

**FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL PROCESS CONSIDERING THE  
STRATEGIC APPROACH AND THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND  
WASTE BEYOND 2020**

**BRASILIA, BRAZIL, 7-9 FEBRUARY 2017**

**REMARKS BY NAOKO ISHII, CEO AND CHAIRPERSON, GEF**

My dear friends, Minister José Sarney Filho, Executive Director of UN Environment, Eric Solheim, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very sorry I cannot be with you in person today.

But, I would like to thank Brazil for its leadership in hosting this first meeting on the road to the post 2020 agenda designed to strengthen the sound management of chemicals and waste.

2017 is an important year for the chemicals community. After Brasilia, we have the COPs for the BRS (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm) Conventions, and, if all goes well, the First Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention in September.

2017 is also an important year for the wider environment and development community.

It's increasingly clear that environmental risks are growing.

Human activity has already pushed the planet beyond its safety boundaries.

The SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement are signs that the world is responding, but we must do more, and faster.

So, this year must be about action. It is also an opportunity to re-shape our thinking on how to tackle the threats facing our planet. This includes harnessing the benefits of chemicals while preventing their harmful impacts on human health and the environment.

The Global Environment Facility, or GEF, has worked over the last 20 years on international chemicals management, but it is impossible to keep up with the pace at which industry invents and produces new chemicals and products.

While the GEF addresses less than 1% of the more than 100 million chemicals produced globally our experience shows that there is a need to approach the sound management of chemicals differently.

We need to transform the way in which chemicals are produced, sold and used. Global efforts to shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and principles such as the circular economy, offer new opportunities to leverage resources from a variety of actors.

With its focus on building strong multi-stakeholder partnerships, the SAICM approach is an effective way to deal with the complex challenges before us.

The GEF has already allocated 13 million US dollars to SAICM activities to advance green chemistry, a priority for this body.

I am also pleased to announce that we are working closely with UN Environment and the SAICM secretariat to develop a comprehensive project to address several priority issues under SAICM, including lead in paints.

Chemicals relevant to the Conventions impact several development sectors, including energy, cities, health and commodities. Recognizing this, the GEF is exploring a new framework that aims to create greater impact at scale, and transform these sectors to produce and consume responsibly.

I look forward to engaging with you on this agenda in the run up to the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Chemicals Management.

Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen. Please rest assured that the GEF is fully committed to take bolder action on the critical issues before you this week.

I want to wish you all a productive and successful meeting.

Thank you