

Til klima og miljøminister Espen Barth Eide
Postboks 8013 Dep, 0030 Oslo

Norske forsker støtter etablering av et mellomstatlig panel for kjemisk forurensing og avfall i FNs femte miljøsamling (UNEA 5.2)

Kjære Espen Barth Eide,

Som forskere ved norske universiteter og forskningsinstitutter som undersøker virkningene av forurensninger på naturen og helsen uttrykker vi vår støtte til å etablere et mellomstatlig panel for vitenskap og politikk relatert til kjemikalier, avfall og forurensing (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution). Vi håper at Regjeringen vil støtte en slik resolusjon på det kommende møtet i FNs miljøforsamling (UNEA 5.2) i perioden 28. februar til 2. mars 2022 i Nairobi, Kenya.

Etablering av et vitenskapelig panel er viktig for å fremme samarbeid globalt, samt regulere produksjon, bruk og utslipp av farlige kjemikalier. Forslaget er allerede støttet av Costa Rica, Ghana, Mali, Nord-Irland, Østerrike, Storbritannia, Sveits, Sverige og Uruguay. Med bakgrunn i Norges fremtredende rolle i internasjonale miljøspørsmål og Norges ledende rolle i UNEA 5, håper vi at Norge vil være en pådriver for en bærekraftig global utvikling.

Vi som forsker på kjemikalier og miljøeffekter av kjemikalier, er svært bekymret for de langsiktige effektene som farlige kjemikalier og avfall kan ha på miljø og menneskers helse. Til tross for flere internasjonale avtaler, som Basel-, Rotterdam-, Stockholm- og Minamata-konvensjonene, er det betydelige mangler i internasjonale reguleringer av kjemikalier og avfall, som f.eks. for farlige metaller, plantevernmidler og persistente organiske miljøgifter, hvorav mange tilhører kategorien hormonforstyrrende kjemikalier, og plastforurensning. I tillegg har eksisterende rammeverk ingen mekanismer for proaktivt å fange opp nye miljøtrusler forårsaket av kjemikalier og avfall. Dette er særlig bekymringsfullt fordi den globale produksjonen av kjemikalier og avfall fortsetter å øke, spesielt i land utenfor EU.

I bakgrunnsrapportene til UNEA 4-resolusjonene beskriver UNEP behovet for vitenskapelige vurderinger for å støtte politiske beslutninger som tar sikte på å redusere miljørisikoen relatert til kjemikalier og avfall på globalt, regionalt og nasjonalt nivå. En fersk rapport fra Nordisk Ministerråd fremhever for eksempel et ytterligere behov for reduksjon av plastforurensning.¹ Slike vurderinger må komme fra kunnskapsrike og uavhengige eksperter som arbeider gjennom en åpen og transparent prosess. Kjemikalier og avfall er en global miljøtrussel som ikke tar hensyn til landegrensener. Som det fremgår av arbeidet mot klimaendringer og mot tap av biologisk mangfold, kan slike komplekse problemer bare løses gjennom koordinert innsats fra det internasjonale samfunnet, veiledet av aktuell vitenskap.

Vi ber derfor Norges regjeringen å støtte utkastet til resolusjon om etablering av et "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yc62vmp7>.

pollution" ved UNEA 5.2. Dette initiativet er avgjørende for å styrke den globale reguleringen av farlige forurensning for en bærekraftig fremtid.

Lenke til UNEA 5.2-oppløsning: <https://tinyurl.com/a3wc456s>.

Vennlig hilsen,

Hans Peter Arp, Expert Adviser, NGI, Professor II, NTNU (Environmental Chemist)
Bert van Bavel, Chief Scientist, NIVA (Analytical Chemist)
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Thomas Maes, Senior Scientist, GRID-Arendal (Pollution Scientist)
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Martin Wagner, Associate Professor, NTNU (Environmental Toxicologist)

To the Minister for Climate and Environment Espen Barth Eide
Postboks 8013 Dep, 0030 Oslo

Norwegian scientists support the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution at the upcoming UNEA 5.2

Dear Espen Barth Eide,

As scientists investigating the impacts of pollution on nature and human health at Norwegian universities and research institutes, we are writing to express our support for establishing an "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution." We also want to express our hopes that the Norwegian government will support the draft resolution that will be presented at the forthcoming meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) on 28 February to 2 March 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The establishment of such scientific panel is important for promoting cooperation globally, as well as raising the minimum level of regulation of hazardous chemicals. The resolution is already supported by Austria, Costa Rica, Ghana, Mali, Northern Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay. Given Norway's prominent role in promoting progress on international environmental issues and taking into account that Norway has the presidency of UNEA 5, we hope that our country will be a driving force for sustainable development here.

As scientists who do research on pollution, we are very concerned about the long-term impacts that hazardous pollution can have on both. Despite several international agreements, such as the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata conventions, there are significant gaps in the international regulation of chemicals, including hazardous metals, pesticides, and persistent organic pollutants, many of which belong to the category of endocrine disrupting chemicals, as well as of plastic pollution. In addition, existing frameworks generally have no mechanisms for proactively capturing new and emerging threats. This is particularly worrying given that global production of chemicals and waste continues to increase, especially in countries outside Europe.

In the background reports to the UNEA 4 resolutions, UNEP describes the need for scientific assessments to support policy decisions aimed at reducing the risks of chemicals and waste at global, regional, and national levels. A recent report by the Nordic Council of Ministers, for instance, further highlights such need for plastic pollution.² Such assessments must come from independent experts who work through an open and transparent process. Chemicals and waste are a global environmental threat that does not take national borders into account. As can be seen from the work against climate change and biodiversity loss, such complex problems can only be solved through coordinated efforts by the international community, guided by the best available science.

² <https://tinyurl.com/yc62vmp7>.

We, therefore, call on the Norwegian government to support the draft resolution on the establishment of an "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution" at UNEA 5.2. This initiative is crucial for strengthening the global regulation of hazardous pollution for a sustainable future.

Link to UNEA 5.2 resolution: <https://tinyurl.com/a3wc456s>

Sincerely,

Hans Peter Arp, Expert Adviser, NGI, Professor II, NTNU (Environmental Chemist)
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