

JOIN NOW THE NEW COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON CHEMICALS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Organized by the SAICM Secretariat and the University of Cape Town



Issue: 2 of 2020

Discussion date: 30th September 2020

Discussion 2 Digest

Topic of Discussion: Brainstorming implementation of gender mainstreaming into national policies for the sound management of chemicals and waste

Strong legislation, effective information systems, as well as scientific evidence and knowledge for chemicals, are at the core of the SAICM community efforts on Emerging Policy Issues and remain relevant in the future to protect human health and the environment from harmful effects of chemicals across the life-cycle. There are additional opportunities for strengthening focus on developing, collecting, and analysing gender disaggregated data, indicators, and other information to support decision-making. In this discussion, stakeholders reflected on gendered national legislation, policies, and strategies to improve on exposures and risks that are falling through the gaps.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER



Hanna-Andrea Rother is Professor and Head of the Environmental Health Division in the University of Cape Town's School of

Public Health and Family Medicine. She has worked in the field of chemicals and pesticide risk management for over 30 years researching, teaching and conducting capacity building work (e.g., academic programmes, communities of practices, diverse training) in the areas of exposures, risk management, risk communication, policy development and analysis, and risk perceptions. Andrea holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Sociology and has specialized in Environmental Health (including children and women's health) for the past 25 years.



Brenda Koekkoek is a Programme Management Officer at the SAICM secretariat and has worked in a leading role in the

secretariat since 2012. Upon joining UNEP in 2006, she worked to establish and manage the Global Mercury Partnership and providing policy support to the negotiation process for the development of the Minamata Convention on mercury. Prior to UNEP, Brenda worked at Environment and Climate Change Canada on air quality and chemical related issues. Brenda holds a Bachelor degree in Environmental Engineering and a Master degree in Environmental Management.

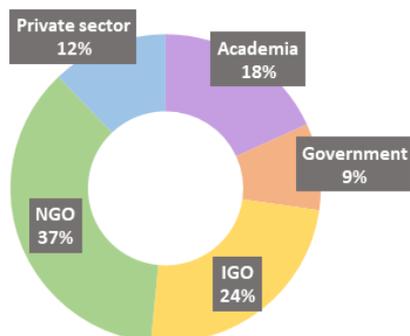


Anna Holthaus is Project Coordinator of the MSP Institute, a small NGO working for high-quality multi-stakeholder processes for sustainable

development. Within the project "Gender and Chemicals" she is doing advocacy work for the integration of gender aspects in international chemicals and waste management policies and implementation. Anna has a M.A. in Governing Sustainability and a B.Sc. in Environmental Sciences

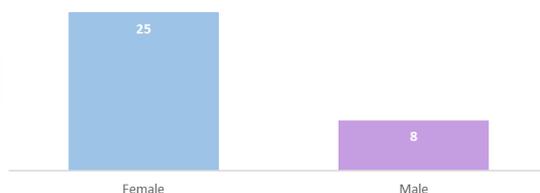
TOTAL ATTENDEES FOR DISCUSSION 2: 33

Sector representation

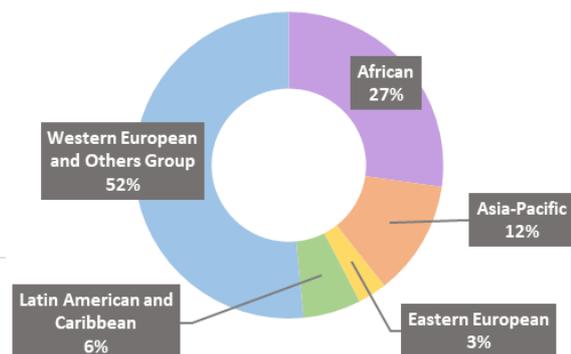


Key:
 IGO – Intergovernmental organisation
 NGO – Non-governmental organisation

Gender representation



Regional representation



Chemicals and SDGs Community of Practice Discussion 2 Summary and looking ahead

- Participants expressed that there is a **lack of gendered text** available. It was suggested that national chemical legislation and policy should consider gender as a factor moving forward. Participants highlighted that women and men have different exposures due to different occupational environments and that these kinds of differences should be considered in legislation and policy. Many participants suggested that gender related risks from chemical exposures should be better highlighted and communicated to make consumers and policy makers aware of these facts. This is particularly as men and women may metabolise chemicals differentially, and women may be more vulnerable at childbearing age and during pregnancy.
- Participants mentioned that **public awareness and education were key** actions to be carried out in some of their countries. There was indication of a need for more **gender-based exposure information** in chemicals and waste management to convince legislators and policy makers of the importance of actions on gender. Some resource needs highlighted in the discussion included:
 - translation of existing gender-related information into other languages,
 - resources for gender activities and campaigns,
 - resources for gender analysis, and
 - funding for more gender-related research.
- Important first steps** mentioned by participants was to get a national chemicals policy in place at national level. Participants agreed there was an opportunity to strengthen the role of SAICM national focal points to consider gender issues. Another key area highlighted was to promote the engagement of toxicologists on gender and chemicals research, as well as legislation and policy process.
- Participants highlighted the need for gender mainstreaming in chemicals management. For this to have an impact, this needs to be actioned at the national level. **Going forward** it is important to develop gender mainstreaming mechanisms at the international level that can be supported and promoted at the national level.

