OEWG 1.2: Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention.

Agenda item 6:

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Madam Chair.

Since this is Liberia's first time speaking at this meeting, please permit me to join other speakers to thank UNEP, the secretariat of the OEWG, the government, and the people of the kingdom of Thailand for this meeting. We are thankful for the heartfelt reception yesterday!

Liberia comes in the spirit of construction and thanks the General Assembly of UNEP's foresight for establishing a science policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and wastes and to prevent pollution. We appreciate those who contributed their financial and technical assistance to this meeting and the panel's establishment—special appreciation also goes to member states, NGOs, and everyone for their presence.

Liberia supports the formation of the science-policy panel, however, with the forewarning of documenting a clear delineation of its scope and functions to avoid overlap with other science-policy bodies.

Liberia supports the formation of the science-policy panel with the priority that the scope will integrate the improvement of intergovernmental and sectorial coordination and collaboration in the sound management of chemicals and their associated waste.

We strongly support the integrated approach in the establishment of the panel. This approach may prove effective considering the interweaving of chemicals, waste, and pollution. From the environmental perspective, the fate of every chemical is of grave concern. When chemicals and chemical products outlive their usefulness, they are often disposed of in the environment. Environmental matrices (water, air, and soil) are often polluted regardless of the disposal mechanism employed. This pollution trend exerts an adverse effect on human health. It also causes biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and consequently contributes to climate change, leaving regulatory authorities and their partners with the arduous task of tackling such menaces. Liberia strongly supports the integrated approach in the spirit of environmental and human health protection.

We believe in the value chain approach since many low or middle-income countries, including Liberia, do not produce chemicals but are affected by the massive inflow of those chemicals from developed countries. Through the integrated approach, this panel might bank on the value chain scheme and aid least-developed countries and countries with economies in transition to play their role effectively in the chain and promote the sound management of chemicals and waste to prevent pollution.

Furthermore, Liberia proposes a panel accessible and flexible enough and inclusive of experts and expertise from all regions in order to respond to specific issues of regional and national concern efficiently.

Thank you for your attention, and congratulation on your election!

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Thank you, madam Chair!

On the functions of the panel, Liberia supports the four core functions outlined by the UNEP in its guiding document relating to resolution 5/8. We believe they captured all the essential functions of the panel, and those options proposed were based on in-depth information. Just like the EU and the UK, our uncertainty is with "horizon scanning". While it is a policy tool that might be vital to the panel, we think it is essential to define it in the scope of this panel and the importance of adopting it.

Additionally, we believe that the functions did not capture to address the challenges at member states' scientific and policy-making levels. Sometimes, there can be insufficient bye-in to mainstreaming scientific issues by policymakers at the national level. This gap can and may affect or impair the functions and scope of the panel locally. Therefore, Liberia proposes that the secretariat consider this as we establish the panel.

Liberia also proposes capacity enhancement and infrastructure development as one of the core functions of the panel. Many Multilateral Environmental Agreements are building capacities, but this panel is unique and specific. Therefore, it must equip local scientists and experts from member states, which economies are in transition or with developing economies, to put them on the same level and give them the tool to provide information and data to the panel in a uniform and specific manner.

Lastly, Liberia proposed further developing other operating principles to supplement the functions and scope of the panel.

Thank you for your attention.