Agenda item 3 (d) - OHCHR Statement at the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)

Check against delivery

Thank you, Madame chair.

Gender equality is a human right, and yet we know that women and girls, especially those in already vulnerable situations are among the most exposed to toxic chemicals. The disproportionate and gendered impacts is why human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches are crucial to the sound management of chemicals and waste.

"Gender" is a concept that allows us to understand and confront structural inequalities of power between men, women, and persons with diverse gender identities. When we talk about gender, we are talking about how roles, hierarchy and relationships are built that have often placed women, girls in a position of subordination compared to men. Human rights-based, gender-responsive approaches are tools that address how these inequalities operate on an economic, political, social and cultural level.

If we change "gender-responsive" to an expression like "equality between men and women", we are setting aside precisely this structural approach.

While women's inclusion and equitable participation is the foundation of ensuring their rights and effective environmental action, women, especially young women, are largely excluded from decision-making.

This is why it is important to ensure that the GAP takes an approach that genuinely enhances women's leadership and does not create tokenistic mechanisms of participation. The GAP should strengthen requirements for participation of women as **agents of change** by establishing clear standards for equitable participation in decision-making processes, for women at all levels, regardless of socioeconomic status or other factors, and increasing training.

While we welcome the inclusion of **gender-disaggregated data,** the GAP must go further and include data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity and region. Looking at women only from one prism of their identity limits the analysis of statistics.

The GAP should develop, on the basis of disaggregated data, specific and gender-responsive **indicators** and monitoring mechanisms to enable Governments and other stakeholders to establish baselines and measure progress.

We are concerned by the lack of references to **intersectional discrimination** in the draft. A human-rights based approach includes considering not only impacts on individuals, but the inequities affecting persons and groups that suffer disproportionate impacts. Impacts are different for those who face intersecting forms of discrimination, including Indigenous women and girls, women and girls of African descent, and in marginalized communities.

Intersectionality is an evolving concept, and the GAP should ensure there is no backsliding on its recognition.

OHCHR stands ready to contribute to the overall implementation of the GAP, particularly activities a.1 and a.2.

Thank you!