

Intervention for Health Care Without Harm during the Opening Plenary / Implementation Arrangements (V/8)

Thank you, Co-Chair. Good morning.

I'm Alessandra Azevedo from Brazil and I speak on behalf of Health Care Without Harm, and its network of Global Green and Healthy Hospitals with more than 2.000 members in 86 countries worldwide, and on behalf of Health Hospitals Project, the HCWH strategic partner in Brazil, representing more than 350 health organizations and 23 health systems in this country.

We welcome the report UNEP/GFC/OEWG1/8 and thank UNEP for their support to generate momentum for the implementation of the GFC and to IOMC for their leadership and work to develop the programme.

The healthcare sector, in general, represents around 10% of the economy and is a large consumer of a variety of materials and is one of the largest users of hazardous chemicals. Production, packaging, transportation, and use and disposal of healthcare products are major contributors to climate change and chemical contamination, resource depletion, biodiversity loss and air and water pollution. All these elements compromise public and environmental health.

HCWH has a long and successful history, over 25 years, of advocacy and action on chemicals, including notably mercury phase-out and the Minamata convention and reduction of Dioxins produced from unsustainable health care waste treatment, and on development and dissemination of resources and tools that can effectively help the health sector to move forward to a more sustainable path.

We are very committed to tackling the environmental and health impacts of harmful chemicals used in healthcare, and through our new strategic plan published at the end of 2024, HCWH is applying a focus on chemicals used in plastics. In this sense, our goal is to eliminate all unnecessary plastics used in the HC sector, particularly single-use plastics, and phase-out the most toxic, notably PVC.

Speaking up from the health sector in this instance is essential. We see that a health sector implementation program for the health sector established under the GFC/IP2 could support this goal and would complement the achievement of a strong Global Plastics Treaty. We hope that such a program will help to create alignment around goals, standards and regulations internationally, as well as improve transparency across the plastics and chemicals value chain. Given its importance in terms of generating impact, we expect that projects by/for the health sector and by health ministers will be encouraged and considered, as well

as specific and proper funding to support it. This program will assist in achieving the following GFC targets: B5, D6, D7 and E6.

HCWH therefore supports the ambition to create this program for the health sector and is committed to supporting its implementation.