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

First meeting

Belgrade, 15–18 November 2011

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Setting priorities and meeting goals

Scenario note for the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management

Note by the President

1. The present scenario note sets out my plans and general expectations for the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management with a view to assisting participants in preparing for and achieving progress at the meeting.
2. By its resolution II/6, the International Conference on Chemicals Management established the Open-ended Working Group as its subsidiary body. The Conference recognized that there was a need to ensure the comprehensive and effective preparation of its sessions, and agreed that the groundwork for those sessions would be carried out by the Open-ended Working Group, which would meet a few months before each session.
3. At the meeting, we will consider progress made in the implementation, development and enhancement of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, identify priority issues for inclusion on the agenda of the third session of the Conference and prepare draft decisions or resolutions for possible adoption by the Conference at that session. In reviewing the implementation, development and enhancement of the Strategic Approach, we will address progress made on substantive matters including activities on past emerging issues, nominations for new emerging issues and proposed additions to the Global Plan of Action. We will also consider, among other things, a draft health sector strategy, an update on the midterm evaluation of the Quick Start Programme, reporting processes and financial matters.
4. A technical briefing session will be held on Monday, 14 November 2011, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., with time allotted for regional and other group meetings from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The technical briefing will include a session on managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives, and a session on the two issues nominated as emerging policy issues for the consideration of the Conference at its third session: international cooperation to promote awareness, understanding and action in respect of endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants. Lastly, there will be a round-table discussion on the Quick Start Programme from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. organized by the secretariat. Participants who are or have been involved in implementing projects under the Programme are invited to share information on lessons learned and experiences gained, as such information will be of great benefit to all participants, not only during the round-table event but also during plenary discussions on the same issue. A draft programme for the technical briefing session is available on the secretariat website (www.saicm.org).

* SAICM/OEWG.1/1/Rev.1.

5. Previously, the Bureau agreed that the Open-ended Working Group would be convened for four days in the light of the busy agenda on environmental and chemicals issues at the end of 2011. Accordingly, and given the many issues to discuss, we need to be both efficient and effective. I therefore encourage all stakeholders to avoid making extensive opening remarks of a general nature so that we can turn swiftly to the substance of our work. Where possible, such remarks should be delivered on a regional basis or by umbrella organizations rather than by individual Governments or organizations. I will impose strict time limits on any opening remarks. I encourage you to prepare information that you would like to share on any relevant activities in writing and submit it to the secretariat to have it posted on the website or intranet during the meeting.

6. We are at a critical phase in the implementation of the Strategic Approach and the Open-ended Working Group has an important role to play: at its second session the Conference concluded that reaching agreement at the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on how to handle some issues would alleviate what would be a heavy agenda for its third session, providing it with more time to focus on strategic issues.

7. In structuring our discussions my intention is to take up the issues in the order in which they are presented in the provisional agenda. It may be necessary, however, after consultation with the Bureau, to discuss specific issues in another order, for example when it is considered useful to establish small groups¹ at an early stage to ensure progress during the meeting. My intention is to undertake a complete first review of the issues in plenary sessions, where the views of all can be heard. As we identify areas that prove challenging to discuss in plenary sessions, or where there are a small number of parties with divergent views on a way forward, it may be beneficial to establish small groups to discuss such issues in detail. The results of such discussions would, of course, be presented for consideration in plenary session. Furthermore, I propose to give such groups narrow mandates and to limit the time for their work to ensure that the Working Group can continue to move forward in plenary session with other issues, taking into account the results of any such small-group discussions.

8. While we should strive to achieve a consensus view on our submissions to the Conference at its third session, I should like to avoid extensive and lengthy discussions if it appears that consensus cannot be reached on a given issue. In that event I suggest that we come to an agreement on whether there is a need for some further action on the issue before the third session of the Conference or on how to proceed to reach a successful outcome at that session. Drawing on working practices that have previously proved effective, I propose that for contentious issues we request the secretariat or a relevant lead agency to prepare draft text reflecting the outcomes of the discussions in plenary sessions to support our discussions at the third session of the Conference.

9. Turning to the substance of our work, I should like to remind you that at this juncture we are almost midway through the initially planned lifespan of the Strategic Approach. We have a looming target of attaining the goal agreed upon at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development of ensuring that, by 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. We need to confirm that the actions that we are taking will indeed lead us to the attainment of that goal, meaning that we need to determine what we have achieved to date and what we can do to ensure that progress is made on the several programmes and projects on which we have embarked.

10. We will have before us detailed annotations to the provisional agenda that will guide us in taking action on several issues. To support our discussions on those issues we will have before us reports on activities undertaken on the four emerging issues agreed upon at the second session of the Conference: lead in paint, chemicals in products, hazardous substances in the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, and nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials. There are four draft recommendations for us to consider on each emerging issue and we need to reach agreement on whether those draft recommendations are ripe for discussion and finalization for transmittal to the Conference at its third session.

11. In addition, we will have before us proposed action and background information on two new proposals to designate issues as emerging policy issues (on endocrine-disrupting chemicals and on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants), and two proposals for additions to the Global Plan of Action (on hazardous substances in the life cycle of electrical and electronic products and on nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials). We will also have before us a draft health sector strategy and a report on progress in implementing activities under the Strategic Approach. Lastly, we will receive an update on the Quick Start Programme, which will bring to light concerns and suggestions that might be submitted to the Conference in relation to how continued support can be

¹ The term "small groups" is intended to encompass such groups as contact groups, drafting groups, smaller groups with a limited specific participation on a specific issue, and friends of the Chair, as needed.

provided to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement the Strategic Approach once the Programme reaches its end, in 2013.

12. We will have before us an update on financial and technical resources for the implementation of the Strategic Approach and will have to consider what to propose to the Conference regarding how best to strengthen support for activities contributing to the achievement of the Strategic Approach objectives. In doing so, we must keep in mind the most recent developments in the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes launched by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, the final meeting in which was held in Bangkok on 6 and 7 October 2011. We will need to consider how best to make use of the outcomes of the consultative process to support and strengthen the Strategic Approach and how to present any outcomes, in conjunction with the results of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June 2012, to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session.

13. Having set out how we may wish to work during this first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, I should like to close by mentioning what we might hope to accomplish by the end of the meeting. I expect that we will have fully discussed all items on the agenda in a comprehensive manner and will have agreed on suitable action for as many items as possible. For items on which there is no consensus, I should like to achieve a clear understanding of the concerns and a way to proceed so that we are well prepared for the third session of the Conference.

14. The Strategic Approach has played a significant role in chemicals management by taking on board issues that might otherwise be addressed only at the regional or even national level and turning them into issues of global relevance. We must ensure that our discussions at the current meeting reinforce the strengths of this voluntary framework and prepare us for robust discussions with strong and achievable results at the third session of the Conference.
