

WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP

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NEW GLOBAL PANEL ON CHEMICALS AND POLLUTION LAUNCHES WITH URGENT CALLS FOR ACTION

The first meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution opened with strong warnings about the growing global impacts of chemical pollution. UNEP Executive Director **Inger Andersen** called the new panel a critical step toward closing knowledge gaps and strengthening science-based decision-making worldwide. She emphasised that governments are ready to begin the Panel's work but must first agree on strict operational rules to ensure credibility and impact.

Host country Switzerland reinforced the call for swift progress. **Katrin Schneeberger**, Director of the Federal Office for the Environment, stressed that adopting clear rules of procedure will be essential for managing complex environmental challenges and building trust among member states.



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>>> CHILE'S OSVALDO ÁLVAREZ PÉREZ TAKES THE HELM

Delegates elected Osvaldo Álvarez Pérez of Chile as the Panel's first Chair, clearing a key hurdle in launching the body's work. A veteran of international environmental negotiations, Álvarez Pérez immediately stepped into a leadership role, steering discussions on how the Panel will operate. While negotiations on the remaining Bureau members continue, his election allows countries to move forward with critical institutional groundwork. During the session, he also met and took photos with observers from the Women Major Group, highlighting engagement with stakeholders and civil society representatives



TECHNICAL TALKS GAIN MOMENTUM IN CONTACT GROUPS



With leadership in place, delegates shifted focus to intensive technical negotiations on the Panel's draft Rules of Procedure. Working in contact groups, countries reviewed the text line-by-line, aiming to resolve sensitive issues and establish transparent decision-making processes. The outcome of these talks will shape how the Panel delivers scientific assessments and policy guidance to tackle global pollution and chemical risks.

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>>> SUMMARY OF MORNING MEETING ON DRAFT OPENING CEREMONY STATEMENT

During the morning meeting, the Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) discussed the proposed draft statement for the Opening Ceremony. Representatives of the WMG actively participated in drafting the statement. Among other issues, the discussion focused on the inclusion of the concept of precaution. Participants emphasized that precaution is essential, recognizing that science and knowledge alone are often insufficient to address uncertainty, long-term impacts, and incomplete evidence. The precautionary concept, rooted in the 1992 Rio Declaration, was widely supported as a necessary element to avoid delays in decision-making when evidence is limited.

There was broad agreement that the group should remain policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive. While scientists and knowledge holders are responsible for providing robust and inclusive evidence, governments retain the authority to determine acceptable levels of risk and precaution. To address concerns that the term "precautionary principle" could be seen as prescriptive, the group agreed to use the wording "precautionary approaches," emphasising proportionality and evidence-based decision-making.

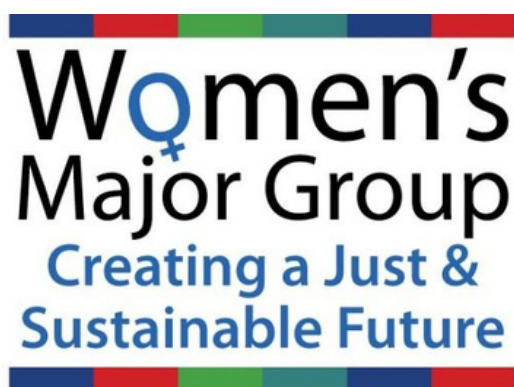


WARM WELCOME RECEPTION BY THE CITY OF GENEVA



On the opening day of the Panel, the City of Geneva hosted a welcoming reception for participants. It was a lovely opportunity to enjoy traditional Swiss food and wine and to experience a bit of local culture in a relaxed atmosphere.

Participants also received a practical gift from the host city, a thoughtful gesture that was much appreciated. Beyond the hospitality, the reception created a great space for networking, allowing delegates, experts, and observers to meet informally, exchange ideas, and connect with one another at the start of the week.



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>>> YELLOW DAY ON THE OPENING OF THE PANEL: FEMINISTS DEMAND A TOXIC-FREE FUTURE FOR ALL

On the opening day of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution, the Women's Major Group (WMG) made its presence visible through its colour campaign by mobilising yellow as the colour of the day, carrying the message: "Feminists demand a toxic-free future for all."

This action marked the beginning of the Panel's work with a clear feminist demand and a strong political signal. Yellow was chosen deliberately to represent urgency, caution, and resistance — a warning that toxic chemicals, waste, and pollution continue to cause profound harm to human health, ecosystems, and especially to women, girls, and marginalised communities worldwide.

Through the colour campaign, WMG brought feminist perspectives into the opening of the Panel, reminding decision-makers that science-policy processes must respond to lived realities. Exposure to toxic substances is not gender-neutral; it is shaped by structural inequalities, care roles, labour conditions, poverty, and environmental injustice. Feminists therefore demand policies that are not only scientifically sound but also grounded in human rights, precaution, and social justice.

By wearing yellow on the opening day, WMG collectively reclaimed space within the Panel and amplified the call for transformative action. The message underscored the need to move beyond incremental change and to confront the root causes of pollution, including unsustainable production systems and corporate accountability gaps.



Feminists demand
**A TOXIC-FREE
FUTURE FOR
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