

[Opening Statement] Intergovernmental Meeting to Consider the Establishment of the new Science-Policy Panel

Thank you Chair for the floor,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am Olga Skaredina speaking on behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group.

The planetary crisis of pollution, driven by the unsound management of chemicals and waste, continues to endanger human health and ecosystems. Addressing this challenge with urgency is essential to protect lives and safeguard environmental integrity. It is both an environmental necessity and a matter of justice. **Ensuring sound management and pollution prevention is critical to securing a clean, healthy, and sustainable future for all.**

The impact of pollution and exposure to hazardous chemicals and waste often disproportionately affects people in vulnerable situations, including children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, women, workers, migrants, farmers, people living in poverty, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, particularly those in conflict zones and humanitarian crises. This Panel has the potential **to uphold intergenerational equity, advance human rights, and deliver robust, rigorous, and conflict-of-interest-free scientific recommendations to inform decision-making.** In doing so, it must also **support capacity building and knowledge sharing**, especially for those on the frontlines of environmental harm.

We underscore the vital role of **early-career professionals and young people** in both contributing to the Panel's scientific work and supporting the implementation of its outcomes. Their meaningful participation brings innovation, lived experience, and a forward-looking perspective that strengthens the relevance and credibility of the Panel's deliverables. In this regard, we envision the establishment of a **Youth Expert Advisory Group** to support the IEC and the panel, alongside **inclusive and accessible engagement avenues for youth engagement from across sectors.**

We stand ready to collaborate in building a Panel that is inclusive, impactful, and responsive to the realities and needs of all generations.

Thank you.