



**Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference
on Chemicals Management**

First meeting

Belgrade, 15–18 November 2011

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

**Preparations for the third session of the International
Conference on Chemicals Management**

Preparations for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management

Note by the secretariat

1. The present note recalls the mandate and functions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management and provides an update on the preparations for its third session.

I. Mandate and functions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management

2. The International Conference on Chemicals Management serves as the governing body of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which it adopted at its first session, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006. Having held its second session in Geneva from 10 to 15 May 2009, and in keeping with the triennial schedule provided for in the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach, the Conference is due to hold its third session in 2012.

3. According to resolution I/1 of the Conference, sessions of the Conference are convened by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), working in collaboration with the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the United Nations Development Programme and other intergovernmental organizations.

4. Paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy sets out the Conference's functions. As the governing body of the Strategic Approach and its subsidiary bodies, it is to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Approach and undertake periodic reviews in that regard. The specific functions of the Conference are as follows:

(a) To receive reports from all relevant stakeholders on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach and to disseminate information as appropriate;

(b) To evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Approach with a view to reviewing progress against the 2020 target and taking strategic decisions, programming, prioritizing and updating the approach as necessary;

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- (c) To provide guidance on implementation of the Strategic Approach to stakeholders;
- (d) To report on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach to stakeholders;
- (e) To promote implementation of existing international instruments and programmes;
- (f) To promote coherence among chemicals management instruments at the international level;
- (g) To promote the strengthening of national chemicals management capacities;
- (h) To work to ensure that the necessary financial and technical resources are available for implementation;
- (i) To evaluate the performance of the financing of the Strategic Approach;
- (j) To focus attention and call for appropriate action on emerging policy issues as they arise and to forge consensus on priorities for cooperative action;
- (k) To promote information exchange and scientific and technical cooperation;
- (l) To provide a high-level international forum for multi-stakeholder and multisectoral discussion and exchange of experience on chemicals management issues with the participation of non-governmental organizations in accordance with applicable rules of procedure;
- (m) To promote the participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Approach.

5. With the first session of the Conference, in 2006, having been devoted to the completion of negotiations to establish the Strategic Approach, the second session, in 2009, afforded an opportunity to review the initial implementation of the Strategic Approach, to consider outstanding institutional matters and, for the first time, to perform Conference functions such as considering emerging policy issues. At its third session, in 2012, the Conference will review further progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach based on the reporting arrangements established at its second session, consider progress with regard to emerging policy issues and take up a number of specific issues referred to it at its second session and the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, such as the evaluation of the Quick Start Programme.

II. Timing and proposed venue of the third session of the Conference

6. The Overarching Policy Strategy provides for the third session of the Conference to be convened in 2012. According to paragraph 25 of the Strategy, sessions of the Conference should, where appropriate, be held back-to-back with meetings of the governing bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations in order to enhance synergies and cost-effectiveness and to promote the Strategic Approach's multisectoral nature. The first session of the Conference was held back-to-back with the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the second back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the sixty-second World Health Assembly.

7. At its second session, the Conference mandated the Bureau to decide on the venue and date of the third session. The secretariat had earlier reserved the Geneva International Conference Centre from 28 May to 1 June 2012, approximately two weeks after the planned dates for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and just before the 101st session of the International Labour Conference, scheduled for 4–15 June 2012. Subsequently, the dates of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development were changed to 4–6 June 2012, with preparatory meetings scheduled from 30 May to 1 June 2012. Consequently, the secretariat modified the dates for the third session and reserved the Geneva International Conference Centre from 15 to 20 July 2012.

8. The Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in a teleconference held on 7 October 2011, noted that the fourth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury would be held in June 2012 and the proximity of that session and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to the dates proposed for the third session of the Conference might not allow for sufficient time for stakeholders adequately to prepare for the third session of the Conference.

9. As no Government has yet offered to host the third session of the Conference, the secretariat has tentatively reserved the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi from 17 to 21 September 2012 to hold the third session of the Conference, having confirmed that the international conference centre in Geneva would not be available for those dates.

10. Should the Bureau approve the proposed venue and dates, the secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to ensure adequate preparation for the third session of the Conference. Holding the session in Nairobi offers regional rotation of the venue of the Conference, given that the first session was held in the Asia-Pacific region in 2006, and the second in the Western European and other States region in 2009.

III. Participation and structure of the conference

11. As stated in paragraph 24 (l) of the Overarching Policy Strategy, the Conference is to “provide a high-level international forum for multi-stakeholder and multisectoral discussion and exchange of experience on chemicals management issues with the participation of non-governmental organizations in accordance with applicable rules of procedure”. Some 800 participants representing 147 Governments, 27 intergovernmental and 90 non-governmental organizations attended the second session.

12. Generally, two¹ representatives per eligible country and representatives of a limited number of non-governmental organizations are funded to participate in sessions of the Conference in order to ensure broad multi-stakeholder and multisectoral representation following the model used for sessions of the Conference and the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

13. On the basis of the experience acquired from the second session, a five-day session of the Conference would appear warranted in view of the substantial functions that it is to carry out. Similarly, following the model adopted for the second session and the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, the day preceding the opening of the third session could be dedicated to meetings of the regional groups and to technical briefings or other preparatory events, as deemed useful. In addition, proposals were made at the second session to provide additional space for side events to ensure increased opportunities for dialogue and exchange of experience. The secretariat will seek to provide such space and also allocate space for press briefings, round-table discussions and exhibitions.

IV. Possible action

14. The Open-ended Working Group may wish to take note of the information provided herein and, in the light of the cost of organizing the third session of the Conference, invite Governments, international organizations and international financial institutions to make financial contributions towards the convening of the session.

15. The Working Group may also wish to provide comments on the draft provisional agenda for the Conference, as set out in the annex to the present note, before its finalization by the Conference Bureau.

¹ If the financial contributions by donors are insufficient to fund two representatives, the secretariat may have to fund only one representative per eligible country and a limited number of non-governmental organizations.

Annex

Draft provisional agenda for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management

1. Opening of the session.
 2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (d) Appointment of a credentials committee;
 - (e) Organization of work.
 3. Report of the credentials committee.
 4. Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management:
 - (a) Evaluation of and guidance on the implementation, review and updating of the Strategic Approach;
 - (b) Implementation of and coherence between international instruments and programmes;
 - (c) Strengthening of national chemicals management capacity;
 - (d) Financial and technical resources for implementation;
 - (e) Emerging policy issues;
 - (f) Information exchange and scientific and technical cooperation.
 5. Health sector strategy.
 6. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations.
 7. Activities of the secretariat and adoption of the budget.
 8. Venue and date of the fourth session of the Conference.
 9. Other matters.
 10. Adoption of the report.
 11. Closure of the session.
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