ANNEX

DETAILED SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION 2:

Disclaimer: The information in this digest represents the opinions of members participating from different stakeholder groups expressed during the discussion. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the opinion or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, the SAICM Secretariat, the GEF or UCT, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

THE DISCUSSION WAS STRUCTURED AROUND THREE QUESTIONS AND THE KEY DISCUSSION POINTS ARE PRESENTED UNDER EACH.

Inputs to the discussion from participants:

Q1. Do you think that national chemical legislation and policies should include gendered text? Why or why not? Explain what you understand by “gender” in your responses. Discuss your opinions and thoughts around gender and chemicals and waste management.

BRAZIL (Private Sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk assessment policies should include gendered text as tests with just men do not represent the whole population.
CAMEROON (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The notion of gender must be a priority in the process of sustainable development, for this a specific policy or a law on gender must be established in the sense that women are more vulnerable to chemical effects as well as children and people disabled. The gender approach analyzes the power relationship between women and men based on the assignment of socially constructed roles according to sex, the gender approach is based on the analysis and questioning of the processes that differentiate and prioritize individuals according to their sex. A law or a specific policy on gender will limit or overcome the social inequality observed in the involvement and treatment of this social layer in chemical matters and sustainable development.
FINLAND (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National chemical legislation should focus on gender separately, as women and men are impacted differently by chemicals and occupational exposure can vary. - E.g. in LMICS, women bear the burden of exposure due to their social status. Social services available to women are less supportive in LICs due to financial problems. On the contrary in HICs men are more exposed to chemicals' exposure in some typical industries like mining etc. - Males and females metabolise toxins differently, so it is relevant to have such gender-based policies. - By gender, I mean basically biological sex (males and females).
GERMANY (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific gendered risk information on pesticides or chemicals labels are very important especially for women of childbearing age and pregnant women. - For women, it is also important to get free and easy information about chemicals in projects in general - Often women are the ones searching for information to protect themselves and their families.
KENYA (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies and legislation should include gender text because both men and women are affected differently by chemicals. - The level of exposure to both is different based on the roles and occupations they do. - It will ensure equality and reducing the gap of difference in exposure on the gender as far as sound management of chemicals is concerned for sustainable development.
SRI LANKA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate discussions on how facilities like e-waste recycling plants should ensure the safety of workers based on gender. - Sri Lanka is in the process of preparing a chemical management policy, which often doesn't specify gender.
UGANDA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National chemical legislation and policies should include gendered text. - It will ensure successful gender mainstreaming. - In Uganda there is gender considerations in the water sector currently. - This will also be the case for chemicals management, which is a relatively new, emerging area.

ISC3 – NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to establish a "culture of innovation", meaning a mindset that supports fresh ideas and openness to new solutions. - This would be something that goes beyond legislation. - We have the Human Biomonitoring Initiative in the EU, which could be something to draw relevant knowledge from? https://www.hbm4eu.eu/
KENYA (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Containers containing chemicals should be well labelled revealing the constituents and risks involved if mishandled, as well as how to handle them. - More funds should be directed to mobilization and awareness creation on the risks of chemicals and their handling.
SRI LANKA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEJ Sri Lanka is currently working on educating parents and caregivers on chemical contamination and exposure pathways. - More gender-based exposure studies on working women would be a useful resource. For example, how much lead is found in blood samples of women and men working in an e-waste recycling plant. It is easier to convince the authorities and the public when country specific research is available. - Funding may be required for research.
UGANDA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking at conducting more research on gender and chemicals in Uganda. - Resources and support that would be key include sustainable funding especially for the NGO/Civil Society sector. - Buy-in from all stakeholders including the decision makers is needed.

Poll 3 Results (N=13)

Is gender mainstreaming already implemented in other areas of environmental and health policy at your national level?

Yes:  4
 No:  5
 I don't know:  4

Poll 4 Results (N=12)

Are any gendered experts/women's organizations involved in chemicals management at the national policy level?

Yes:  4
 No:  5
 I don't know:  3

Q3. What should be the first steps to integrate gender into national chemicals policy and what hurdles might arise? How could the SAICM community provide support, e.g. for the national focal points?

