

Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4)

Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

Nairobi, Kenya, 27 February – 3 March 2023*

Proposed CRP

New text proposal

Section 6: Mechanisms of Implementation Health aspects of implementation; D. Enhanced sectoral and stakeholder engagement

Submission by WHO, Canada and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Note by the secretariat

The attached to the present note contains a submission by WHO, Canada and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is reproduced as received by the secretariat, without formal editing.

* The fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) was held from 29 August to 2 September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. The meeting was adjourned on 2 September 2022 and will be resumed from 27 February to 3 March 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Proposed Conference Room Paper

(Submitted by WHO, Canada and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

New text proposal

Section 6: Mechanisms of Implementation Health aspects of implementation; D. Enhanced sectoral and stakeholder engagement

10. Human health is central to sustainable development and the health sector has a critical role and unique expertise to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to assure good health and wellbeing (SDG3). The roles of the health sector are described in the WHO Chemicals Road Map approved by the World Health Assembly Decision WHA 70/25. The WHO Chemicals Road Map recognizes that the health sector is a diverse group with varying roles and responsibilities. Stakeholders are encouraged to use the WHO Chemicals Road Map as a tool when developing and implementing their plans for the sound management of chemicals and waste.

Background

The World Health Assembly, is the governing body of the World Health Organization (WHO) and comprises ministers of health from 194 Member States. The World Health Assembly has discussed the Strategic Approach on five occasions since 2003 concluding several resolutions that recognize the importance of SAICM and encourage full engagement of ministries of health. A progress report on the intersessional process is part of the upcoming World Health Assembly in May 2023.

Through consultation with Member States the following health sector priorities were identified and presented to ICCM4:

- Devising better and standardized methods to determine impacts of chemicals on health, to set priorities for action and to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and progress of the Strategic Approach;
- Formulating strategies aimed at prevention of ill-health and disease caused throughout the life cycle by chemicals, including strategies directed specifically at the health of children and workers;
- Building capabilities of countries to deal with poisonings and chemical incidents and emergencies, and to achieve the core capacities for chemicals under the International Health Regulations (2005);

- Promoting alternatives to highly toxic and persistent chemicals;
- Filling gaps in scientific knowledge on chemicals;
- Elaborating globally-harmonized methods for chemical risk assessment, to enhance transparency and understanding, enable work-sharing and reduce duplication of effort;
- Improving ability to access, interpret and apply scientific knowledge, particularly in developing countries

To further strengthen engagement, and in response to a request from the World Health Assembly in resolution WHA 69/4 , WHO further elaborated key roles of the health sector in chemicals management and developed the WHO Chemicals Road Map. The specific objective of this work was to further strengthen the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of SAICM. The World Health Assembly is committed to updating the Road Map as needed following the completion of the SAICM Intersessional Process.

The road map identifies concrete actions where the health sector has either a lead or important supporting role to play in the sound management of chemicals, recognizing the need for multi-sectoral cooperation. The actions are organized into four areas:

- risk reduction;
- knowledge and evidence;
- institutional capacity; and,
- leadership and coordination.

For each action, the main actor, or lead, within the health sector has been identified. While it is recognized that, in many cases, success depends on coordination and cooperation between a variety of stakeholders and sectors, the identification of a lead within the health sector, where possible, is intended to be helpful and to facilitate progress. Member States have been identified as the lead in cases where governments, and in particular ministries with responsibilities for human health, would bear most of the responsibility for the action.

The Co-chairs consolidated document emphasizes in **Section VI Mechanisms to support implementation** that enhanced sectoral and stakeholder engagement is needed. Section D speaks of supporting national programmes and fostering coordination and cooperation and the role of IOMC organizations (including WHO) to promote awareness of the cross-cutting nature of the sound management of chemicals and waste. However, the consolidated text does not go further in suggesting how this could be done.

The Minamata Convention on Mercury – has the objective of protecting human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. Article 16 elaborates several of health-aspects of the Convention, which are of particular priority and relevance to the health sector. This article has been useful in mobilizing the efforts of the health sector for greater engagement in the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

- It is therefore proposed that the SAICM Beyond 2020 instrument adopt a similar approach to that adopted by the Minamata Convention by including a paragraph in the instrument on health sector implementation, with specific reference to the WHO Chemicals Road Map.
- In considering this proposal, it should be noted that ministries of health have already formally approved this approach through the World Health Assembly and so in essence the proposal is simply making the approach explicit and creating a necessary anchor for the agreed health sector approach in the Beyond 2020 instrument.