



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

Third meeting

Montevideo, 2–4 April 2019

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Progress towards the achievement of the 2020 overall
objective of the sound management of chemicals: emerging
policy issues and other issues of concern**

Emerging policy issues and other issues of concern

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat has the honour to circulate a description of the activities called for by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its previous sessions, together with summaries on progress achieved in relation to the existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern, as developed from input received from the respective lead organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (see annex).
2. The emerging policy issues identified by the Conference to date are lead in paint, chemicals in products, hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants. In addition, managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives, and highly hazardous pesticides have been identified as issues of concern.
3. Priority actions on emerging policy issues and other issues of concern have been called for in Conference resolutions II/4, II/5, III/2, III/3, IV/2 and IV/3, as well as in the overall orientation and guidance for achieving the 2020 goal of the sound management of chemicals.¹
4. Attention is drawn to the related meeting document on emerging policy issues and the response of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to requests from the fourth session of the Conference (SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/9).
5. The Conference may wish to take note of the activities undertaken and to review progress made in relation to resolutions II/4, II/5, III/2, III/3, IV/2 and IV/3, as appropriate, including considering whether the action called for in respect of each issue have been adequately implemented.

* SAICM/OEWG.3/1.

¹ Available at www.saicm.org/Resources/Publications/tabid/5507/language/en-US/Default.aspx.

Annex

Emerging policy issues and other issues of concern

I. Background

1. In its resolution IV/2, the International Conference on Chemicals Management requested the lead agencies of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, Governments and other relevant stakeholders to report through the secretariat on progress in the implementation of Conference resolutions on emerging policy issues to the Open-ended Working Group and the Conference at its fifth session.
2. The emerging policy issues identified by the Conference to date are lead in paint, chemicals in products, hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants. In addition, managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives, and highly hazardous pesticides, have been identified as issues of concern.
3. The following intergovernmental organizations lead the work on the above-mentioned issues:
 - (a) Lead in paint: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), through the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint;
 - (b) Chemicals in products: UNEP;
 - (c) Hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
 - (d) Nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR);
 - (e) Endocrine-disrupting chemicals: OECD, UNEP and WHO;
 - (f) Environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants: OECD, UNEP and WHO.
4. In addition, OECD and UNEP lead the work on managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives through the Global PFC Group called for in resolution III/3.
5. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNEP and WHO lead the work on highly hazardous pesticides called for in resolution IV/3.
6. Work on emerging policy issues and other issues of concern has been under way throughout the intersessional period since the fourth session of the Conference.
7. The International Labour Organization (ILO) seeks to foster the creation of a global culture of safety and health prevention, with the objective of achieving real reductions in work-related deaths, injuries and diseases across global supply chains. Those projects aim to prevent occupational safety and health risks for workers in key sectors such as agriculture, textile and garment production and manufacturing. ILO is currently developing a strategic approach for its engagement on a number of emerging policy issues, including lead in paint, chemicals in products (e.g., in the textile and garment supply chain), highly hazardous pesticides, nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials.

II. Action called for by the Conference at its fourth session and summary of the progress achieved

8. In its resolutions IV/2 and IV/3, the Conference called for specific actions to be implemented under each of the emerging policy issues identified in the resolutions. Progress in relation to the emerging policy issues and to highly hazardous pesticides, as called for in resolution IV/3, and the management of perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives, as called for in resolution III/3, are also summarized in the present section.

A. Global Environment Facility support to emerging policy issues and other issues of concern

9. In its resolution IV/2, the Conference invited the Global Environment Facility (GEF), within its mandate, to support the implementation of the Conference resolutions on all emerging policy issues and to continue that support in its seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund.

10. GEF has approved an \$8.19 million project on the theme “Global best practices on emerging chemical policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management”. The aim of that global project is to accelerate progress and measure the adoption of national activities on emerging policy issues to achieve the Strategic Approach goal by 2020 and to support planning for chemicals management in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. The project will be implemented in over 40 countries over a 4-year period with the aim of presenting early project results at the fifth session of the Conference, in 2020. The GEF unit in UNEP is the implementing agency and the Strategic Approach secretariat is the executing agency. The project focuses on three work components: lead in paint, chemicals in products, and strategic planning and knowledge management. The project was approved for implementation by GEF on 7 August 2018, and the project inception meeting was held on 15 and 16 January 2019.

