

Opening statement on behalf of Indigenous Peoples at the Global Framework on Chemicals meeting in Punta del Este, June 24, 2025

Shé:kon sewakwé:kon. Konwaiatanón:we's íontiats tánon Kanienkehá:ka nitiató:ten.

Many thanks to the people of Uruguay for the warm welcome we have received in your beautiful lands.

Greetings to everyone, I am from the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation and Indigenous community of Kahnawà:ke, located on the shores of the St. Lawrence River near Montreal, Canada. Like so many other Indigenous communities, our traditional territory is impacted by intense development, chemicals, waste, and pollution.

Among the emerging policy issues and issues of concern being discussed and advanced here at the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) meetings, we especially highlight chemicals in products, including in plastics and synthetic textiles, PFAS chemicals, and endocrine disrupting chemicals. Exposure to these chemicals impacts our health and reproductive justice, with Indigenous women, babies, and children being harmed the most. The Gender Action Plan must account for disaggregated data to identify and address this intersectionality and mainstream a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach throughout the work of the GFC.

We, Indigenous Peoples maintain deep kinship connections to our territories, lands and waters, which shapes our Indigenous knowledge and science. Contamination of our territories causes loss of access to clean and safe environments and to our preferred foods, which in turn impacts food sovereignty, causes loss of language and culture tied to those activities on the land, loss of spiritual and family connections, and violates our rights under the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We continue to urge for the mainstreaming of Indigenous Peoples' rights in all GFC processes; protections for the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples; and ensuring the equitable participation of Indigenous Peoples who are the experts of our knowledge and science. Indigenous Peoples have important lived experience which must be reflected in the building of solutions to address chemicals in the environment. This includes participation in decision-making, implementation, and access to funds to fully engage in this process and address the chemicals, waste and pollution crises we are experiencing in our territories. We advocate for the removal of barriers for Indigenous Peoples from all regions to access the GFC Fund. We look forward to continuing to work with you all to achieve these goals to protect human health and the environment for all.