



a toxics-free future

9 February, 2017

IPEN Intervention on Gender

Given by Olga Speranskaya

Thank you, Mr. Chair-

IPEN would like to highlight the importance of SDG 5. In our initial intervention this morning, this sustainable development goal was listed as one of the goals which is the most relevant to chemicals and waste issues. This goal highlights the need for gender considerations and it is aimed at achieving gender equality as a key cross-cutting issue including chemical safety.

Rio Principle 20 states that "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development." Years later in 2006, SAICM also included important aspects related to women in an agreement that links chemical safety with sustainable development.

SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy states the importance of public participation in decision-making, "featuring in particular a strengthened role for women." However, women are still underrepresented in decision-making about chemical safety, waste,

and environment. This creates an unbalance of power and injustice that must be corrected. Women have also been underrepresented or not represented at all in studies concerning chemical exposures and health outcomes.

Gender disaggregated data is needed to understand different vulnerabilities based on biology, occupations, and gendered practices. Thus, gender mainstreaming into each step of sound chemicals and waste management decisions at the national and international levels is crucial for achieving effective and inclusive processes. Gender considerations should be part of project planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, which will help avoid inequality between women and men and better address ways to minimize chemical exposures for all.

To highlight the role of women as agents for change in the chemicals and wastes arena and provide input into achieving the SDG 5, including SAICM issues of concern, a working group should be formed to develop recommendations for consideration at the 2nd intersessional meeting. The UNEP Global Gender and Environmental Outlook, UN Special Rapporteur report, IPEN-PAN paper on this topic, paper on women and chemicals produced by Women Engage for a Common Future may be useful resources.

Female Ministers of Environment, Health, and Agriculture in collaboration with relevant stakeholders should develop a report for SAICM on women and chemical safety for release in 2020 that includes case studies and concerns from all UN regions.

A declaration on women and chemical safety should follow based on the findings and recommendations of their report consistent with the needs and strategies outlined in the SAICM agreement.