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saicm Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

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**Eighth Teleconference of the Bureau of the
International Conference on Chemicals Management for its fifth session**
19 May 2021 from 14:00 – 16:30 CET

Possible elements of a survey on experiences with the SAICM Virtual Working Group process held between October 2020 – February 2021 (revised)

I.   Background

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the logistical difficulties in rolling out vaccines globally, particularly in developing countries, the ICCM5 Bureau at their fourteenth meeting held in January 2021 agreed to postpone the face-to-face 4th intersessional process meeting (IP4) and the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) scheduled for July 2021.

The World Health Organization and other assessments, project that the rollout of effective vaccine-based immunization in all countries will only be completed by late 2022, at the earliest, but more likely sometime in 2023. This paper proposes elements of an online survey to be circulated to all SAICM stakeholders for completion and the data gathered from the survey will be used to develop an assessment of the experiences with the SAICM Virtual Working Group process. The findings of the assessment will inform the design of future work for the intersessional process until the time when face to face meetings are feasible.

This document takes on board the comments received at the seventh teleconference of the ICCM5 Bureau held on 24 March 2021 and written submissions received from Brazil, EU and its Member States, GRULAC, PAN/IPEN, A Group of NGOs, United Kingdom, United States and WHO by the deadline of 14 April 2021.

II.   Objectives of the survey

The objectives of the survey include:
(i)   Gather information about stakeholders' experiences and views to inform the design of future work in the intersessional process; and
(ii)   Increase ownership and shared responsibility by engaging with SAICM stakeholders using their experiences and suggestions for planning the next phase (inclusion, enhanced participation).

The SAICM secretariat will finalize and disseminate the survey and analyze and share the results. The survey will be shared widely, including to all SAICM focal points and beyond.

III.   Elements of the survey

The elements of the survey serve to address the positive and negative experiences, as well as, suggestions for the future, as follows:
(i)   What has worked well?
(ii)   What has not worked so well?
(iii)   What actionable recommendations can be proposed based on these experiences?

Reference to these aspects could be included in the survey chapeau to invite stakeholders to share **positive and negative experiences** and put forward **actionable recommendations** on that basis.

Some of the suggested elements may be surveyed using a **multiple choice format**; some using a **4 point scale** (e.g. "not suited – somewhat suited – suited – very well suited"); a limited number of **open questions** (with a limited number of characters in answer spaces).

IV.   Proposed timeline for the survey process

Below is the proposed timeline for the survey process, from the launch of the survey to the survey results being presented to the ICCM5 Bureau for consideration.

Activity	Timeline
Translation of the survey into the 6 UN languages	20 May – 18 June 2021
Launch of the survey	1 June – 16 July 2021
Targeted outreach to developing countries	1 June – 16 July 2021
Compile and anaylze the survey results	19 – 30 July 2021
Present the survey results to the Bureau at their ninth teleconference	to be confirmed

V.   Proposed questions for the survey

A. Stakeholder information

Information sought includes (*multiple choice questions)*
- o   Which VWGs did you register for and which virtual meetings did you attend? (via a table with meetings (like on the website), people can put an X for the ones they attended) *(VWGs 1, 2, 3, 4, none; if none please specify the reason(s))*
- o   Did you provide written comments? *(Y/N)*, if Yes, please specify if comments were provided by individual governments / stakeholders *or* by a group of governments / stakeholders
- o   How often did you provide comments? *(1 – 3 times, 3 – 5 times 5 – 7 times, more)*
- o   Country
- o   Region *(AFR, AP, CEE, GRULAC, WEOG, Global)*
- o   Which stakeholder group do you belong to? *(Government, IGO, NGO, Private sector, Academia, other – please specify)*
- o   Which sector group do you belong to? *(drop down list)*
- o   Which organization do you belong to? *(optional)*
- o   Answering as representative of stakeholder group / network / coalition *(optional)*

B. Review of experiences October 2020 – February 2021

This section focuses on the experiences and views of stakeholders from the period October 2020 to February 2021.

