
Latin-America and the Caribbean Regional Briefing

8 September 2021, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. CET

SUMMARY REPORT

LATIN-AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL BRIEFING

1) Welcome and introduction

The SAICM Regional Focal Point for the Latin-America and the Caribbean region, Ms. Angela Libarona, welcomed all participants, the ICCM5 President, Ms. Anita Breyer, the IP Co-chair, Ms Judith Torres, the Bureau Member for the Latin-America and the Caribbean region, Ms. Valentina Sierra, as well as the SAICM Coordinator, Ms. Nalini Sharma. She also thanked the SAICM Secretariat and UNON Conference Services in Nairobi for organising this regional briefing.

Ms. Libarona explained that the ICCM5 Bureau at its last meeting agreed to convene regional briefings in early September 2021. The objectives of these regional briefings are: (i) to inform the regions on the results of the survey on the design of the future virtual work; (ii) for the IP Co-chairs to present the way forward in the Intersessional Process; (iii) to give the regions the opportunity to provide feedback to the SAICM Secretariat and the IP Co-chairs; and (iv) to give the regions the opportunity to discuss their perspectives among themselves.

The [Regional Briefings Concept Note](#) was circulated on 17 August 2021 and is available on the SAICM website. Ms. Libarona introduced the meeting agenda and reminded all participants that the Co-facilitators of the four Virtual Working Groups (VWGs) have provided video recordings on the outcomes of the VWG process held between October 2020 and February 2021, and hoped that participants have watched these recordings in order to be well informed for the discussions during the briefing. The recordings are available on the [SAICM website](#) under “Outputs & Recordings” for each VWG.

The Latin America and the Caribbean regional briefing was attended, in an online manner, by 85 the participants.

2) Presentation of survey results

The SAICM Coordinator, Ms. Sharma presented the results of the Survey on stakeholders’ experiences of the Virtual Working Group Process held between October 2020 and February 2021. The [full report](#) including the raw data of the survey responses as well as a [summary](#) of survey responses are available on the [SAICM website](#).

Ms. Libarona thanked Ms. Sharma for the presentation on the survey results and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Mr. Agustín Harte from Argentina thanked the SAICM Coordinator for her presentation and asked her if the responses and inputs received from the different stakeholders, including Governments, were available. He kindly asked to be informed about which specific country made a specific contribution.

Ms. Sharma emphasised that the anonymous character of the responses and inputs since its early process and therefore the impossibility of further consultation.

3) Moving forward

Ms. Libarona gave the floor to the IP Co-chair, Ms. Torres, noting that the second IP Co-chair, Mr. David Morin could not attend this briefing due to national elections that are currently taking place in Canada.

Ms. Torres referred to the four videos of the VWGs Co-facilitators summarizing the outcomes of each VWG to inform stakeholders and foster discussions during this regional briefing. She noted that the objective of the VWG process was to maintain the momentum and to advance discussions as COVID-19 prevented SAICM stakeholders from meeting face-to-face at IP4 and ICCM5. Thereafter, she presented [Elements for discussion on the Intersessional Process moving forward](#) including three guiding questions to facilitate the exchange of regional perspectives. She pointed out that the feedback from the regions would be very important for the design of the next steps in the Intersessional Process towards IP4 and noted that the IP Co-chairs will take into account the views expressed during the VWGs, as well as the results from the survey, and the outcomes of the regional briefings. With that, she thanked the participants in advance for their valuable contributions to this process and referred to the three questions to be discussed under the next agenda item.

4) Questions and Answers

Ms. Libarona invited Ms. Sierra, from Uruguay, to moderate this agenda item by presenting the three questions proposed by the IP Co-chairs to guide the exchange of regional perspectives and opened the floor for comments.

1. How can we take the best advantage of this time to move the work forward to contribute to a successful outcome when we are able to meet face to face at IP4?

Ms. Lilian Corra, representing the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), made reference to Mr. Harte's intervention by mentioning that the best way of preparing to move the work forward was by identifying active stakeholders in the region and therefore recognizing their capacities and the way these capacities could be strengthened, while maintaining the momentum and increasing participation in the region.

Mr. Fernando Bejarano, representing RAPAM- IPEN Hub Latin America Caribbean, referred to the need of promoting regional participation in line with the SAICM agenda. He also referred on how the COVID-19 pandemic could be used as a topic where the exposure and effects of chemical substances as well as vulnerable populations could be taken into consideration.

