**XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean** 28-31 March 2016, Cartagena, Colombia

**Decision 8. Chemicals and Waste**

**The Ministers of environment of Latin America and the Caribbean,**

***Regional Cooperation***

**Recognizing** the urgent need for concerted action by all countries in the region to effectively address the risks posed to human health and the environment associated with the unsound management of chemicals and all wastes, as well as of the importance to have regional coordination mechanisms;

**Reiterating** the need to promote, in collaboration with international organizations and other stakeholders, the required financial support for the implementation of the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste;

**Decide**

1. **To establish** an intergovernmental network on chemicals and waste for Latin America and the Caribbean, whose Terms of Reference are annexed to this Decision, with the main objective of strengthening the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste, reinforcing sub-regional and regional cooperation and facilitating the exchange of experiences, ensuring cooperation and coordination with agreed international and regional frameworks, as well as improving engagement and communication with other stakeholders.
2. **To invite** the Secretariat of the Forum to support the establishment of a working group with the objective of developing a regional action plan, that identifies the priority issues to be addressed by the network, including areas for capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer, as appropriate, as well as strategic approaches, for the consideration of the XXI meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. **To promote**, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee and the Secretariat, initial actions to facilitate exchange information, experiences and where applicable, expertise, among the network focal points.

***Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)***

**Recognizing** that the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste is one of the requirements for sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents an opportunity to ensure increased political attention and effective implementation of actions in this area;

**Recalling** the goal to achieve by 2020, the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, as reflected in the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future we Want”, and integrated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the updated version of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), and is in line with the CELAC Declaration of Belen of January 2015;

**Welcoming** thework developed during the fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management, including the development of the Overall Orientation and Guidance for achieving the 2020 goal, as well as the establishment of an intersessional process to further elaborate the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals beyond 2020;

**Decide**

1. **To reiterate** the commitment of countries of the region to undertake joint and specific actions oriented towards the environmentally sound management of chemicals, strengthening dialogue and institutional engagement with all relevant sectors;
2. **To encourage** countries to undertake the six core activity areas of the Overall Orientation and Guidance towards the achievement of the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management.
3. **To express** also, the willingness of the countries to the implementation of risk reduction measures related to emerging policy issues, such as highly hazardous pesticides, lead in paint, harmful chemicals in products, hazardous substances in electrical and electronic products, environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants, among others, to the extent possible and in accordance with national and international commitments.
4. **To reaffirm** the willingness of the region to actively participate in the meetings convened during the intersessional period to discuss to further elaborate the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals beyond 2020.
5. **To encourage** countries of the region to include, where appropriate, the sound management of chemicals and waste within national development planning processes and relevant sector policies.
6. **To** **undertake** South-South cooperation actionsto strengthen technical capacities enabling to address the different needs to implement an environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste; among other, the strengthening of the financial and technical capacity of the regional centres in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Conventions on Chemicals and Waste.
7. **To develop** jointly with countries in the region relevant and technically feasible mechanisms of action to prevent accidents and respond against contingencies and disasters, either at local or regional level;

***Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions***

**Recalling** the decisions adopted at the respective meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, in May 2015;

**Recognizing** the work undertaken to strengthen coordination and cooperation among the chemicals and waste conventions and SAICM;

**Reaffirming** the need to increase the technical and scientific capacity of the countries of the region, including the needs related to the inclusion of new chemicals in the Conventions, and acknowledging the support provided to Parties within the region and sub-regions through the Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centres, as well as the support provided by their hosting countries;

**Welcoming** the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals;

**Decide**

1. **To reiterate** the need to strengthen, in collaboration with international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, the financial and technical capacity of the Basel and Stockholm Regional Centres network in Latin America and the Caribbean, to facilitate the effective delivery of capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer to support implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions, and where appropriate, the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
2. **To welcome** the progress achieved to date in relation to coordination and cooperation among the Secretariats of the chemicals and waste conventions, and to further encourage countries within the LAC region to ensure that effective coordination and cooperation at national and regional levels is fully achieved.
3. **To urge** countries to increase their individual and collective efforts to cooperate on the prevention, minimization and recovery of hazardous wastes and other wastes, in accordance with the Basel Convention Cartagena Declaration[[1]](#footnote-1), as well as on the control of illegal traffic of hazardous waste and chemicals.
4. **To welcome** the widening of the area for chemicals withinthe Global Environmental Facility to continue increasing the funds until the seventh replenishment and to continue work on the financing of projects that generate co-benefits for the different conventions on chemicals and waste.
5. **To pay special attention** to the needs of landlocked developing countries towards ensuring the sound management of hazardous wastes, particularly in its transboundary transport to final disposal sites.

