

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE AFRICA REGION ON THE AD HOC OPEN- ENDED
WORKING GROUP ON A SCIENCE POLICY PANEL TO CONTRIBUTE FURTHER TO
THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND WASTE AND TO PREVENT
POLLUTION ON JUNE 15, 2025, PUNTA DEL ESTE**

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, and Esteemed Colleagues

1. The Africa Region would like to thank the Republic of Uruguay for its hospitality since our arrival in Punta del Este and commends the SPP Secretariat for the excellent organization of the meetings building up to this session, as well as the excellent preparation of this OEWG 3.2 meeting.

Madam Chair

2. This session is a continuation of OEWG 3.1 and is expected to be the last on a series of three OEWDs that is planned to deliver on the UNEA 5/8 Resolution. It is regrettable that, we missed the target in 2024 and therefore it is our firm belief that we shall deliver on the mandate and meet all the expectations right here in Punta del Este. Let us be mindful of the importance of the unfinished agenda items from OEWG 3.1, and manage our time efficiently to get the work done with the urgency and diligence they deserve.
3. We take note that, there are low hanging fruits which we can leverage on in the foundational document and in the other working documents in order to fast-track our work here and save time and energy. We are confident therefore that, with mutual respect, collaborative mindsets, shared commitment, and a focus on our common goals, we can achieve and be able to establish a Science-Policy Panel that truly serves the global community including addressing challenges that the African countries are facing.

Madam Chair

4. On the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, the African Group calls for equal representation of both developed and developing countries in the membership to allow for access to equal opportunities, socio-economic expertise and different forms of knowledge exchanges for enhanced outputs and outcomes of the panel's work.
5. The Africa Region also advocates for a panel that considers the value chain of chemicals and waste, addressing pollution. We envision a scientifically independent panel that would ensure credibility, impartiality, transparency, and legitimacy in its operations and delivery. In so doing, it shall consider avoiding duplication of work, ensuring geographically balanced, gender-inclusive, and gender-responsive participation, and recognizing the experience of the informal workers, considering their critical roles in hazardous waste management and recycling.

Madam Chair

6. On the panel's name, the Africa region is open to discussing the options available and expects a panel's name that fulfils the core elements in the UNEA resolution 5/8 and that aligns with broader international agreements on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention.
7. Further, the Africa Region acknowledges the importance of the decisions on arrangements on the interim period and to ensure continuity and effectiveness of the panel's work, it is pivotal that the current Secretariat continue its work, in the interim.
8. In conclusion, we anticipate a highly productive session this week, as we approach the final stage of the negotiations and we stand ready to constructively engage and contribute to the deliberations and so to enable the Executive Director of UNEP to convene the intergovernmental meeting as scheduled. Once again, our region is

totally committed to seeing the establishment of the Panel at this meeting. A call to action by all.

Thank you!