

Statement by Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment (AUPWAE)

The Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment (AUPWAE), an observer and part of the NGO Major Group of UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, would like to thank the Chair, all distinguished delegates and the Secretariat for the commendable progress made to-date in the current process of establishing a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

On-going scenarios of pollution from chemicals and waste sources that we are currently witnessing, continue to detrimentally affect human health and the environment. Examples include water pollution from industrial discharge, comprising of pollutants such as chemicals, heavy metals and untreated sewage. These affect water quality, human health and aquatic ecosystems well-being among others. Similar cases of air pollution from various emission sources are causing respiratory problems in communities in our region and across the globe. Furthermore soil contamination from hazardous pesticides and other agrochemicals in vulnerable smallholder farming settings, negatively impact agricultural productivity and food safety for both producers and consumers in their communities and beyond.

As AUPWAE, we therefore welcome the future science-policy panel that will adequately provide much-needed holistic evidence for implementation of effective measures and actions at all levels, so as to address the chemicals, waste and pollution crisis at hand, leaving no one behind.

Our recommendations are therefore as follows:

1. **Foundational document and related draft decision for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel.** As civil society we welcome the inclusion of language supporting an authoritative, independent, multidisciplinary, transparent and relevant body. We also propose strengthening of text in reference to vulnerable groups such as women, youth and indigenous communities.
2. **Proposal on interim arrangements to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel.** We would very much hope to see continued and on-going consultations during the interim period. This would be anticipated to enrich the inaugural meeting of the Governing Body of the Panel. We also welcome engagement that is inclusive, capturing the voices of rural communities and drawing from indigenous and traditional knowledge sources. Scientific information that is disseminated should be adequately communicated through civil society engagement, ensuring appropriate translation of materials for use at local levels.

We look forward to continued engagement during the resumed third session of OEWG-SPP and beyond and are available for further consultations during this process.

Thank you very much