

Agenda item 18.1, 18.2, 18.3

Climate change, pollution and health – written statement Switzerland, 27 May 2025

The climate crisis — together with the two other planetary crises, pollution and biodiversity loss — is worsening. Increasingly, we see compelling evidence of the multifaceted and adverse impacts these crises have on human health.

Switzerland welcomes the reaffirmation of the Fourteenth Global Programme of Work (GPW 14) as a key tool in defining the priorities of the World Health Organization. It makes clear that the climate crisis is fundamentally also a health crisis—and that the WHO has a central role to play in addressing it.

At the end of last year, Switzerland proudly joined the WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH). We believe this is a crucial initiative that enables the sharing of expertise, knowledge, and experiences among a broad and diverse network of governments and stakeholders—helping us address global challenges more effectively.

We also welcome the adoption of several key documents:

- The updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution,
- The global action plan on climate change and health, and
- The resolution on galvanizing global support for a lead-free future.

Switzerland is convinced that urgent action is needed to address the interlinkages between health and the environment. We must enhance the engagement of the health sector, and of WHO, in leading and supporting existing efforts, including through a human rights lens.

In this regard, we warmly welcome the adoption of the *Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste*. This represents a significant milestone, and an opportunity to reinforce the link between health and environment. A decision from the WHA responding to the invitation from ICCM5 acknowledging the GFC would be further helpful in strengthening the role of the health sector and implementation of the WHO Chemicals Road Map.

We would also like to highlight two important intergovernmental negotiation processes, currently being led by ministries of environment, but of direct relevance to ministries of health as well: First, the development of the Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention. Second, the negotiations towards a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.

The Science-Policy Panel represents the missing counterpart to the IPCC and IPBES. As an intergovernmental panel, it will help strengthen decision-making on chemicals, waste, and pollution at all levels, by providing governments with robust, policy-relevant information. In Switzerland's view, it is important that WHO remains actively involved in the new Science-Policy Panel, to ensure that health considerations are fully integrated. We recognize that the funding of the Panel will be voluntary and additional to existing WHO initiatives.

Concerning the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic pollution, Switzerland stresses the importance of integrating the protection of human health across the full life cycle of plastics within the treaty's legal framework. The health community contributes significant expertise on a wide range of issues that are relevant to the treaty. This should be well reflected — not only in the negotiation process, but also in the treaty's future implementation. Switzerland acknowledges the engagement of WHO thus far and encourages its continued and enhanced engagement, particularly in the lead-up to INC-5.2 this August in Geneva.

To conclude, Switzerland reaffirms the essential role of WHO in supporting a comprehensive, coherent, and effective international framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste. We fully support the continued engagement of WHO and its close cooperation with other organizations and instruments within this thematic cluster.