

South Africa Closing Statement on SPP Intergovernmental Meeting

20 June 2025

Thank you, Madam Chair!

South Africa would like to thank the Government of Uruguay for hosting this meeting, the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for making time from her busy schedule to be with us in this session. Her engagement and insightful input throughout the process of negotiations during the Open-Ended Working Group session is highly appreciated. We appreciate the SPP OEWG Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this session. Madam Chair, we would like to thank you for the guidance and leadership in establishing a science policy panel on chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention.

Our appreciation also goes to all members for having effectively engaged during the session that culminated in the establishment of the SPP. We appreciate the support provided to enable the participation of member states from low and middle-income countries.

Madam Chair,

We have now reached the end of the Intergovernmental Meeting with concrete foundational documents, rules of procedure for the governing body, clear process for determining the work programme, procedures for the preparation and clearance of the panel deliverables and the conflict-of-interest policy. We believe that UNEA Resolution 5/8 on establishing the science policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution has been met.

We appreciate the inclusion of the non-governmental actors as this is critical to ensure the

much-required legitimacy and acceptance of the SPP processes and products as well as ensuring broader sources of knowledge. If there is no inclusive participation there will be no transparency, and this will lead to compromised legitimacy of the SPP. The broader inclusion of stakeholders, for example in the composition of the Inter-disciplinary Expert Committee, will ensure the integrity of the SPP outputs. We appreciate the provision for broader participation of actors in the panel to enable the provision of additional breadth of scientific disciplines and knowledge including citizen science as this will mitigate the risk that essential perspectives and expertise will be left out.

Madam Chair,

Work must immediately begin to develop the working relationship with other partner organizations to enable effective delivery on the mandates of the panel. As indicated during our opening statement, the issues that the SPP must address lie in the cross-section of environment and health; and therefore, such collaborative efforts will go a long way and assist to leverage from the strengths, networks, expertise and resources of all participating organizations.

In conclusion, South Africa has specific legislations that focuses on chemicals and waste management and as such, the outputs of the SPP will assist in improving these policies to be more scientific based. We support the establishment of the science policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

Thank you, and safe travels back home!