



Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 18)

## **Strategies for sustainable chemicals and waste management (HLS Roundtable 4)**

### **Statement by Switzerland**

held by Mr. Franz Perrez, Deputy Head of International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

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Chemicals are an important basis of our well-being, but their sound management is also a challenge for all of us. When entering this room, I have received a brochure from NGOs stressing that CSD 18 fails to deliver on chemicals. When coming to this meeting, I have not expected that CSD-18 delivers, but that it provides a platform for exchange of experience and lessons learnt, to identify challenges that need our attention, and to prepare CSD-19 which then should formulate further guidance.

But deliver, this is the task of the international chemicals and waste regime. And I am impressed how it has delivered so far. Chemicals and waste have been one of the success stories since the Rio conference. Important international instruments have been developed. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as well as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) provide very effective frameworks and tools for international cooperation for the sound management of hazardous chemicals and wastes.

But I agree with the NGOs that what we have achieved is not yet sufficient, much needs to be done.

### **Use and further develop the existing instruments**

We will need to continue making good use of these instruments. And we also need to continue developing them further where there is a need. And we need to make sure that the existing and future instruments are flexible and future proof. The regime has to be further developed in a synergetic manner. Thus:

- New persistent organic pollutants should be included under the Stockholm Convention in the future.
- The Rotterdam PIC list should similarly be further completed – it is simply revolting that a very few countries object for reasons not related to the Rotterdam PIC Convention the listing of chrysotile asbestos and endosulfan, substances where the technical bodies have concluded that they fully fulfill the PIC criteria.
- In the Basel Convention, we have to address the challenges of e-waste and undertake urgent action to achieve the objectives of the BAN amendment. Switzerland is committed to continue its support for the Partnership Initiative on Mobile Phones and on Electronic Computer Waste. And, Switzerland, together with Indonesia, has launched a country-led initiative to find ways to achieve the BAN amendment.



- Another example for further developing the current regime relates to compliance and financing: Strengthening of the respective compliance mechanisms is a clear necessity.  
Similarly, we have to make sure that adequate support is provided for the implementation of the existing and new commitments. Switzerland is happy and proud about the increased replenishment of the GEF. Together with Uruguay, we would like to build on that success by organizing a ministerial lunch on financial chemicals. We hope this will strengthen financial support for chemicals and waste.
- And, we need to make full use of the existing regime such as SAICM to address emerging issues such as nanoparticles. Switzerland, together with the U S, brought the issue of nanotechnology at ICCM-2, and we have launched with UNITAR a series of regional workshop on nanotechnology with a view of further deepening the discussion of this issue at ICCM-3.
- But we also need to close existing gaps. One such gap which needs to be addressed by a regulatory framework at the global level is mercury. This gap will be closed soon through the negotiations of a legally binding instruments on mercury which are about to begin. Other heavy metals such as lead and cadmium need further study and assessment in order to better understand their potential risks at the global level. They might also turn out to be gaps in the international systems that need to be closed at some point in the future.  
There is a need for further developing this regime. And thereby, we have to make sure, that this happens not through proliferation and mushrooming of instruments, but in a synergetic and future proof manner. The development of a new instrument on mercury provides the golden opportunity for this: we should give a clear signal that it should be open for other chemicals of global concern that pose similar challenges and ask for similar responses.

### **Improving International chemicals and waste governance**

- A particularly promising strategy for improving the sustainability of chemicals and waste management is to make further improvements in the governance structure,
- There are a lot of synergies between the existing instruments that can be realized to the benefit of a more sustainable development. The decisions taken at the extraordinary meetings of the COPs in Bali are certainly a large step in the right direction. However, there is still a considerable potential to further enhancing coordination and cooperation and thus for improving the effectiveness of existing regulatory regime.
- Further improving governance will also greatly benefit the implementation of sound chemicals and waste management at the national level. Examples:
  - Common reporting on all conventions;
  - Increased resource mobilization;
  - Enhancing cooperation and coordination among agencies and offices at national level.



### **At the national level**

- Question of finding the right mix between legislative and non-legislative approaches.
- Switzerland has made encouraging experiences in complementing its regulatory regime on chemicals and waste on certain aspects with the use of economic instruments instead of extensive legislation.
- This is one of the reasons, why Switzerland's recycling rates for many materials are the highest or amongst the highest in the world.

### **Intellectual property rights**

- I understand that some countries have suggested that the relaxation of intellectual property rights in innovations could be a way to enhance the transfer of environmentally-friendly technologies
- We do not believe that this is the right approach. Quite on the contrary, we are convinced that a strengthening of intellectual property rights in all countries, including developing countries, would provide an important incentive for the creation environmentally-friendly technologies and for their transfer.