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

Bucharest, Romania, 23-27 March 2020

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda¹

Development of recommendations for consideration by the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management for the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020: Governance and implementation

Stakeholder workshop on strengthening governance for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020: Summary Document

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the contributions of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The document presented in the annex has been developed and submitted by UNITAR and has not been formally edited.

* Revised since its initial distribution on 6 March 2019

¹ SAICM/IP.4/1

Annex



Stakeholder workshop on strengthening governance for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

DECHEMA (Society for chemical engineering and biotechnology),
Theodor-Heuss-Allee 25, 60486 Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany

14 – 16 January 2020

Organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) with support from the Governments of Germany, Norway and Switzerland

Summary document

1. Introduction

Within the intersessional process on SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, governance and institutional issues have been receiving growing attention. From 14-16 January 2020, more than 100 participants from governments, intergovernmental organizations, industry bodies, workers' organisations, civil society organizations and academic institutions from around the world gathered in Frankfurt, Germany to discuss relevant topics in greater depth.

The workshop had the overall goal of informing the international deliberations on a range of governance and institutional issues considered of relevance for effective international chemicals and waste management beyond 2020. It built upon discussions at the third meeting of the intersessional process (IP3), Bangkok, October 2019 and earlier workshops on this topic organized by UNITAR.

This summary document captures key points and views exchanged at the workshop, and highlights prominent messages and areas that may warrant further attention for consideration during the intersessional process. Given the informal nature of the discussion, it does not seek to express a consensus view or negotiated agreements.

2. Workshop overview

The workshop featured several themes including:

- *Strengthening global governance.* This session provided an opportunity to discuss options for strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and coordination of institutions supporting the sound management of chemicals and waste at the global level. Specific topics included: Strengthening the International Conference on Chemical Management; Enhancing IOMC and its role in ICCM and “Beyond

2020”; UNGA resolution- possible resolution & pathways forward; and Increasing the political profile of chemicals and waste management

- *Strengthening national governance.* This session discussed opportunities to create strong and coordinated national governance structures and plans to address national priorities and effectively support action at the global level. Specific topics included: Inter-ministerial/sectoral coordination and focal points; Capacity development, action plans and review; and Innovative financing, polluter pays principle and cost recovery.
- *Strengthening private sector governance and engagement.* This session discussed opportunities for strengthening and enhancing private sector governance and engagement, including but not limited to advancing the use of existing standards, standard setting and sustainable supply chain management “beyond 2020”. Specific topics included: Exploring the role of “Beyond 2020” in advancing private standards; Engaging downstream industry sectors in “Beyond 2020”; and Other opportunities for strengthening private sector governance.
- *Strengthening the science-policy interface and governance.* This session discussed data needs, possible functions and institutional considerations to strengthen the science-policy interface for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 taking into account lessons from other mechanisms, in particular intergovernmental mechanisms in other clusters, such as IPBES and IPCC.

In her keynote presentation, Ms. Gertrud Sahler, President of the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), highlighted the importance of raising the political support for international chemicals and waste management and ensuring that new actors are engaged. Ms. Silvana Montes de Oca Abal, Deputy Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay, and Ms. Sofia Tingstorp, Deputy Director, Ministry of Environment, Sweden introduced the High Ambition Alliance and encouraged all stakeholders to support raising levels of ambition, and to join the Alliance.

Ms. Brenda Koekkoek, SAICM secretariat, introduced the outcomes from IP3, and the document “Compilation of recommendations for consideration of ICCM5 regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020” (SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.8/4”). The document has formed one of the working documents for IP4 ([SAICM/IP.4/2](#)) - referenced as the “Compilation Document”. In addition, a panel discussion on global governance featured Mr. Stephan Contius of the Ministry of Environment of Germany and Mr. Alf Wills, Summit Outcomes, providing insights from other international clusters on how the profile of chemicals and waste management could be raised.

3. Main observations and messages of the workshop

The following sections feature points made at the workshop, including through plenary presentations and discussions, and interactive working groups, following the logic of the agenda. However, there are many areas where the discussions from the workshop might be seen as relevant to the ongoing discussions in the intersessional process and could be considered in relation to the Compilation Document ([SAICM/IP.4/2](#)) as stakeholders continue their preparations.

Strengthening global governance

Topic 1: Strengthening the International Conference

Views exchanged on an effective International Conference

- Beyond performing its formal functions, the International Conference has the potential to serve as a stimulating forum to promote good practices, disseminate guidance and evaluate work done by stakeholders

- Individual sessions could focus on a sector, issue or a group of key targets. Through a commitment process, stakeholders could broadcast, obtain feedback and report back at future sessions
- The International Conference could include a component to stimulate innovation, support start-ups or other innovative efforts to advance a non-toxic, circular economy, such as through awards, funds and showcase events
- Science-based information and policy options provided by a science-policy interface could provide knowledge and trigger discussions on emerging issues, prevention and monitoring, and support prioritization of issues.

