End of Mission Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights, Marcos A. Orellana, on his visit to Ghana, 30 November to 13 December 2022

Accra, 13 December 2022

Today I conclude a 14 days long visit to Ghana at the invitation of the Government. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Ghana for welcoming me.

During the last two weeks since 30 November, I have held constructive exchanges with a number of Government authorities, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, the Minerals Commission and Ministry of Energy and Petroleum.

Nonetheless, I regret that several of the official meetings requested by my mandate were unfortunately not granted.

In addition, I have met with the National Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, civil society organizations, members of academia, traditional authorities, local authorities, several local communities, Ghana Association of Small Scale Miners, and other stakeholders. I am very grateful for the fruitful exchanges with representatives of Ghana's active civil society, and academia, who have generously given their time to contribute to the success of the visit. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the local UN offices for their valuable support in the preparation and duration of the visit.

From the capital Accra, I travelled to the Atewa Range Forest Reserve (Eastern Region), Kumasi and Obuasi (Ashanti Region), and Tarkwa (Western Region). I visited communities living by gold mines where mercury and cyanide are used to extract gold from the ore. I also visited Tamale (Northern Region) and Bolgatanga (Upper East Region), where I have met with farmers that use pesticides and others that practice agroecology. I have also met with various stakeholders in Greater Accra Region. For example, I visited the Agbogbloshie site where dismantling of all types of electronics take place. I also visited James Town beach, which is littered by plastics and adversely affected by the burning of tyres to clean animal skin. In the same region, I have also travelled to Tuba where I met farmers to discuss about their use of pesticides.

I would like to thank all the community members in all these places for their time, their openness and their sharing of experiences concerning toxic substances.

In this final phase of my official visit, I am pleased to share today my preliminary observations. A full report on my official visit to Ghana will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2023.

Introduction

The aim of this official visit was to collect and assess first-hand information related to issues falling under the scope of my mandate and to offer constructive recommendations to the Government and other stakeholders. I was particularly interested in examining a range of issues from a human rights lens including: i) the use of mercury in small-scale mining; (ii) solid waste management and facilities, including hazardous waste and plastics management; (iii) the use of pesticides and fertilizers; iv) electronic waste; and, v) contamination by used clothes.

I would like to congratulate Ghana for having ratified all international agreements on chemicals and wastes (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions). I would like to highlight Ghana’s leadership in the governance of these agreements. For example, earlier this year Ghana proposed landmark amendments to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, in order to subject transboundary movements of e-wastes to the prior informed consent procedure of the Convention. Similarly, Ghana is co-sponsoring an amendment

to the the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, to be discussed in the next Conference of the Parties, to establish a new Annex for the listing of hazardous chemicals where consensus cannot be reached at the COP, in order to overcome the paralysis that has undermined the effectiveness of this instrument. Furthermore, Ghana has taken the lead in the process toward a new legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including incorporating elements of a rights-based approach. It is also encouraging to see Ghana lead on the elaboration of an action plan on chemicals and waste for the sub-region at ECOWAS.

From a human rights perspective, I cannot stress enough the historic significance of the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/300 on 28 July 2022 recognizing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This General Assembly resolution enjoyed the support of 161 States, including Ghana. The adoption of the resolution is of great relevance to people exposed to hazardous substances. The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment encompasses the right to live in a non-toxic environment.

Important progress by Ghana on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals has been registered over recent years. Ghana's latest Voluntary National Review, submitted in the context of the 2030 Agenda follow up and review mechanisms, indicated an average completion of the SDGs to 63.4 per cent in 2022. I would like to encourage the Government to continue in this direction, paying specific attention to the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

During my visit, I have observed that Ghana has embarked on several initiatives to strengthen its response to the challenges posed by chemicals and wastes. For example, the State is preparing a regulation on air quality that would strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency Act 490. Similarly, with support from the Global Environmental Facility, the Government has prepared a National Action Plan (NAP) on artisanal and small-scale gold mining, as required by the Minamata Convention on Mercury. I wish to commend the various consultations that have informed its elaboration. However, I also wish to express my concerns about the absence of a phase out date for mercury use in the NAP.