12. A proposal for a medium-sized project was submitted to GEF for review and the approval of its Chief Executive Officer on 11 October, 2018. With a budget of \$2 million, the project is to be implemented in 11 countries over a 4-year period. It will focus on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and highly hazardous pesticides. The GEF unit of UNEP is the proposed implementing agency and the Strategic Approach secretariat is the proposed executing agency. Key project partners include FAO, WHO and UNEP.

B. Lead in paint

13. On the issue of lead in paint, in its resolution IV/2, the Conference:

(a) Welcomed the efforts of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint to achieve its goal to phase out lead in paint by 2020;

(b) Encouraged Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector to participate in the work of the Alliance and assist in achieving the above goal;

(c) Encouraged Strategic Approach stakeholders to promote and/or initiate national and/or regional discussions to address the possible establishment of effective measures, including regulation, to phase out the use of lead in paint.

14. In respect of the global status of legal limits on lead in paint, as at 30 September 2018, 71 countries had confirmed that they had legally binding controls on lead paint. Information about the status of each country can be seen in the WHO Global Health Observatory¹ and in the UNEP update for September 2018 on the global status of legal limits on lead in paint.²

15. The advisory council of the Alliance is chaired by the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States of America and meets twice a year by teleconference to track progress and review activities in relation to the 2-year action plan of the Alliance. The advisory council currently has 14 members, representing 5 Governments, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 3 non-governmental organizations and 3 paint industry representatives. The European Commission is an observer.

16. The number of partners in the Alliance has increased each year, and, as of November 2018 there were 92 partners, including 22 Governments, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 38 non-governmental organizations, 21 paint industry representatives and 6 representatives of academia.

17. The “Model law and guidance for regulating lead paint” is available in the six official languages of the United Nations.³

18. The GEF full-sized project component under the Strategic Approach on the theme “Promoting regulatory and voluntary action by government and industry to phase out lead in paint” will stimulate national regulatory action, engage the private sector in addressing the issue of lead in paint, and provide information on global best practices in respect of the necessary conditions and inputs that are most effective in generating political will to take action at the national level. Project outputs will include

¹ See www.who.int/gho/phe/chemical_safety/lead_paint_regulations/en/.

² Available at www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/2018-update-global-status-legal-limits-lead-paint.

³ Available at www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/model-law-and-guidance-regulating-lead-paint.

policy advocacy and the demonstration of lead-free paint reformulation in at least 50 small and medium-sized paint enterprises. The intended project outcome is for 40 countries to legislate and implement legislation on lead paint.

19. International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week has been held every year since 2013, most recently from 21 to 27 October 2018. Each year, there have been events in 40 or more countries that have involved multiple stakeholders. A report of activities during International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is published each year. A review of International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week for the period 2013–2017 has been carried out and a progress report has been published on the WHO web page of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint.⁴

20. In addition to the annual International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Alliance has put in place a communication strategy, as part of which it has developed brand identity guidelines and a bi-monthly newsletter.⁵

C. Chemicals in products

21. With regard to chemicals in products, in its resolution IV/2, the Conference:

(a) Encouraged the private sector, Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, including worker organizations, to participate actively and report on the implementation of the chemicals in products programme, and invited all stakeholders to provide adequate human, financial and in-kind resources for further work;

(b) Renewed the mandate of the Steering Group of the chemicals in products programme that was set out in resolutions II/4 C and III/2 C, with additional representation of Strategic Approach stakeholders to be inclusive, suggested that representation from the recycling sector be included, and requested the Steering Group to develop and adopt its own terms of reference with inputs from stakeholders;

