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CEJAD Intervention on raising the political priority of SAICM

Given by Griffins Ochieng

Thank you Co-Chair-

I am speaking on behalf of Centre for Environment Justice and Development, a NGO based in Kenya and a participating organization of IPEN.

Unfortunately, SAICM has a relatively low political priority in most countries. Some say SAICM's low political priority in countries is due to the fact that the agreement is not legally binding. Others note the lack of a tangible, adequate financial mechanism for implementation of the agreement. Another view considers that sound chemicals management needs better messaging to highlight its links to sustainable development. All of these characteristics make it difficult for SAICM to achieve a higher political priority; however, governments widely agree on the need to raise the political priority of chemical safety and that should also include SAICM and arrangements on chemical safety Beyond 2020.

We feel that with the current, rapid expansion of chemical use and chemical production in the developing world, there is a growing need for a stronger, more capable SAICM that receives proper

political priority. SAICM should be upgraded in importance to match the growing challenges of health, environmental, and economic injuries associated with the production, use, and disposal of toxic chemicals and wastes.

We see that formalizing and funding the coordination of the multi-stakeholder, inter-ministerial committees recommended in the SAICM agreement particularly at national level would increase the political priority of SAICM.

Further, there is need to create synergies at the national level by broadening the mission of national ozone units, for example, to serve as chemical safety units. If funded, these units could serve a role in coordination, regulation, financing/mainstreaming, compliance, needs assessment, reporting and others.

Thank you.