

## FOREWORD

It is an inspiration and a delight to bring you such a varied collection of stories from around the world that provide a snapshot of how gender perspectives are being incorporated into the sound management of chemicals and wastes. Bringing gender issues to the forefront of the chemicals and waste agenda is absolutely key as women, men, boys and girls are exposed to these harmful substances in different ways and to varying degrees depending on where they work and live. In addition to gender differences in exposure to hazardous substances there are also differences in physiological susceptibility between men and women, girls and boys. We need to take these differences into account when we devise measures for the sound management of chemicals and wastes so that we tailor our responses with gender aspects in mind.

The stories featured in this publication bring forth a picture of grassroots action being taken around the world every day by individuals and communities to protect the most vulnerable segments of our population from the potentially harmful effects of certain chemicals and wastes. Many of the stories speak of the empowerment of women in marginalised communities and the impacts that their actions have had in the promotion of ecological agriculture and the reduction of use of highly hazardous pesticides, in the protection of children from the toxics found in toys and in the collection of e-waste from landfill sites, to name but a few examples. Several stories break down gender stereotypes and show women as pioneers in areas that have traditionally been thought of as a man's domain, such as in scientific research, the shipping industry, even sailing. Whilst approaching the issue from differing perspectives, it is clear that all of the proponents in these stories are playing an invaluable role in not only bringing gender issues to the fore, but also in raising awareness and promoting action to ensure the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

I hope you enjoy reading the publication as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

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Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam  
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