(c) Invited UNEP, subject to the availability of resources, to continue to lead the chemicals in products programme in an open, transparent and inclusive manner to promote and facilitate implementation activities, with input from stakeholders, to coordinate periodic updates, as necessary, of the guidance and to provide a comprehensive report on progress to the Open-Ended Working Group at its third session as well as to the Conference at its fifth session, with support from the Steering Group;

(d) Also invited UNEP, subject to available resources, to maintain the website of the chemicals in products programme, with a view to facilitating access to programme documents and promoting awareness of the use of chemicals in products information for sound chemicals management actions, as well as in coordination with the Steering Group to engage in stakeholder capacity-building and awareness-raising and to facilitate chemicals in products programme pilot and implementation activities, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and with the involvement of relevant stakeholders and vulnerable groups.

22. The GEF full-sized project has a component under the Strategic Approach on the theme “Life-cycle management of chemicals present in products”. The project component on chemicals in products involves action by Governments and value chain actors in the building, electronics and toys sectors to track and manage chemicals of concern in their products. The two expected outputs are as follows: (a) new tools and guidance to reduce the use of chemicals of concern in the building, electronics and toys sectors; and (b) training and support for Governments and value chain actors to test and adopt new guidance and tools.

23. UNEP has continued to reach out to stakeholders and raise awareness of the chemicals in products programme and has received commitments from stakeholders to participate in outreach and promote the programme. The efforts of UNEP continue on that front, and other stakeholders are expected to engage in that regard in the near future.

24. The Steering Group has met twice, in Brasilia in February 2017 and in Stockholm in December 2018. The meetings served as opportunities to take stock of Programme progress. The meetings focused on finalizing and adopting updated terms of reference for the Steering Group; developing a revised process to motivate stakeholder engagement in the Programme; determining the approach for updating Programme guidance; and discussion of further studies and initiatives needed, including economic

⁴ www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/gaelp/en/.

⁵ Available at www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/global-alliance-eliminate-lead-paint.

assessments of the benefits of information-sharing systems. Three summary guidance documents for Governments, industry and civil society have been produced.

25. Given that it is missing representatives from the Asia and Pacific region, the membership of the Steering Group is still not complete. The Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for the Asia and Pacific Region in China has indicated its interest in being a member, and confirmation from the Bureaux is pending. It is important to note that retailers and industry sector representatives, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles, have expressed an interest in participating in the meetings and discussions of the Steering Group.

26. To identify and demonstrate best practices in facilitating access to information on chemicals contained in textile products, a GEF-supported project on the theme “Defining and demonstrating best practices for exchange of information on chemicals in textile products” was implemented by UNEP, and executed jointly with the Government of China and leading textile manufacturers. The project started in late 2014 and will end in 2019. It has strengthened and complemented existing efforts to promote the exchange of information on chemicals in products and leveraged significant efforts on the part of a number of leading apparel, footwear and outdoor clothing brands by increasing access to such information throughout their supply chains. In particular, the project has helped to define the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders throughout and outside the supply chain, and identified and demonstrated best practices for chemicals information exchange in the textiles sector in China. The project has had a positive effect on textiles sector actors in China beyond the supply chains of international brands.

27. The International Persistent Organic Pollutants Elimination Network has finalized the implementation of three pilot projects to promote the implementation of the chemicals in products programme and associated guidance to improve information disclosure on chemicals present in children’s products, including toys. Two similar projects will follow in 2019. To assist partner non-governmental organizations in the implementation of projects under the Programme, a package of information and awareness-raising materials was developed. The package includes, inter alia, guidance on project activities under the Programme; guidelines on phthalates monitoring; guidance on product label analysis; and guidance on evaluation of the Programme’s implementation.

28. In addition, the International Persistent Organic Pollutants Elimination Network has implemented a multi-country project on chemicals in toys as part of product sustainability information, including analyses of toy samples containing toxic metals (32 per cent of all samples that were tested) or phthalates (40 per cent of all samples that were tested) and labelled those products with information about their chemical content to warn consumers.

