP and the INC processes, we are pleased to see the plans to participate in capacity building efforts and research initiatives, from a health focus as well as continuing to explore all options for its involvement in the future instruments.

In this spirit, we support the WHO to take a more active role in global chemicals management to protect human health, including in the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals, which was recently adopted in Bonn, Germany. It would be important, for example, to carry out a holistic revision and update of the Chemicals Road Map to enhance health sector engagement in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management towards the 2020 goal and beyond, to reflect

the agreements adopted in the Global Framework. We therefore welcome the scheduled discussion on this topic for the 78th World Health Assembly in 2025.

With regards to the INC process to develop a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, we would welcome the realization of a Health Day in association with INC4, to be held in Ottawa, Canada, to better promote and shed light on the importance of the issue of plastic pollution, chemicals in plastics, microplastics, and potential harmful implications for the respect and enjoyment of the right to health.

The health focus on environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change is indispensable. As such, we welcome the incorporation of this agenda item and look forward to continued work and engagement in this area within the WHO.

As a final note, in order to carry out these new and important initiatives, it will be fundamental to assign finance to these efforts. It will therefore be critical for the WHO Secretariat and WHO Member States to find creative funding mechanisms.

Many thanks.

,