“Institutional arrangements” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Engaging key sectors in the International Conference

- No one sector can solve chemicals and waste issues on their own; therefore, multi-sectoral work and partnerships are key
- Providing uniform and transparent access to all stakeholders is an important and valuable feature of the International Conference
- ICCM could showcase different sectors, and facilitate engagement with “new” sectors, such as the mining and the automotive industry. This could include presenting road maps and actions plans.
- A “business case” could be made for all sectors as to why sound management of chemicals and waste is relevant to their commitments to sustainability, with the investment sector also present
- The ILO assessment to identify priority economic activities within the world of work (i.e. all sectors) could inform future themes
- The finance sector can be encouraged to adapt its sustainability criteria to chemicals and waste, creating incentives to participate and for innovative business opportunities

“Institutional arrangements” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2)

Topic 2: Enhancing IOMC and its role in the International Conference and “beyond 2020”

IOMC role and sector engagement

- There could be an opportunity to include the IOMC in institutional arrangements in the beyond 2020 framework/compilation document
- IOMC POs could be invited to take a broader coordination role, and could be encouraged to include all relevant international organizations and bodies in the IOMC
- IOMC organizations could support the development of road maps and action plans with their respective sectors, as done by WHO and considered by ILO
- In developing targets and indicators, it is important to consider the IOMC role and special competencies, and consider IOMC POs as possible custodians of targets or indicators
- The IOMC could receive suggestions from the ICCM on what priorities the POs could focus on, while providing freedom in planning through their management and partnership systems

“Enhanced Sectoral and Stakeholder Engagement (VI. D, p. 8)” is addressed as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Strengthening the interface of governing bodies of IGOs and the International Conference

- Given that IGOs engaged in chemicals and waste management have their own, unique structures and governing bodies, the Conference does not have a formal mandate to decide for other IGOs. Targets and indicators adopted by the International Conference therefore need to be aligned with the objectives and programmes of work of concerned IGOs
- Calls by the International Conference and further engagement with relevant governing bodies, through governments, could lead to more robust mandates and may increase resource availability. A UNGA resolution could also provide support in this respect
- “Champion countries” could take specific issues to various governing bodies to build interest and commitment

“Institutional arrangements” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Strengthening the interface of chemicals and waste with other global clusters

- Creating links with other clusters (e.g. biodiversity, climate change and desertification) may create a range of co-benefits
- It would allow tapping into the capacity of other clusters, avoid duplication and add ideas to other clusters’ agendas
- There may be value in scanning other clusters’ activities and explore developing shared targets, mobilize common funding, and explore common timelines.

“Institutional arrangements” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Topic 3: UNGA resolution: possible resolution & pathways forward

A possible resolution in the General Assembly on chemicals and waste management is one option to raise the political profile. Following a presentation about the process of preparing a UN General Assembly resolution by Ms. Gal Buyanover (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, United Nations), discussions took place in working groups on possible elements of a possible resolution, interactions with governing bodies of IGOs, and engagement of stakeholders in the process.

Relationship and coordination with other governing bodies

- A UNGA resolution creates an opportunity to raise the political will. SAICM was present in 2006 in a UNGA resolution, so a UNGA resolution on the new framework could maintain and further enhance this level of profile.
- While relevant IGOs receive mandates from their specific assemblies or governing bodies, a UNGA resolution could recognize and support IGOs, including national level action.
- Possible efforts to develop a UNGA resolution need to avoid the case that text agreed by ICCM5 is changed or negotiated further, or that a voting process divides the community
- A UNGA resolution could help scale up communication and outreach and ensure links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Stakeholders should remain aware of other opportunities to engage with governing bodies beyond the UNGA. For example, the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (15-28 October 2020), so as to benefit from the momentum of ICCM5

Possible elements of a UNGA resolution

A UNGA resolution on chemicals and waste could:

- Refer to interlinkages between chemicals and waste and other agendas and clusters, via the SDGs, including development, gender, biodiversity, climate change, and circular economy. This may bring the beyond 2020 framework into the 2030 Agenda, rather than keeping it “separate”
- Include an element of reporting back to help ensure ongoing, periodic engagement and continuity of commitment of the UNGA
- Reference a range of stakeholders, including private sector, labour unions and NGOs to recognize the multi-stakeholder and multisectoral approach and increase ownership and commitment by various actors
- Include a message that international trade of chemicals should be fair and safe

In case the development of a General Assembly resolution gets traction, a draft high-level declaration could be ready to be considered by IP4, with a small multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral group to work on this up to ICCM5. Engagement with foreign affairs departments, other clusters (e.g. climate, biodiversity) and representatives at the UN Headquarters in New York could facilitate this.