29. Regarding sectoral engagement, there is growing interest worldwide regarding toxic chemicals and chemicals of concern in synthetic textile fibres and textile products. Several activities to promote the exchange of information on chemicals in products are ongoing at the national and regional levels. Examples of such sectoral engagement include:

(a) Progress made in Germany in the development of a project of the European Union to improve supply chain communication processes and the flow of information on substances of very high concern between consumers and suppliers, thereby supporting the substitution of those substances with safer alternatives;⁶

(b) The delivery by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of a programme of work to address the presence of persistent organic pollutants in various product groups. Current projects include investigations into the presence of restricted brominated fire retardants in waste electrical and electronic equipment, soft furnishings and construction products and the consideration of appropriate disposal routes. The work will ensure that an evidence-based approach to policymaking is taken in the implementation of the international obligations of the United Kingdom;

(c) A research project in the United Kingdom being led by the Industry Council for Electronic Equipment Recycling and the waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling sector to identify persistent organic pollutants in plastics. The project will sample all major categories of electronic waste at a number of recycling facilities across the country. The results will inform the policy and regulatory strategies taken in the country to ensure the persistent organic pollutant content in recycled plastics is below internationally agreed limits;

⁶ See <https://www.askreach.eu/>.

(d) The consideration by Canada of experiences and best practices, including developments under the chemicals in products programme, as the country charts the next phase of its chemicals management plan, which will include addressing chemicals in the supply chain beyond 2020.

D. Hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products

30. In respect of hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, in its resolution IV/2, the Conference:

(a) Encouraged stakeholders:

- (i) To consider and implement, as appropriate, the Strategic Approach Global Plan of Action, in particular the actions related to hazardous substances in electrical and electronic products adopted by the Conference at its third session;
- (ii) To maximize risk reduction by encouraging original equipment manufacturers to adopt sustainable design and safer processes for the production, waste management and recycling of electrical and electronic products throughout the supply chain and life cycle;
- (iii) To widely disseminate the report of the international workshop on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, held in Vienna from 29 to 31 March 2011, and to consider the recommendations made and the key messages delivered on hazardous chemicals within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products by the participants in that workshop, when deciding on further actions to take in respect of such chemicals (see SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/24);

(b) Invited UNIDO, in partnership with other organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and relevant stakeholders, to undertake a process to develop and finalize the workplan for the period 2016–2020 set out in the note by the secretariat (SAICM/ICCM.4/INF/18), including by:

- (i) Soliciting comments and input on the workplan from Strategic Approach stakeholders;
- (ii) Revising the workplan on the basis of comments received from Strategic Approach stakeholders and including indicators of progress to be reported by stakeholders as part of the report to be developed for consideration by the Conference at its fifth session;

(c) Encouraged Strategic Approach stakeholders to take steps to enhance their involvement and efforts to develop and implement the workplan wherever possible, in particular ILO in addressing worker safety in the production of electrical and electronic products throughout the supply chain, as well as in waste management and recycling;

(d) Encouraged meaningful engagement of all Strategic Approach stakeholders to consider the recommendations from the Vienna workshop when deciding on further action to take, in particular:

- (i) To promote advocacy, awareness, information, education and communication about hazardous chemicals in electrical and electronic products for vulnerable groups and relevant stakeholders along the supply chain beginning in 2016;
- (ii) To encourage original equipment manufacturers to work with their supply chains to develop and implement sustainable and effective electrical and electronic product take-back programmes;
- (iii) To encourage original equipment manufacturers to work with their supply chains to establish and implement industrial hygiene and environmental monitoring programmes;
- (iv) To facilitate the implementation of procurement initiatives that favour improved safety and sustainability profiles of electrical and electronic products, including chemicals used in manufacturing;
- (v) To encourage original equipment manufacturers to collect and provide health and safety information to workers on chemicals they are handling or exposed to in electrical and electronic products manufacturing;

(e) Encouraged relevant stakeholders to consider implementing the chemicals in products programme in order to provide access to information on hazardous chemicals in the life cycle of electrical and electronic products.