In addition, Mr. Bejarano said that the governments in the region could open communication channels to promote a more inclusive discussion within SAICM. He recognized that the discussions carried out during the intersessional process could not be considered as final negotiated resolutions due to uneven accessibility caused by different time zones, connectivity issues and the need for face-to-face meetings to make decisions.

Ms. Sierra confirmed that during the Bureau meetings, it is emphasized the non-negotiation character of those intersessional discussions by taking no final decisions due to the challenging participation of some stakeholders.

2. Considering the outcomes of the work to date, what would be the top priorities for your region to advance the work in preparation for IP4? What type of schedule/level of work would be manageable for participants?

Ms. Corra, recognized the need of making the agenda more dynamic, both through the technical and political meetings, where priorities are identified. She suggested to have biweekly meetings for participation through the different agenda items. She added that this would help on networking in the region and including more participants. She also recognized that losing time was the worst-case scenario.

Mr. Harte supported Lilian's intervention. Mr. Harte, thanks to his participation at the four VWGs, recognized the great effort in participating in these groups due to the demanding participation every two weeks and the supportive documents to be discussed.

He recommended to narrow down the work in one or two working groups by looking into: i) the mechanisms for technical and financial assistance, as it was the case from the QSP, and the current GEF and Special Programme options, and ii) another regional priority on national plans and the finalization discussion on objectives and goals.

Finally, Mr. Harte also recommended to simplify discussion on issues that could be easily approved and further involvement with other stakeholders and their agendas from health, work, education, science, etc.

Mr. Daniel Rios, from Givaudan in Argentina, made a suggestion to improve the discussion by sharing a list of the participants of the SAICM IP in Latin America and the Caribbean due to the need to strengthen the participation and discussions. For example, by identifying which sectors and countries are missing from that list.

Mr. Placido Silva, from Colombia, commented that it is important to know who is participating so further organisation can be established in the relevant working groups.

Mr. Bejarano referred to the fact that outcomes from the different working groups should be called instead outputs as they have not been finalized yet and they have had little participation.

In line with the above-mentioned proposals, he also recognized the need of knowing what stakeholders are missing from the discussions. Mr. Bejarano also suggested that at national level it is required action to further involvement of all Ministries and to elevate the political support. He reflected in the Mexico's example where the glyphosate has not been linked to the Highly Hazardous Pesticides, and they are not part of the strategic vision of this country, in addition to work on the National Plans.

Ms. Evelyn Espín, from Ecuador, suggested to establish a road map for achieving SAICM objectives and give support to those who have not achieved the accomplishment of the first steps in the implementation process.

The SAICM Secretariat shared with the briefing participants the fact that the list of participants for each of the four VWGs can be found on the VWG website under the section of each VWG i.e. <http://www.saicm.org/Beyond2020/IntersessionalProcess/VirtualWorkingGroups/tabid/8563/language/en-US/Default.aspx> .

Ms. Sherika Whitelocke-Ballingsingh, from the Caribbean Poison Information Network based in Jamaica, mentioned through the chat that during the pandemic period, sectors that do not directly dealt with treatment of patients in locality were able to do more reviews of technical documents that are shared through email. One of the major issues she described was the availability of network and the technical capacity to manoeuvre the technology. She agreed with identifying the specific sectors that are directly related to these discussions and the focal point who are being delegated by government to manage the portfolio for SAICM. She also mentioned that it is important to have direct conversation with focal points in each sector and to get reason for non-participation in on-going discussion.

Mr. Matheus Bastos from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil mentioned the need to take a step back before talking about top priorities in the Latin America and the Caribbean region as countries were not able to participate and engage during the work of the VWGs. He recognized the need of join efforts and identification of individual countries' views for reaching regional consensus on the new platform of SAICM.

He made reference to Brazil's priorities such as governance discussion of the new instrument and its relation to the structure and enforcement and how the indicators would look like.

Mr. Bastos suggested to look at the results of the survey for being more flexible in terms of the timing e.g. meetings to be scheduled between 2 or 3 weeks and being realistic about the time constraints of covering other chemicals and waste related conventions.

Mr. Rios put forward the industry offer to create spaces for discussion as well as regional capacity, not only for the SAICM text but also throughout the science-policy discussions and other opportunities with other sectors that are not yet involved. He noted the need to create space for these discussions, to increase industry participation and to involve more stakeholders.

Ms. Corra commented that the working groups were very tiring and long. There were difficulties with the facilitators of these working groups, and people did not have enough time to express their views. She insisted on transparent and inclusive participation of all different stakeholders, especially in the Latin-America and the Caribbean region.