In addition, Ghana established a Chemicals Control Management Centre and adopted the 2021 to 2030 Strategic Plan for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and a related communication strategy. These are positive steps in the efforts by the County regarding the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

In terms of science, research and technology, I would like to welcome the launch, just last week, of the new West Africa Centre on Environmental and Occupational Health at the University of Ghana in Accra.

Despite such important achievements and initiatives, cross cutting gaps exist in legislation for effective management of chemicals and waste. While Ghana's environmental laws are strong, there is weak implementation. Also, there are certain gaps in Ghana's normative framework regarding industrial chemicals as well as a lack of a comprehensive national policy to manage the entire lifecycle of chemicals, including waste. Furthermore, corruption amongst the police force is also of particular concern to the proper enforcement of laws and the rule of law.

Awareness raising must be scaled up for the rights holders to be informed about human rights risks associated with toxics exposure. The current gaps in the legislative and policy framework of Ghana generate a lack of protection of the population against environmental risks, particularly for those involved and exposed to informal dumping sites, gold mining and agrochemicals.

E-Waste

A variety of "second hand" electronic materials are imported in Ghana through the Port of Tema, including hundreds of thousands of tons of discarded electronics, mostly from Western Europe and the United States.

While imported electronic material is officially labeled as used (or second hand) consumer goods by exporters, many of the discarded electronic goods are in a state beyond repair- constituting electronic

and electrical waste (e-waste). It is estimated that 15 per cent of electronics are not functional upon arrival. Trade facilitation, which includes efforts at reducing the time containers spend in customs, means that less containers are inspected. Also, pre-shipment inspections that were carried out by a third-party contractor, largely have not worked.

The Government of Ghana has applied significant efforts to address challenges posed by the import of used electronic goods. For example, the Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control and Management Act of 2016, often referred to as Act 917, aims at regulating the import or export of used or discarded electrical or electronic equipment. It also establishes the Electrical and Electronic Waste Management Fund, partially financed by an eco-levy system on imports. While this act and fund are important steps, I would like to express my concerns about actual impacts on the ground of e-wastes. The informal sector handles 95 per cent of e-waste, and I have witnessed the absence of protective equipment on workers, high risks of work accidents, and human rights infringements due to the high level of toxicity and the poor conditions of e-waste sites.

My visit took me to Agbogbloshie, which is amongst the biggest e-waste dumpsites in the world. It was estimated that 40 000 people live and work on site. Agbogbloshie has seen improvements, including certain efforts at relocation. Workers remaining are exposed to toxic substances such as brominated and chlorinated dioxins, among others. Such heavily contaminated places are "sacrifice zones"; places where human rights are denied to their inhabitants.

In Agbogbloshie, I have met workers making a living from e-waste. Many of my interlocutors migrated from the Northern parts of Ghana, drawn by Accra's economic opportunities. I have also held conversation with members of the Agbogbloshie's community, including children and women, currently living in informal settlements in poor sanitary conditions with no direct access to safe drinking water, a limited number of public toilets, and no formal waste collection system.

I have witnessed practices such as burning and mechanical shredding, which expose recycling workers to a variety of health risks. As I walked around the site and talked to its inhabitants, I have seen a range of highly hazardous activities taking place a few meters away from families' homes, including transforming used motor oil into waterproof paint for roofs, repurposing refrigerators and motors scrapings, and the burning of electronic cables for the extraction of copper. All workers I have witnessed conducting these activities were doing so without adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), in most instances with their bare hands, wearing jeans and open shoes, without masks preventing them from inhaling the highly toxic smoke generated by e-waste fires. This exposes workers to heightened risks of respiratory diseases and decrease lung functions.

It has also been reported that levels of particulate matter (PM) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which can be generated by disposal and recycling activities of e-waste, were elevated for workers performing burning and dismantling. Hazardous substances including arsenic, lead, mercury, and copper have also been detected in the soil, water, ash, sediment, and dust collected from the Agbogbloshie site. These health risks infiltrate and affect the food chain. Haggard animals walk freely and graze in the Agbogbloshie area, which is home to one of Accra's main food markets.