31. At the third session of the Conference, new activities were added to the Global Plan of Action related to hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, and a number of additional activities were highlighted for action in resolution III/2. UNIDO, as the coordinating agency during the third session of the Conference for this emerging policy issue, led collective efforts to identify and assess key issues relating to the issue and to develop a series of options and recommendations for future work that were provided to the Open-Ended Working Group of the Strategic Approach and to the International Conference on Chemicals Management for their consideration and possible cooperative actions.

32. During the fourth session of the Conference, UNIDO, on behalf of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, provided an update on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products (SAICM/ICCM.4/INF/18) and introduced a proposed workplan for the period 2016–2020. The Strategic Approach secretariat also introduced a report on a related survey (SAICM/ICCM.4/INF/27/Rev.1). It was determined that the issue was cross-cutting and, owing to the increasing complexity of the issue, it was important to deal with the matter in a collaborative manner. After discussions and exchanges, the Conference set up a contact group to draft an omnibus resolution on emerging policy issues, including hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products, which was later adopted by the Conference as resolution IV/2 (see SAICM/ICCM.4/15).

33. In follow-up to Conference resolution IV/2, relevant Strategic Approach stakeholders, including its secretariat, the Basel, Stockholm and Minamata conventions, the United Nations University (UNU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ILO, UNEP, UNIDO, WHO, the Solving the E-waste Problem initiative, the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment, and later, the Environment Management Group through its Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste, have continued to implement their own activities with due attention to the recommendations set by the Conference. However, given that a collective attempt to get funding for this emerging policy issue did not materialize, activities to address hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products have remained unfunded and many of them have not been tackled. On the other hand, UNIDO, in partnership with the Strategic Approach secretariat and other the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals organizations and relevant stakeholders, undertook the process of developing and finalizing the workplan for the period 2016–2020 as requested by the Conference. Further efforts until 2020 are expected on promoting green purchasing, design for environment and the tracking of substances within the manufacturing process along the product life cycle.

34. Furthermore, in response to a substantial increase in global e-waste generation, and considering that there are many existing e-waste initiatives and active stakeholders in the United Nations system, in May 2016 the Environment Management Group established the Inter-Agency Issue Management Group on E-waste, which published a report in 2017 on the United Nations system-wide response to tackling e-waste, which mapped the characteristics of United Nations e-waste initiatives and the United Nations entities involved. Based on recommendations set out in that report, the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste has three work streams currently under development.

35. However, important gaps remain in achieving the 2020 goal of the Global Action Plan, including: (a) the current focus of the workplan being on the upstream level, which requires streamlining discussions with electrical and electronic equipment manufacturers to provide them with information regarding the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment, which in turn is essential for requesting them to enhance the environmentally friendly design of such equipment; (b) the lack of funding by the Strategic Approach stakeholders concerned to tackle the activities stated in the workplan for the period 2016–2020, which remains unfunded.

36. Work on this issue by WHO has focused on the health impacts of e-waste on children.⁷ WHO has also collaborated with others, including ITU and UNIDO, in the development of a report on the sustainable management of waste electrical and electronic equipment in Latin America.⁸

⁷ See www.who.int/ceh/risks/ewaste/en/.

⁸ Available at www.who.int/ceh/publications/ewaste_latinamerica/en/.

37. Work on this issue by ILO has focused on the greening of enterprises, occupational safety and health and the promotion of decent work.⁹ ILO also has contributed to an E-waste Coalition report on shifting towards circular economies in the sector.¹⁰ ILO has ongoing country projects in Argentina and Peru to analyse the employment situation in the e-waste sector and improve working conditions in the e-waste value chain. In April 2019, ILO will convene a forum to discuss emerging issues related to decent work in the management of e-waste with the aim of adopting recommendations for future action.

E. Nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials

38. With respect to nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials, in its resolution IV/2, the Conference:

(a) Encouraged Strategic Approach stakeholders to address the sound management of manufactured nanomaterials in relevant national and international instruments, including regulatory frameworks, adapted to take into account specific properties of manufactured nanomaterials, as appropriate, and taking into consideration the objective of enhancing coordination and cooperation in the chemicals and waste cluster;

(b) Welcomed the establishment of regional networks focusing on the safety of nanomaterials and encouraged all stakeholders to develop and implement regional cooperation mechanisms;

(c) Emphasized the need to continue to facilitate the exchange of information on the sound management of manufactured nanomaterials throughout their life cycle, for example through an appropriate clearing-house mechanism and regional networks;

(d) Emphasized the need for OECD and UNITAR to continue the development of international guidance and training materials for the sound management of manufactured nanomaterials, drawing on existing initiatives, needs assessments and best practices, within their respective mandates and subject to available resources, in cooperation with the regions and other relevant stakeholders;

(e) Welcomed the proposed workplan for the period 2016–2020 in the note by the secretariat (ICCM.4/INF/19);

(f) Invited all stakeholders to continue to raise awareness and enhance capacity on the sound management of manufactured nanomaterials, paying particular attention to the situation and needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including through regional consultations and e-learning courses;

(g) Encouraged Strategic Approach stakeholders to consider using the Guidance for the Development of a National Nanotechnology Policy and Programme, developed by UNITAR, and other relevant documents.

39. Universitas Indonesia undertook a visit in September 2016 to the National Nanotechnology Centre, Thailand, to discuss potential research collaboration in the field of ecotoxicology. This relationship is a direct result of the nanosafety workshop for the Asia-Pacific region that was held in 2015.

40. In November 2018, the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change of Malaysia ran a week-long training course on nanomaterials, directly based on the learning materials from a UNITAR nanosafety e-learning course. Two UNITAR senior experts and an OECD expert contributed to the learning aspects of the course. The course also built on relationships developed in UNITAR regional workshops and the OECD Working Party on Manufactured Nanomaterials.

41. In 2017, WHO released guidelines on protecting workers from potential risks of manufactured nanomaterials. The recommendations therein were intended to help policymakers and professionals in the field of occupational health and safety in making decisions about the best protection against potential risks specific to manufactured nanomaterials in workplaces. The guidelines are also intended to support workers and employers.¹¹

⁹ See www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_196105/lang--en/, www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_315228/lang--en/ and www.ilo.org/beijing/what-we-do/publications/WCMS_375174/lang--en/.

¹⁰ Available at www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_665137/lang--en/.

¹¹ Available at www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/manufactured-nanomaterials/en/.

42. In late 2013, UNITAR embarked on a second phase of pilot projects at the national level, in Armenia, Jordan and Viet Nam, all of which have completed their activities since the fourth session of the Conference. The project in Viet Nam developed a proposal for activities for the period 2016–2020 and a national vision up to 2025, provided a review of activities and ongoing research in the country related to nanotechnology, and assessed national nanosafety priorities. Armenia formulated a new nanosafety policy and added a nanosafety chapter to the national profile on chemicals management. Jordan increased awareness of the issue at the national level, shared information on activities in-country and developed workplace safety guidelines.

43. The third round of the UNITAR e-learning course on the theme “Introduction to nanomaterial safety” ran from October to December 2015, with all seven participants successfully completing the course. The course was operated in collaboration with three UNITAR expert tutors. No further courses have been run owing to lack of demand.

44. In February 2018, OECD and UNITAR organized two workshops, back-to-back with Strategic Approach regional meetings being held in Panama and Poland. In addition, a workshop focusing on Africa and on the Asia-Pacific region was held back-to-back in September 2018 with the eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention, to facilitate discussions on waste containing nanomaterials with respect to decision BC-13/17, in which the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, among other things, requested the Secretariat to prepare, for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group at its eleventh meeting and subject to the availability of resources, a document compiling information on existing activities that addressed waste containing nanomaterials and identifying issues related to waste containing nanomaterials that might be relevant to work under the Convention and on options for further work that may be carried out under the Basel Convention related to waste containing nanomaterials within the scope of the Convention, avoiding duplication with activities relating to the matter in other forums.