“Main general recommendations” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Topic 4: Increasing the political profile of chemicals and waste management

Up to ICCM5 (but also thereafter) there is an opportunity to build political and public interest in the sound management of chemicals and waste. Positive outcomes of an increased interest could include higher levels of political attention, support (including funding), and improved understanding of the multi-sectoral links and benefits stemming from the improvements from sound management. Additional points raised include:

- A higher political profile of chemicals and waste management could ensure that different sectoral issues are brought up across different ministries. For example, relevant labour or agricultural issues would be raised more prominently with ministers of foreign affairs.
- It is vital to be able to communicate the message of sound management more effectively and to different audiences. Further efforts are needed to communicate (for example, of insights from GCO-II) in ways that are meaningful to people to make them act, and to share them more widely. NGOs can be key in raising the profile among consumers and putting pressure on the private sector.
- A message of the cost of inaction and cost recovery systems may be a spur to action, similar to the Stern Report on the costs of climate change. A message related to planetary boundaries impacted by the use and releases of chemicals could also be valuable.
- New stakeholders, such as the G20, the World Trade Organization, the World Economic Forum, youth groups, and the media, need to be engaged to raise the political profile. There is a two-way street; such stakeholders are wanted and needed at “chemicals and waste” events, but “chemicals and waste” stakeholders also need to be present and actively engage in meetings of other constituencies.

“Main general recommendations” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Strengthening national governance

Inter-ministerial/sectoral coordination and focal points

- Inter-ministerial coordination is important for the successful implementation of chemicals and waste beyond 2020
- To support coordinated inter-ministerial action, chemicals units could be established (and legally backed), taking into account individual national circumstances

- The intersessional process and beyond 2020 needs to reflect on how it can ensure diverse inter-ministerial engagement and consider how funding could support it
- Different models of focal points could work (one or several). In case of one, it is important that all sectors and stakeholders are fully engaged and incentivised
- To mobilize interest of various national ministries, official communication of the beyond 2020 framework could include the logos of relevant IGOs. Such international leadership on multi-sectoral coordination could trickle down to national levels

“National Implementation (VI. B, p. 8)” is addressed as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2

Capacity development, action plans and review

- Need to make use of what is developed already, and understand how action plans from similar themes or related clusters can be utilised
- National Action Plans and their review can serve as a useful tool to bring all key sectors together to set national priorities and targets
- Feedback and review of plans from external experts may provide value added in supporting country driven implementation of international targets
- Capacity development remains a key element of the pursuit of sound management of chemicals and waste
- Linking capacity development interventions to national action plans helps to ensure achieving measurable results.

“National Implementation (VI. B, p. 8)” is addressed as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2

Innovative financing, polluter pays principle and cost recovery

- The draft compilation of financing examples ([SAICM/IP.3/7 - Financial considerations](#)), to be considered at IP4, was seen as useful information now and in the future, building on successful and effective examples, including the LIRA Guidance
- It is not always needed to search for “innovative” financing mechanisms, but consider successful ones, such as cost recovery
- Acknowledging the specificities of different situations is important, taking into account particular national legislative conditions, and pay attention to where any funds may be directed.
- Information on properties of chemicals collected through schemes requiring data to be generated in producing countries could be shared with countries where substances and products are imported, to avoid imposing costs twice and steering consumers to products that may not have gone through stringent management schemes
- There is a key difference between cost recovery mechanisms that can support ongoing national management schemes (this may be considered a service that companies pay for as part of their registration fees), and projects that can be covered by a specific fund. Different modalities can be targeted at different stakeholders

“Financial considerations” (VII, p.11) are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2

Strengthening private sector governance and engagement

Engaging downstream industry sectors in the implementation of “beyond 2020”

- Downstream industry (e.g. textile, electronics and automotive sectors) play a key role in the sound management of chemicals and waste. Incentives need to be created to encourage their active engagement in the beyond 2020 process.
- A lot of information exists on downstream activities and initiatives and a mapping research document could be produced to compile these
- It is important to include and encourage the active engagement of recycling companies, as key contributors to sound management of waste and resource efficiency/circular economy approaches
- The emerging policy issue on chemicals in products and the subsequent programme constitutes good work in developing priority sectors, and this should be built upon
- ICCM could be a forum to show progress from relevant sectors, which can include impact assessments that many already undertake

“Enhanced Sectoral and Stakeholder Engagement (VI. D, p. 8)” as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” is addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2