The lack of sound management of wastes creates incentives for children to leave school in search for a few dimes burning cables, especially in the context of the high poverty rate for children and dire economic situation.

Plastics and used clothes contamination

Approximately 840,000 tonnes of plastic waste are generated by Ghana every year and only 9.5% of this plastic waste is collected for recycling. The rest of the plastic waste litters urban and rural environments, clogs drainage infrastructure, impairs water streams and lagoons, and also finds their way to contaminate the sea.

Plastics contain a myriad of toxic additives posing severe risks and harms to human rights and the environment. Hazardous chemicals are released or added to plastics at every stage in the plastics cycle.

The ever-increasing plastics production, incineration and waste dumping only aggravate the detrimental consequences.

In Ghana, plastic waste is not properly managed. It can be found over roadsides and shores, floating in water bodies, and piled up and burning in informal dumping sites. Farmers I have spoken to told me plastic is blown by the wind to their farms, and is eaten by their animals that then have health complications or die. They also spoke about how plastics is now also found in soils, and that this negatively affects ploughing activities and crops to grow properly. In addition, bush fires or burning practices in agriculture often result in plastics burning as found on the land, incrusted in soil or simply dumped. Similarly, fishing folks report that about half of their catch is plastics.

My visit also took me to Korle Lagoon, severely hindered -almost blocked in certain areas- by piles and piles of waste including plastics. I was shocked by the quantity of waste brought by sea to on James Town beach which, in some areas, was covered by 10 to 50 centimeters of waste including textile garments and shoes that have been brought ashore by the waves. On the same beach, many people live in informal settlements, where they breed and slaughter cattle and fish for subsistence and livelihood. Like in Agbogbloshie, their human rights to water and sanitation, health, housing, food and to a healthy environment are being infringed.

In addition to plastics, used clothes (many of which also are or contain plastics) are posing a serious waste challenge upon Ghana. I have visited a wild beach in greater Accra, close to Mighty Beach, where great quantities of waste, mostly used clothes are found littering the coast. Many of the clothes were in large plastic bags, alongside discarded fishing nets.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the adoption of a National Plastic Waste Management Policy. Positive strategic actions include the establishment of collection, recovery, recycling and re-manufacturing targets and initiatives to fostering innovative resource mobilization towards a circular economy. However, while a policy is important, it only makes a difference where it is implemented effectively, including through laws and other measures. For instance, Ghana should consider banning single-use plastics and establishing extended producer responsibility schemes. There is also an urgent need to reduce plastic consumption, for packaging and in general.

An additional concern is tyres management, often piled up outside shops, on the side of roads or pile up in informal dumping sites. In 2019, it was estimated that the amount of waste tyres was above 100,000 tonnes. Mismanagement of waste tyres constitute a serious problem for human health, as it provides malaria-infected mosquitoes with additional breeding grounds. In addition, tyres are often burned for fuel or to extract the metals in them, which exacerbates release of highly toxic pollutants to the environment.

Kantamanto is Ghana's largest second-hand clothing market, and one of the biggest in the world. Kantamanto market's retail side alone covers over seven acres in the heart of Accra, and employs around 30,000 people. The import side of the business, which supports all of the retail operations, takes up another 15 acres. But not all used clothes are in good shape for resale. At least 6 million articles go to trash each week. What is not sold is thrown into open drains, where it eventually ends up in the ocean, or sent to be burned in unofficial dumpsites, the largest of which is located around the Korle Lagoon, which flows into the Gulf of Guinea.

Chemicals such as pesticide residue in cotton, PFAS, and synthetic fibers contributing to plastic pollution are all found in cheap clothing that ends up as waste in Ghana. I would like to highlight the negative implications of such waste mismanagement for the local community and ecosystem: Around 80,000 people who live in Kantamanto's surrounding informal settlements are exposed to the unofficial dumpsites, which pose serious health risks. Furthermore, textile waste blocks drains, causing flooding and, as a result, diseases such as cholera and malaria to spread. Leached dyes, decomposing fibers, and microplastics have a significant impact on aquatic life, as well as human health.