BRAZIL (Private Sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First step is to have a national chemicals policy already in place or under development. - Main hurdle is that participants in the chemical policy creation do not see gender as a relevant aspect to be considered. - Creating awareness, supported by facts and data (research), would help remove this roadblock. - Other steps include having good participation of women in the working groups responsible for developing or updating chemical policies. - The first benefit is to show and have respect for about 50% of the world population.
CAMEROON (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First step at JVE Cameroon must be a comparative study of the ownership of international policies on gender. - Obstacles may include lack of collaboration from government officials in charge of the issue, lack of funding and limited access to actual data. - SAICM community could provide support by the national focal point or partner.
FINLAND (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First steps include evaluate the risks and weigh the impacts. - The scientific community must form the core of a working group and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders would then add weight to the subject. - Main hurdles are the proposal of gender-based policy being drowned by strong 'Chemicals lobby'. - SAICM's role is very relevant for LMICs specially - those are the countries where most production is done, and most of the global population resides.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active communication with national focal points and impacting their decisions by providing scientific know-how from HICs could be valuable.
GERMANY (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft of the MSP Institute "gender road map" as a resource: (https://uctcloud.sharepoint.com/sites/ChemicalsandSDGsCommunityofPractice/Shared Documents/30.09.2020 - Discussion 2/GenderRoadMap_MSPInstitute_draftfordiscussion.pdf). - First step idea: a workshop on gender mainstreaming for the SAICM national focal points. - People working on chemicals policy are very interested, but they mostly have a natural science background, which is very different in comparison to the way of thinking in gender studies. - We need good illustrations and explanations about gender concepts/theories and the complex gender terminology.
IRAN (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should not be any objection to this considering the amount of scientific basis, and that we are getting to the post COVID era where there should be solutions for these types of problems and closing of the gap. - Best solution is getting more toxicologist in this work because a toxicologist is aware about both nature and about chemicals/ pesticides, etc. - Unfortunately, most related conventions, including the SAICM, Minamata, etc., were in communications with more political people, instead of toxicologists.
KENYA (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct research on gender equality and mainstreaming to inform to what extent the gender inequality is on management of chemicals. - SAICM to lobby to the governments to ensure integration of gender equality in sound management of chemicals through legislation and policies. - The hurdle will be the implementation part because of poor/ lack of political good will.
MOZAMBIQUE (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We need a Gender and Chemical's National Policy in place as the first step.
SOUTH AFRICA (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In South Africa, industry managed to have the chemicals management policy removed after public participation and just before it was gazetted, so there was no opportunity to raise gender issues. - It is key for the SAICM focal points to have a more active role and profile nationally.
SRI LANKA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National focal point is the ministry of environment and is still active. - SAICM can assist through advocacy. - If gender becomes an essential compliance tool in obtaining ISO or national level standard certification, that might help businesses to adopt them. - A hurdle could be if the regulations or standards for women in working with chemicals increase, then factory owners may become reluctant to hire women.
UGANDA (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Uganda the SAICM focal point is the National Environmental Management Authority

Poll 5 Results (N=9)

Do you think a gender road map for SAICM national focal points would encourage the integration of gender mainstreaming in national policy?

Yes:  9

No: 0

I don't know: 0

Poll 6 Results (N=7)

What are the potential co-benefits from integrating gender issues into national chemicals and waste policies?

"A more decisive approach against chemical toxicities tailored for each gender."

"The first benefit is to show and have respect by about 50% of the world population."

"It ensures health and safety of specially women and thereby upcoming generations."

"Better health and life for all."

"Saving a healthier generation from chemicals/ pesticides exposure"

"More likely to protect the health of all populations."

"Will promote a regulations or standards for women in working with chemicals sounds management."

Helpful resources:

- **Regulating Toxics: Sex and Gender in Canada's Chemicals Management Plan**
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2441322
 - **BRS Conventions**
 - Pocket Guide to the BRS Gender Action Plan (2019) www.brsmeas.org/Portals/4/download.aspx?d=UNEP-FAO-CHW-RC-POPS-Gender-PocketGuide-ActionPlan-2019.English.pdf
 - IUCN Global Gender Office (2017): Women's participation and gender considerations in country representation, planning and reporting to the BRS Conventions. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2017-046.pdf>
 - **UNFCCC**
 - National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points. <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/resources/list-of-gender-focal-points-under-the-unfccc>
 - **Convention on Biological Diversity**
 - Fact Sheet: Gender and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/fs_uicn-cbd_nbsaps.pdf
 - **Multilateral environment agreements tagged with gender**
<https://www.informea.org/en/terms/gender>
 - **MSP Institute: Gender Road Map (draft)**
http://gender-chemicals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GenderRoadMap_MSPInstitute_drafftfordiscussion.pdf
 - **WHO (2017): Chemicals Road MAP**
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/273137/WHO-FWC-PHE-EPE-17.03-eng.pdf?ua=1>
-

CSDGs CoP: The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Environmental Health Division at the University of Cape Town (UCT) created this Community of Practice (CoP) to foster online discussions and address key issues on Chemicals and SDGs among stakeholders from governments, international organizations, industry, academia and civil society. This CoP is contributing to the SAICM/GEF project on Emerging Chemicals Policy Issues Knowledge Management Component.

This activity is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on *Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)*.

If you have any question or require clarification on this initiative, please contact the SAICM Secretariat at saicm.chemicals@un.org or UCT at uctcops@outlook.com.

Join the CSDGs CoP at: <https://chemicalswithoutconcern.org/community>

Disclaimer: The information in this digest represents the opinions of members participating from different stakeholder groups expressed during the discussion. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the opinion or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, the SAICM Secretariat, the GEF or UCT, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