Advancing private sector initiatives and standards

- Many private standards, or more broadly, private initiatives, have a potential to contribute to “Beyond 2020” and the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout the global supply chains.
- Examples of initiatives developed by the chemicals sector include the “Together for Sustainability” tool, and the WBCSD Guidance on Sustainability Assessment tool
- The beyond 2020 instrument could have expert groups per industry to assess existing standards (ambition, coverage, applicability, etc.) and their potential for other industries. A priority could be the textile industry, with the aim to moving to other sectors, e.g. furniture and toys.
- The beyond 2020 instrument could feature knowledge-sharing fora to present private frontrunner initiatives/standards, obtain stakeholder feedback and broaden stakeholder engagement
- Criteria and guidelines could be developed to assess the robustness and impact of private sector initiatives/standards
- Lessons could be shared between sectors (e.g. textiles, electronics, construction) with a view to advance sound management practices
- The business case of standardisation (see e.g. “Proactive Alliance” on substances in articles reporting) could be highlighted in order to motivate private sector involvement
- To understand different initiatives better, a framework document could be developed to provide an overview of different types of standards and private sector initiatives
- It could be valuable to tie standards to issues of concern
- International labour standards have governmental input that could then be disseminated in the beyond 2020 instrument

“Enhanced Sectoral and Stakeholder Engagement (VI. D, p. 8)” is addressed as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2.

Other opportunities for strengthening private sector governance

- The beyond 2020 framework could encourage development of a reporting template to guide, standardise, communicate and monitor corporate reporting on chemicals issues. This could draw on existing guidance (e.g. GRI, Chemical Footprint Project), national legislation to implement international conventions, as well as priorities established under the framework. This would help

improve the private sector's ability to understand, integrate, report on, and discuss with their stakeholders, their business model around use of specific chemicals

- Reporting would not necessarily be to ICCM, but rather to readers of sustainability reporting (i.e. any interested stakeholders, including the financial sector, consumers). It would give greater consistency, comparability and quality to reporting on chemicals used
- The ICCM could serve as a driver and forum for the finance sector to develop sustainability criteria for chemicals and waste management
- SMEs are an important player, with SME associations that can play a role in enhancing engagement

“Enhanced Sectoral and Stakeholder Engagement (VI. D, p. 8)” is addressed as part of “Mechanisms to support implementation” in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2

Strengthening the science-policy interface and governance

The workshop identified a number of data and information needs, gaps, functions and institutional considerations relevant for strengthening the science-policy interface for the sound management of chemicals and waste, with some discussion of a possible ICCM5 resolution/outcome on this topic.

Data and information needs

- Data (with clear procedures of what data is required, e.g. health and environmental hazard properties) on chemicals produced; inventories; import, export, transport; greenhouse gas emissions of production
- Transparent information throughout supply chain (and on the waste), life-cycle approach; chemical footprint; water footprint
- Impacts (adverse) of chemicals/substances/mixtures
- Consolidated list of bans and restrictions of substances in all countries
- Substitutes (including regrettable)
- Cost of inaction (socio-economic impacts)
- Identification of hazards and risks, issues of concern, priority lists

“Mechanisms to support implementation” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Functions/gaps an effective science-policy interface could deliver/fill

- Scientific assessments on identified issues, e.g. a group of substances or products
- Informing scientists about relevant policy needs on the one hand, informing decision makers and regulators about gaps, issues of concern and response options on the other (policy relevant but not policy prescriptive)
- Identification of (mega)trends for known problems, emerging issues, and as an early warning horizon scanning, taking into account resolutions from relevant bodies
- Communications and an easy-to-use clearing house, and disseminate across different fora and in different languages
- Produce periodic reports on identified issues, which could be region specific as well as global
- Ensuring academic rigour
- Stocktaking in relation to targets

“Mechanisms to support implementation” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

Considerations for effective institutional arrangements

- Should be transparent, balanced, inclusive, independent, impartial and reliable
- Should be multi-disciplinary and intergovernmental, serve the chemicals and waste cluster and coordinate with related structures (e.g. POPRC) and other clusters
- Cost-effective and avoid duplication
- It should include institutional arrangements for whistle-blower protection
- The science should be independent, should prevent conflicts of interest, with procedures for declaration of interests and reviews to identify biases

“Mechanisms to support implementation” are addressed in the Compilation Document, SAICM/IP.4/2, p.2

4. Closure and next steps

The workshop closed with summary statements and comments on the importance of such workshops to facilitate the exchange of information and viewpoints. The workshop summary document is to be forwarded as information for the intersessional process, as an additional contribution and to stimulate continued deliberations among all delegations. A technical briefing for stakeholders that were not able to participate in the workshop is an option in the coming months, to ensure the information is shared.