Gold mining industry

The gold mining industry is an important source of income in Ghana. Gold makes up for 93 per cent of mineral exploitation, and the country is the leading gold exporter in Africa. The small-scale gold mining industry contributed to 35.93 per of the total gold production in 2019, which adds up to more than $2 billion USD.

During my mission, I have visited several communities that are adversely impacted by mining. Some mining operations are small-scale, both legal and illegal, and invariably they use mercury. Others are large scale mining operations often conducted by foreign companies.

I would like to express my deep concerns about the increasing use of mercury across the country and its serious human rights implications. Mercury is a highly toxic metal that is persistent, can cross the human placenta, affects neurodevelopment of children, and causes a range of health problems including terminal diseases such as cancer.

Over the course of my visit, many of my interlocutors told me that mercury is actually "everywhere" in Ghana. While the importation of mercury is controlled in Ghana by law, the substance makes its way into the country through a well organised black market, hence remaining easily accessible.

Small scale mining

The prospect of important rapid economic gain attracts many individuals into small scale mining, including illegal small-scale mining (*galamsey)*. According to the World Bank small scale mining contributes to the revenue of over one million households across the country. In 2019, there were an estimated of 2 to 3 million artisanal miners, using mercury which contributes also to illicit flows of the substance across the region and in Ghana.

It is concerning that workers in the small-scale mining industry, which is undertaken around the country from North to South, use mercury without being fully informed of the high risks of the substance on human health and the environment. For instance, a miner I spoke to told me he had been using mercury indoors, at home, without protective equipment. In addition, at times mercury is used close to water streams, contaminating water bodies, ecosystems and the food chain. It has been estimated that 60% of the water bodies are currently polluted in the country, with most of them in critical conditions.

Furthermore, it has been reported that *galamsey's* operations impact cocoa crops. It should be noted that Ghana is the second-largest producer of cocoa in the world. Furthermore, the cocoa sector's contribution in the total foreign exchange earnings, comes second, right after mineral exports. Cocoa production should not be compromised by the gold mining industry.

I would like to highlight efforts deployed by the Government of Ghana to address small scale mining. They encompass programmes to transition away from mercury, including through the acquisition of mercury-free gold processing machines to promote sustainable mining in the small-scale sector. Additional efforts include the Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small-Scale Mining Project, financed by the World Bank.

I would like to encourage the Government to scale up such programmes and ensure that they are accessible to all small-scale miners. While these initiatives are important steps, more should be done being particularly concerned about potential violations of the rights to life, health, and a healthy environment of members of communities exposed to mercury.

In regard to the deleterious impacts of mercury on human health and the environment, the Government should adopt strong measures of control. It should ban the trade and use in mercury, champion amendments to strengthen the Minamata Convention on mercury, and address mercury use as a form of environmental crime.

Large-Scale Gold Mining

Large scale mining activities negatively affect the human rights of communities all over Ghana. Such impacts include blasting noise and vibration, dust pollution, heat waves, and waste generated by mining activities. Transport of hazardous substances is also dangerous and risky. 13 persons died in January 2022 due to a road accident and explosion implicating a truck carrying explosives to a gold mine.

Over my visit in Ashanti and Western Regions, I have seen entire villages surrounded by mining waste and large areas of land covered in tailings and stagnant water. I have heard testimonies of individuals losing their lands, farms and livelihoods to the benefit of large-scale mining companies. I have also heard testimonies of entire communities being deprived of their sources of clean water by the pollution discharged from mining operations. I have also met community members in mining areas, who have reported suffering from coughing, rashes, nose bleeding, fatigue, weakness, respiratory problems and cancer, amongst other health issues.

In addition, I have been informed of alleged serious human rights violations conducted by security companies and contractors of mining companies. According to a survey conducted by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in 2008, instances of torture and other cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment have been reported, including use of guard dogs, intimidation of community members and harassment of arrested illegal miners.