3. Are there any gaps in terms of areas in need of further discussion but not identified in document IP.4/2 Compilation of recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 and discussions during the VWGs?

Ms. Sierra opened the floor for any responses to this question, which were not available at that time. She further emphasised time for discussion, on this, and the other two above-mentioned questions, during the regional perspective discussion in agenda item 6.

5) Closing remarks

Ms. Breyer thanked the region for the opportunity to present herself and expressed her honour to have been nominated by Germany to serve in the role of President of ICCM5. Ms. Breyer stated that she has served in several roles in the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety in Germany, including 1½ years of “apprenticeship” in chemicals management when she supported the negotiations on the Stockholm Convention in Bonn in the year 2000. Since 2020, she holds the position Director-General for Immission Control, Transport, Safety of Installations, Chemical Safety and Environmental Health.

She began her remarks by reiterating Germany’s firm commitment to hosting a successful ICCM5 whenever global in-person meetings are feasible. In the interim, however, she made clear that we cannot allow the virus to keep us from making progress. She highlighted, that the sound management of chemicals and waste would be vital and integral to address challenges which have deteriorated due to the pandemic, such as poverty, inequality and food insecurity.

Ms. Breyer thanked the Co-Chairs of the intersessional process, the Co-facilitators and participants of the virtual working groups for their commitment in these challenging times to keep the process running. The pandemic forced us to set up completely new working modalities. This change in working modalities do not come without setbacks and failures. Now is the time to evaluate our experiences and learn how to improve our working modus to strengthen our approach leading to IP 4 and to ICCM5. She thanked all stakeholders for their continuing support of this process and pointed out how valuable the region’s feedback is for designing the next phase of the virtual work, and that their perspectives will be considered.

Ms. Breyer pointed out that full and inclusive participation in the Intersessional Process and at ICCM5 is the common vision and ambition, and that she, in close consultation with the ICCM5 Bureau, is continuously assessing the situation worldwide. However, at this stage, it would be too early to determine dates for a face-to-face IP4 and ICCM5. In the meantime, she reiterated the need to adapt to the current circumstances and proceed our work leading up to a SAICM, updated and advanced in the light of the 2030 Agenda, that is inclusive and for which all relevant stakeholders in all sectors take ownership and responsibility for its implementation.

She ended by expressing her excitement to work with all stakeholders on the journey towards a successful ICCM5.

Ms. Libarona thanked the current ICCM5 President for these encouraging words, as well as the Government of Romania, that from the previous Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) regional briefing, offered to continue hosting IP4. She also thanked the former ICCM5 President Ms. Ms. Gertrud Sahler for her work done by maintaining the momentum towards a successful ICCM5.

Ms. Sierra also took the floor by thanking the ICCM5 President and the Government of Germany and by mentioning that the option of no work prior ICCM5 were not an option and that therefore the momentum should be kept.

Ms. Libarona supported Ms. Sierra's words specially towards the ICCM5 President and closed the agenda item 5.

6) Regional perspectives

Ms. Libarona invited Ms. Sierra to moderate this agenda item which was considered as a closed meeting.

Ms. Sierra explained that this agenda item served as an open forum to share regional perspectives on what has been heard so far during this regional Briefing and to discuss possible ways forward from the Latin-America and the Caribbean regional perspective. Ms. Sierra reminded participants of the three questions discussed during agenda item 4 that could be further explored during the regional perspective discussion. She then opened the floor for comments.

Mr. Harte took the floor first by suggesting that participation be increased in the spaces already created for this purpose. He recognised that many participants did not attend the VWGs and therefore the Latin America and the Caribbean region was not well represented. He acknowledged that although written contributions from some countries were interesting, there was a need to think about on how to increase regional participation and by making sure that relevant discussions were included. Mr. Harte also suggested to have a simpler work plan that the one carried out, which was very intense, and also to improve coordination and consensus in a coordinated manner.

Ms. Corra mentioned the option of reactivating the Quick Start Programme (QSP) as a financial option. She also referred to other available financial options to be identified and to be triggered to the attention of the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Ms. Corra also referred to the idea of activating existing academia and technical groups working that are considering topics such as alternatives.

She also mentioned the need to define roles and responsibilities of each sector. She referred to Mr. Rios's offer on regional capacity by mentioning that industry's support should rather come from voluntary actions which are lacking in the region, especially towards pressing issues such as health and reducing exposure to chemicals.

