January 2015

It's my privilege to serve the global chemistry industry as the new president of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA). On behalf of my colleague Cal Dooley, president and CEO of the American Chemistry Council and incoming ICCA Council Secretary, I would like to thank my friend and predecessor Kurt Bock, CEO of BASF SE, for his leadership in promoting the responsible and sustainable production and use of chemicals around the world as part of our industry's commitment to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

Our industry has already made a huge impact on global sustainability initiatives—and yet, the contributions chemistry can make to improve the lives of everyone on the planet are far from complete. In the lead up to the 4th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-4) in September, and the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in December, I see three areas in which our industry can make tangible progress toward reaching the SAICM 2020 goal of sound chemicals management worldwide.

The first is in continuing to drive the development of products and technologies that help enhance our quality of life and enable a more sustainable future. At the 2012 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, 192 member states agreed to a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would drive the U.N.'s post-2015 development agenda. The 17 SDGs covered a broad range of issues in which chemistry could play an enormous part: advancing health and quality of life; feeding a growing world population; providing clean drinking water around the world; helping develop the cities of the future; combating climate change; and protecting our environment.

ICCA and the more than 20 million men and women around the world employed by our industry welcome the opportunity to continue developing the innovative products and technologies that can help solve such large-scale, global challenges. As governments work together to finalize the SDGs and design a post-2015 development landscape, we urge them to recognize the ongoing importance of innovation in the development of new chemistries, materials and products to advance our global sustainability interests.

Another opportunity for chemistry to make further progress under SAICM is by working continuously to improve the products we make and the processes we follow to help enhance health, safety and sustainability. ICCA member associations are reaching out to chemical companies around the world to encourage them to commit to performance excellence the safe management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle as required by the revised Responsible Care® Global Charter. We are also working to advance the Global Product Strategy (GPS) to continue to improve the overall management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle. More than 150 top chemical companies and more than 40 associations currently implement GPS, and I look forward to building on our progress in 2015 and beyond.
Finally, in collaboration with UNEP and other SAICM stakeholders, ICCA continues to lend a hand in helping countries that currently lack the capacity to manage chemicals safely put that capacity in place. In previous years we have partnered with UNEP to provide key port stakeholders in Ghana and Kenya with basic training on dangerous goods handling and capacity building for emergency preparedness and response. We see these projects as the most effective use of available resources in promoting measurable progress on sound chemicals management around the world.

Although Mr. Bock’s is a tough act to follow, I look forward to capitalizing on the opportunities for global chemical manufacturers to fully raise the curtain on the role chemistry can play in tackling the world’s biggest challenges.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Rohr
President, International Council of Chemical Associations
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Celanese Corporation