When it comes to the illegal mining sector, important concerns should also be raised about potential labour rights abuses, exploitation and corruption. In particular, cases of child labour have been reported, and I have received first-hand information about corruption through bribery of police officers. Some of the *galamsey* are also armed, which is a concern reported in 2017 by the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries.

Large-scale gold mining activities has contaminated lands previously used for cultivation. Mercury, zinc and arsenic have resulted in toxic water pollution. This has eroded people's access to livelihoods and food, which have forced communities to leave their villages.

In Tarkwa, I have exchanged with some individuals waiting for adequate compensation. They have remained in their communities despite the proximity to the mining operations and exposure to waste and toxics. For instance, one of my interlocutors explained that the mining company, net worth more than 9 billion USD, estimated his property based on partial assessment, attributing no value to wooden part of his house but only to its cement infrastructure. Some communities are put under pressure to accept (inadequate) compensation and to relocate. I have witnessed destroyed houses and facilities, including public toilets, in communities where people decided to stay. Many of them struggle to find employment in resettled locations, including in large scale mines operating around them, despite provisions from the Mining Act promoting hiring of local workers by mining companies operating concessions.

Furthermore, I would like to stress that there is an important imbalance in benefit sharing of the mining industry. The gold industry sector contributed 12.12% to Ghana Government Revenue in the form of domestic tax. Apart from mineral rent and fees, mining companies currently pay royalty of between 3-6% of the total revenue of minerals obtained, as prescribed by law. Not much of this reaches the communities adversely impacted by mining, however. Nonetheless, Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives have, at times, provided important services to communities, including schools, roads and hospitals.

The total gold produced in 2019 resulted in US$ 6.68 billion in exports, according to the Minerals Commission. While large scale mining industry employed 31,571 people in 2019, the economic benefits of the sector for the rest of the population are limited. For example, roads and social services, essential for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, are in poor conditions in the regions where mining companies are located. Despite the high revenues of mining companies, only a limited percentage is contributing to national revenue, hence having an impact on the maximum resources available for the realization of human rights. In this regard, it should be noted that more than 25 per

cent of the population live in poverty, close to half of the population being food insecure and low levels of sanitation are registered.

I would like to highlight the important steps taken by the Government of Ghana regarding the development of a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. This initiative is of key importance as businesses have human rights responsibilities, as outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. I encourage the Government to continue in this direction, and towards the final adoption of a plan through extended informed consultation with all stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and local communities. I would like to stress that key attention must be paid to the mining sector and its impacts on human rights.

Such a framework is of particular importance, as I have received information regarding challenges in public participation and consultation among the communities. It has been reported that individual members of the communities lack opportunities to voice their concerns about, or opposition to, a project, as the current consultation process focuses on the chieftaincy's position. In this regard, I would like to highlight that free and prior informed consent should not be perceived as a tick-the-box exercise, but as a tool to ensure meaningful participation and the realization of human rights. Furthermore, I was informed of allegations of corruption of traditional authorities and local politicians, in the context of large-scale mining projects.

Pesticides and fertilisers

Various agrochemicals contribute to Ghana's toxic challenges. These chemicals include fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and other products. The increased use of agrochemicals by farmers with limited knowledge in safety precautions, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), usage above recommended proportion, and the impacts on crops and the food chain raise concerns. In addition, used pesticide containers pose a problem, as they are often burned in the fields and sometimes even reused to fetch or store water. Incentives and controls to secure the collection of pesticide containers after usage should be put in place.

Some of the pesticides used in Ghana are banned for use in Europe because they are hazardous to human health and the environment. Examples include atrazine, paraquat and chlorpyrifos. It is also alarming that one of the most widely used pesticides in the country is glyphosate (locally known as Kondem), which the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified as "probably carcinogenic to humans."

In this regard, I would also like to highlight the abhorrent double standards of countries that ban the use of pesticides because they are dangerous to people's health and the environment while allowing them to be produced and exported to developing countries. At the same time, I need to remind that it is also the responsibility of the Ghanian State to protect the human rights of its population and to restrict the importation of highly hazardous pesticides.