Technology, connectivity and access
- Meeting platform:
  - Did you participate in the online meetings? *(Y/N)* If not, why? *(optional)*
  - How did the WEBEX platform work for you in general? *(Well / not so well / not well at all)*
  - Did you have any problems, if so which ones? *((Y/N)*, *If yes, drop down list e.g. connectivity; sound; video; chat; raising hand; other – select as many as relates to your situation)*
- If you experienced difficulties or were unable to participate in VWG meetings, what were the main reasons? *((Y/N)*, *If yes, drop down list: e.g. poor internet connection; lack of IT equipment; time zone differences; conflicting meetings, other – please specify)*
- Did you use the chat box during the VWG meetings? *(Y/N)*

Access to information
- Website:
  - Did you find all necessary information and documents on the SAICM website? *(Y/N)*
  - Were you able to access the calendar of meetings? *(Y/N)*

Meetings, preparations and follow-up
- Timing and time zones:
  - Was the timing suitable for you in relation to your time zone? *(Y/N)*
  - Were the VWG meetings announced in a timely manner? *(Y/N)*
- Documents:
  - Were the VWG meeting documents available in a timely manner? *(Y/N)*
- How much time would you need to consult and be sufficiently prepared for the VWG meetings? *(drop down list: 1 to 3 days, 1 week, 2 weeks, more than 2 weeks)*
- How much time between VWG meetings is needed in order to digest meeting summaries and prepare for subsequent sessions? *(drop down list: 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, more than 4 weeks)*
- Was the overall schedule of all 4 VWGs manageable for you? *(drop down list: e.g. manageable/ not so manageable / very difficult to manage)*

C. Potential future process

This section focuses on forward looking aspects of the possible virtual work in the future based on the experiences from the first phase of the virtual work, and also suggestions on how the virtual work can be improved in the future.

Technology, connectivity and access
- Functionalities of a video platform:
  - which functionalities would you like to be made available? (*drop down list: group chat; private chat function; breakout rooms, other - please specify)*
- Are there other technologies/ platforms you have used and would consider better suited for the VWG meetings? If yes, which ones? *(drop down list: Webex, MS Teams, Zoom, GoToMeeting, other – please specify)*
- Time zones:
  - Should meetings be held several times, in smaller groups, in different time zones? *(Y/N)*

- o Which starting time would work best for you for future meetings *(drop down list: e.g. starting time 12.00 CET (Brussels) / 8.00 EST (New York) / 22.00 JST (Tokyo) / 23.00 WST (Samoa), and a few more)? 8 CET (...) 10 CET (...) 14 CET (...);*
- Language:
  - o Would tools such as online interpretation be useful to enhance inclusiveness and participation? *(Y/N)*
  - o Do you think the working documents should be translated into all 6 UN languages? *(Y/N)*
- Regions:
  - o Would an opportunity for a regional dialogue be helpful for your region? *(Y/N)*
- Would you need support in order to participate effectively in an online process? *(No, yes – please specify: drop down list: e.g. access to conference facilities in embassies / UN offices / hotels; internet financial support / other – pls specify?)*

Meetings, preparations and follow-up
- Which practices will be helpful in the future virtual work? *(drop down list - tick Y/N: exchange & dialogue; deepen mutual understanding; generating new ideas; resolving conflict; discussing text; other – pls specify)*
- Electronic feedback:
  - o Should stakeholders who cannot participate actively in meetings be able to submit written submissions prior to the meeting *(Y/N)*; after the meeting? *(Y/N)*

Topics to be considered in the future
- Do you have any other suggestions to further increase the engagement in the preparations for IP4 and ICCM5? *(open question)*
- In your view, and within the mandate of the current process, what are the priority areas to be further discussed in order to advance in 2021? *(open question)*

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