
Concept note: Webinar on women leadership, chemical safety, and the SDGs

Jointly organized by the UN Environment Programme, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Secretariat (SAICM) and the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)

When: Thursday, 13 January 2022 | 16:00-17:30 GMT | 11:00-12:30 EST

Where: Online Zoom platform, [register here](#)

Background and Context

Women's and men's bodies are affected differently by certain chemicals – exposure, risk, and impacts can be different between the sexes. Growing evidence indicates that while globally women are disproportionately impacted by exposure to chemicals and wastes, they have less access to participation in the decision-making process around the sound management of chemicals and waste. Despite the fact that women play a major role in managing natural resources and often contribute significantly as household providers e.g., in the agricultural sector, environmental decision-making bodies and leadership positions at all levels are often dominated by men.

As a consequence, women's perspectives often go unrecognized and their needs are not met in environmental policies. This undermines the development of gender-responsive policies. However, with their wealth of expertise and extensive experience, women also act as key agents of change in all sectors of society.

With women increasingly engaged in chemically intensive sectors and yet rarely receive basic training about the chemicals they use, it is vital that measures are taken to ensure that they are key players in the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

When gender is mainstreamed across high priority development issues it provides benefits for both men and women. Identifying these strategic opportunities—such as promoting secure and safe working conditions—can yield tangible results.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda aim to address inequalities among all population groups – especially women, children, and the impoverished. In particular, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and improve women's rights. Directly addressing the links between the environment and gender in the context of the SDGs will provide new opportunities to achieve these goals in a more sustainable and beneficial manner.

The UN Environment Programme is committed to addressing these issues and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in conservation and sustainable development. Gender considerations have been increasingly incorporated into global multilateral environmental agreements, including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Furthermore, UNEP and IPEN are working in partnership on gender and chemicals, on raising awareness, promoting women's engagement and leadership in decision-making processes as well as contributing to activities related to SAICM Emerging Policy Issues and the SDGs.

In 2021, a joint UNEP-IPEN report on [Women, chemicals and the SDGs](#) was published as an output of the currently ongoing GEF Project on Global Best Practices on Emerging Policy Issues of Concern under SAICM. The report focuses on the SAICM Emerging Policy Issues and identifies gender priorities. Building on this report and advancing chemicals safety, IPEN has developed a series of free online courses on women and chemicals, featuring a diverse group of nine trainers across the globe. The courses enhance the role of women and women's leadership in local, regional, national, and global efforts to reduce exposures to harmful chemicals and wastes.

Aim and Objectives of webinar

This webinar aims to draw attention to the intersection between gender and chemicals management, its vital importance for reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and recent contributions by UNEP and IPEN in this regard. It will feature both international as well as local efforts to mainstream gender and chemical issues.

Questions to be discussed during the webinar:

1. *What are the obstacles and challenges to the full participation of women in the sound management of chemicals and waste and how can these be overcome?*
2. *To address gender inequality, how can we strengthen the integration of gender into the sound management of chemicals and waste?*
3. *What are the current entry points for women's participation in the sound management of chemicals and waste and how can these be effectively leveraged?*
4. *Based on the key findings and recommendations from the UNEP-IPEN report on Women, chemicals and the SDGs, what specific actions have been undertaken to address these findings and recommendations?*

Opening remarks

Per Ångquist, Director General, The Swedish Chemicals Agency

Panelists

Monika Gail MacDevette, Chief, Chemicals and Health Branch, Economy Division, UNEP

Pamela Miller, CoChair, IPEN

Vivianne Atah, Centre de Recherche et d'Education pour le Développement (CREPD)

Cecilia Bianco and **Ariana Ortega**, Taller Ecologista

Moderator

Nalini Sharma, SAICM Coordinator, UNEP

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
16:00- 16:10	Welcome remarks	Per Ångquist
16:10-16:25	UNEP perspectives on issues related to gender and chemicals and waste	Monika Gail MacDevette
16:25-16:35	Women leaders and the importance of addressing issues related to women, chemicals and the SDGs	Pamela Miller
16:35-16:45	Empowering Parents and Caregivers on the understanding and knowledge of Highly Hazardous Pesticides	Vivianne Atah
16:45-16:55	Precautionary Principle and Environmental Violence Associated with Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	Cecilia Bianco and Ariana Ortega
16:55-17:30	Discussion and Q&A	All panelists Moderated by Nalini Sharma