Ms. Cecilia Bianco from Taller Ecologista in Argentina stated a need from Governments to convey meetings where SAICM and its focus on issues of concern are discussed among all stakeholders. She emphasized the need for rapid identification of key issues in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Ms. Bianco also proposed, via the chat function of the KUDO platform, the idea of a non-anonymous survey in relation to the priority topics in the Latin America and the Caribbean region which results would be discussed through a meeting.

Ms. Sierra invited further participants to the discussion. She recognized the different challenges in the previous meetings regarding participation. Ms. Sierra also recognized the different alternatives for moving forward with the work to be done. She put forward to meeting participants the idea of a discussion between balancing ambitions and a realistic approach to advance towards the instrument post 2020.

Based on Mr. Paulo Porta's intervention from the Ministry of Environment in Perú, Ms. Sierra and the SAICM Secretariat further clarified that the recordings of agenda item 1 to 5 will be made available.

Ms. Libarona referred to the different stakeholders participating in the discussions as a way to support and increase coordination at the national and regional levels through discussions among different sectors. She supported Ms. Sierras comments on further participation and coordination in the discussions and the finding of mechanisms for making them more efficient.

Ms. Corra mentioned the need for greater action across all the United Nations organizations e.g. UNEP, UNDP, PAHO, etc. at the national level. She recognized that these organizations do have the mandate and they would be able to support us during outreach and capacity building activities. She emphasizes the importance of private sector involvement in sharing information and helping to approach successful voluntary actions and good practices at the regional level.

Mr. Guillermo Foladori from the Red Lationamericana de Nanotechonología y Sociedad ([ReLANS](#)) briefly presented the work done by the Red on nanotechnology and nanomaterials and the sources of information that the Red is continuously updating directly in the website. He emphasized the importance of taking into consideration such information for the SAICM discussions. He recognized that in Latin-America there are no discussion on this topic and that the regulatory measures should be taken into consideration. He also recognized that some private organizations and, in particular the ISO, are compiling different voluntary norms from different Latin-American countries and at the global level.

Mr. Bejarano suggested that the inputs to a working group discussion should also be in writing to ensure equal participation by all stakeholders. He recognized that webinars are intended to inform but not to identify or gather the different perspectives of stakeholders, which should be done in writing.

In line with Mr. Foladori's intervention, Mr. Bejarano stated that for emerging policy issues not only nanotechnology and nanomaterials but also Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP) or Endocrine Disruptor Chemicals (EDC) are issues for which voluntary actions are not yet sufficient on the part of the industry and therefore there is a need to strengthen regulation with a precautionary approach.

Based on Mr. Bejarano's intervention the SAICM Secretariat further clarified that the list of participants and the different interventions of the current briefing will be made available.

Ms. Marjorie González from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia participated in the briefing and requested to the SAICM Secretariat the recording of the present meeting, which will be shared with other entities at a national level.

The SAICM Coordinator also noted, throughout the chat function of KUDO, that some of the survey responses were submitted on behalf of country groups or stakeholders, including the private sector.

Ms. Sierra summarized the regional perspective discussion as a briefing that allowed to:

- a. Explore ways to increase the participation of all stakeholders in enabling the Latin-America and the Caribbean region to move forward;
- b. Recognize the importance of regional capacity building, with the involvement of all sectors, in issues such as the science-policy interphase;
- c. Identify the different funding options and the financial discussions that are taking place in addition to the capacity building options;
- d. Recognize that the region's participation in the VWGs has been limited participation from the region and that therefore there is a need for improvement for a better participation and general consensus in the region;
- e. Activate the different technical groups and/or academia by contacting them and inviting them to participate in the process as a fundamental action;
- f. Involve further the private sector throughout voluntary actions and identify successful actions in some countries of the region in order to replicate them;
- g. Highlight the need to work on health and emerging policy issues in the region;
- h. Active involvement of the United Nation organizations e.g. UNEP, UNDP, PAHO, at a national;
- i. Promote regional discussion on nanotechnologies and nanomaterials by informing and involving the Governments throughout those discussions; and

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- j. Convene all regional stakeholders for a meeting. The purpose of this meeting would be to advance issues related to the continuation of the process, how to be better engage and the elaboration a list of identified focal points currently involved in the process.

Ms. Libarona thanked all participants for their active engagement in this meeting, and the SAICM Secretariat for the organization of the briefing and their support during this briefing.

She closed the Latin-America and the Caribbean regional Briefing at 6 p.m. CET.
