



## The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)

### UNEP Science-policy panel OEWG 1.1: Accredited Major Groups Stakeholder Statement

The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) is a global scientific organization, which is composed of members from academia, business, government and NGOs. SETAC would like to thank UNEP for the opportunity to attend the inaugural meeting of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, and to offer our scientific expertise to support the OEWG activities. SETAC's work, in relation to science-policy activities, has clearly demonstrated that multidisciplinary multistakeholder collaborative working groups, consistent with [SETAC principles](#), are the most robust way to tackle global challenges in [collaboration](#) with other organizations. As such, SETAC is delighted to witness the transparent and inclusive approach that UNEP has taken, to consult with all relevant actors prior to today's first OEWG meeting, and to invite all interested stakeholders to participate in the OEWG meetings and actively share their personal statements today.

Globally, there are approximately 350, 000 chemicals on the market, and of course, in today's society, we strive for safer and sustainable by design chemicals and products, at any stage of their life cycle, to be developed, and we aspire to minimize their pollution. However, we need to be mindful that regardless of current or future policy and developments, legacy chemicals, left over from past anthropogenic activities, are present in our environment, which will still pose a risk to humans and our planet, and require safe disposal or remediation. We need to be mindful that globally there is not an equal distribution of wealth or resources, and we know from history that the actions of developed countries have caused challenges for the developing countries. Waste and chemical pollution is going to be with us, in one way or another, for a very long time to come, in our waters, in our soils, and in the air that we breathe.

SETAC urges the OEWG to be bold and brave in your decision-making. We urge you not to settle for the route of least resistance, or the route endorsed by the loudest voices. As a membership-based society comprising of world-leading ecotoxicologists, environmental risk assessors, risk managers, environmental chemists and life cycle analysis practitioners, SETAC urges the OEWG to select a route that is supported by the most robust and rigorous scientific evidence, to focus on the key chemicals of concern and wastes that pose the greatest global risk to human health and the health of aquatic, terrestrial and atmospheric ecosystems, in order to reduce pollution and therefore, protect humankind and our planet. We urge the OEWG not to focus specifically on one ecosystem at the expense of our other ecosystems, but instead take a holistic approach, which offers humankind and our planet the greatest protection.