***Mercury and Lead***

**Welcoming** the progress achieved to date by countries of the region in the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, as well as the actions undertaken at the national and regional levels to minimize risks of exposure to mercury and mercury compounds on human health and the environment;

**Recognizing** the challenges and opportunities related with the implementation of the provisions of the Minamata Convention once it has entered into force, and countries’ need to further develop their legal, institutional and technical capacities, for which technical and financial support from multilateral, regional and national organisms is required;

**Aware** of the serious risks on human health and the environment associated with the exposure to lead, particularly to children population;

**Decide**

1. **To continue to encourage** countries of the region to take the necessary steps to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, thus contributing to its early entry into force.

**To cooperate** with other governments of the region and stakeholders in different areas related with the provisions of the Minamata Convention, such as the preparation of inventories, development of national and sub-regional strategies and plans to reduce and when feasible ultimately eliminate the use of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining, emissions and releases of mercury, remediation of polluted sites, control of legal and illegal trade of mercury, and the storage and sound management of mercury waste.

**To invite** UNEP to continue supporting the governments of the region in the development of an information exchange mechanism on mercury priority issues, particularly on remediation of polluted sites, the management of mercury in river ecosystems, as well as the reduction and, when feasible, elimination of mercury in artisanal mining.

**To urge** countries to adopt, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee and other stakeholders, measures to minimize exposure to lead, promoting particularly the phase-out of lead in paint and the sound management of used lead-acid batteries, in accordance with the principles and technical guidelines of the Basel Convention.

***Waste management***

**Recalling** the request to the Secretariat, as outlined in the Los Cabos Declaration, to develop a regional outlook on the main challenges and trends on integrated waste management, and recognizing the progress achieved to date;

**Considering** the adverse effects on human health and environment that can be derived from the unsound management of waste, and aware of the progressive increase in the amount and complexity of waste generated in urban settlements;

**Decide**

1. **To request** the Secretariat to continue the development of the outlook on waste management in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to report on its outcomes at the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers, in order to provide orientation in the planning of national and regional policies and programmes, as appropriate.
2. **To promote** the development and adoption of integrated strategies and policies on waste prevention and management, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee of this Forum and other relevant multilateral organizations, and in coordination with other related initiatives such as the 10YFP.

**ANNEX**

**Terms of Reference of the Intergovernmental Network on Chemicals and Waste for Latin America and Caribbean**

**Objectives**

General objectives:

* Contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by facilitating the achievement of the chemicals and waste-related goals and targets in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC);
* Support the implementation of the chemicals and waste international agreements in the countries of the region;
* Strengthen regional cooperation and facilitate exchange of information and best practices on the sound management of chemicals and waste;
* To promote technology transfer mechanisms and capacity building for the reduction on the use of chemicals; and
* Provide recommendations at policy and programme level for consideration of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

Specific objectives:

* Support the development and implementation of a regional action plan on chemicals and waste in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, in coordination with other relevant initiatives and stakeholders;
* Identify and disseminate among the countries in the region financing opportunities and support resource mobilization to undertake activities related with the area of chemicals and waste;
* Facilitate the strengthening of capacities and exchange of information, experiences, policies, projects and good practices on the sound management of chemicals and waste among the countries of the region and with other regions, including through south-south cooperation actions and engaging different stakeholders, and with the support of the network of regional centers of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions;
* Promote the knowledge generation and research activities within this area;
* Promote awareness raising and dissemination of information on risks and impacts linked to chemicals and waste;
* Identify priorities, challenges and opportunities, and make recommendations for consideration of the LAC Forum of Ministers of Environment and other relevant forums;
* Support the development of information exchange mechanisms, in areas such as remediation of polluted sites, the management of mercury in river ecosystems, as well as reduction and, when feasible, elimination of mercury in artisanal mining
* Contribute to other objectives on chemicals and waste defined by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC.

**Structure and functioning**

Members:

The intergovernmental network on chemicals and waste for LAC will comprise the focal points nominated by governments in the region. Other related stakeholders will be invited to nominate their respective focal points, with the aim of encouraging its participation and promoting an integrated vision of the actions to be addressed by the regional network. For the identification of stakeholders, the SAICM regional structure will be taken into account as a reference.

Steering Committee:

The network will have a Steering Committee comprising two members from each of the sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mesoamerica, Caribbean, Andean and the Southern Cone). The members of the Steering Committee will be nominated for a period of two years on a rotational basis, among the countries in the sub-region.

Secretariat:

The network will be supported by the Secretariat of the LAC Forum of Ministers, which is in the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Operation:

The intergovernmental network on chemicals and waste will meet at least once every two years (subject to available resources), and will carry out periodic conference calls. The Steering Committee will meet at least once per year and will develop at its first meeting the internal rules of operation of the network establishing the consultation procedures with the governmental focal points, and the modalities of participation of focal points nominated by the stakeholders.

Regional Action Plan:

The network will develop a biennial strategy or regional action plan which will be submitted for adoption by the Forum of Ministers. The first regional action plan will be prepared by a working group composed of the members of the Steering Committee and experts from other relevant organizations, with the support of the focal points. The Plan will reflect regional cooperation priorities on chemicals and waste, and the potential actions and resources needed to undertake them.

1. Basel COP10, Cartagena, Colombia, October 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)