The pesticide's control and management act, 1996 (Act 528), now part of Environmental Protection Agency Act 490, regulates the registration, distribution, and usage of pesticides in Ghana. It provides competences both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency. However, the insufficient action of the competent institutions to prevent toxics exposure and effectively monitor compliance with the law, is resulting in serious damage to the environment and people's health. The Ministry of Agriculture deploys "extension officers" in communities, and the Environment Protection Agency's regional offices help to conduct inspections. However, monitoring capacity remains limited due to the wide territory to cover, and the high number of communities they serve. There is a need for more capacity and tools at the Environmental Protection Agency, including testing and monitoring equipment, cars for mobility, the establishment of laboratories and staff exchange programs.

In addition, coordination between the competent agencies could be improved. For example, there is no common platform for data and information sharing to improve coordination.

Also, I was surprised to learn that agrochemical business interests sit in the Pesticides Technical Committee, influencing which pesticides are registered in Ghana.

It has also been brought to my attention that farmers have limited information or lack the means to purchase protective equipment.

I have also had the opportunity to see agroecological farming in action. In Northern Ghana I visited the Gundoog community, where its members cultivate crops without the use of chemical pesticides. They explained that their ancestral practices are organic. I learned about how they have achieved food security, in addition to preserving soil fertility and preventing pollution of water bodies.

As alternative to the current challenges with chemical fertilizers, I have also learned about microbial farming and microbial fertilizer value chain. This would also contribute to the reduction of chemicals in farming practices.

Conclusions

These are some of the issues I will discuss in my report to the United Nations Human Rights Council in September 2023. In said report I will offer specific recommendations. The Government of Ghana should not delay taking the steps necessary to address the adverse impacts of *galamsey*, pesticides, e-waste and plastics. For example, the State should prohibit the import and use of hazardous pesticides that are banned or restricted in their countries of origin.

Ghana is on the receiving end of a global economy that seeks to externalize the costs of waste generation on poor developing countries. The result is exposure of workers lacking protective equipment to the hazardous substances released in the dismantling and recycling of e-wastes. Furthermore, electronic equipment is not designed to be recycled, which is an obstacle to a circular economy and adds to the need for an extended producer responsibility (EPR) system across borders.

During my visit it became clear to me that many communities in Ghana are suffering from exposure to toxic substances. One of the main concerns is the lack of effective enforcement of environmental legislation. There is a need for greater articulation between governmental institutions, under the normative framework of human rights, as well as a greater availability of these institutions to the population. There is an urgent need for Ghana to respect and guarantee the free and full exercise of human rights in the face of the threats posed by toxic substances in Ghana.. In addition, prominence of chemical and waste action must be elevated within environmental protections.

There are true opportunities for leapfrogging in technology in Ghana at the moment, but they are unfortunately not captured. As a result, Ghana appears to be stuck with the polluting practices that have caused heavy human rights impacts and contaminated sites in other countries. In addition, there is a need to address false solutions, such as certain waste-to-energy proposals that shift the contamination from one medium to another.

I would like to conclude by congratulating Ghana for its leading role in important initiatives related to toxics and waste, both at the national and international levels. Ghana has adopted relevant laws to prevent toxics exposure. It has also led the strengthening of international instruments in the chemicals and waste cluster, such as by proposing amendments to the Basel Convention, co-sponsoring amendments to the Rotterdam Convention, and leading the African Group in the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. A critical achievement is the collection and disposal of PCBs, as per Stockholm Convention requirements.

These initiatives reflect effort and commitment for the sound management of chemicals and waste in Ghana. Still, much remains to be done. Every person in Ghana has the right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In this regard, Ghana must take further steps to strengthen its legal framework by addressing current gaps and improve implementation and enforcement.

Finally, I would like to thank again the State of Ghana for its invitation to visit the country and the hospitality offered to me by the Ghanaian people during my two-week stay. I am available to offer technical support to address the challenges with regard to toxics and human rights in the years to come. Thank you.