45. The workshops served to re-connect participants with the network that had been created in Colombia for Latin America and Caribbean region in 2015, to re-launch activities in the Central and Eastern Europe region and to gain access to Basel Convention stakeholders. The main purpose of the workshops was to provide updates on international policy developments (UNITAR activities, OECD activities, nanomaterials as part of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, the Basel Convention decision relevant to waste containing nanomaterials (BC-13/17) and the relevant chapter in *Global Chemicals Outlook II*) and to provide a forum for regional experts and participants to share information on their latest work. In addition, significant time was dedicated to introducing the WHO guidelines on protecting workers from potential risks of manufactured nanomaterials, which was a major policy development in 2017 and was a significant collaborative effort among the Basel Convention, OECD, UNEP, UNITAR and WHO. For the workshop in Panama, WHO, through the Pan American Health Organization, was able to invite specific “health sector” representatives to participate.

46. Participants were happy with the opportunity to meet again, share information, hear more about the work of the Basel Convention, OECD, UNITAR and WHO, discuss future priority actions on nanomaterials, and propose collaborative activities in the region.

47. OECD promotes international cooperation on the human health and environmental safety aspects of manufactured nanomaterials. Its objective is to facilitate cooperation among countries in assessing the safety implications of nanomaterials and in identifying solutions to common challenges. This remains its major objective in the area of nanomaterials, while considering the safety of nanomaterials within the context of chemicals management. In view of the increasing trend over recent years to use existing regulatory systems, such as those for industrial chemicals, to manage the risks of manufactured nanomaterials, the OECD Council adopted a relevant recommendation in 2013, that is open for adherence by non-OECD countries with the aim of enhancing international cooperation in that regard.

48. In late 2015, OECD published the results of its testing programme,¹² with the objective of evaluating the efficacy and accuracy of standard test guidelines. It is worth noting that it was not intended for use in the determination of risks associated with the use or application of nanomaterials. Much of the data collected fell within the scope of the OECD system for the mutual acceptance of data in the assessment of chemicals. An important part of the system is the OECD test guidelines that make it possible to assess the potential effects of chemicals on human health and the environment. While many of the guidelines are considered to be suitable for nanomaterials, some are not and are being adapted by OECD to the specific nature of nanotechnologies and nanomaterials. In 2017, OECD

¹² See <http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/nanosafety/testing-programme-manufactured-nanomaterials.htm>.

published updates to the test guidelines for toxicity by inhalation to take into account the toxicity of nanomaterials. Furthermore, a test guideline was published to test for the agglomeration behaviour of nanomaterials.

49. To complement this work, OECD is looking at developing methods to adapt existing risk assessment methodologies to manufactured nanomaterials, to identify best practices to address varying levels of uncertainty in risk assessment based on differing regulatory regimes related to manufactured nanomaterials, and to identify issues that will assist countries in implementing and/or developing their own regulatory policies for manufactured nanomaterials.

50. OECD has also been addressing the issue of exposure to nanomaterials. In the past, a large part of the activities was focused on exposure in occupational settings. However, OECD has been gradually increasing its activities to address human exposure resulting from contact with consumer products and from environmental releases. In 2017, a survey result was published on the availability of exposure models for the assessment of consumer and environmental exposure.¹³

51. OECD will continue to facilitate information exchange on nanosafety¹⁴ in order to improve transparency and decision-making processes through its programme of work, in coordination with entities such as UNITAR and WHO.

F. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals

52. With regard to endocrine-disrupting chemicals, in its resolution IV/2, the Conference:

(a) Welcomed¹⁵ the report by UNEP and WHO entitled *State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals – 2012*, in which they identified concerns, including evidence in humans, laboratory animals and wildlife, that exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals could result in adverse effects, that the most critical window of exposure was during development, and that exposure during early life stages could result in adult-onset disease, and noted that an important focus should be on reducing exposure;

(b) Invited UNEP and WHO to address the needs identified by developing countries and countries with economies in transition, subject to available resources, by generating and disseminating information on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, as part of the workplan set out in the progress report on endocrine-disrupting chemicals prepared by OECD, UNEP and WHO (SAICM/ICCM.4/INF/20, annex, sect. III);

(c) Acknowledged the work by the Advisory Group on Endocrine Disruptors Testing and Assessment of OECD and efforts by Governments and other stakeholders;

(d) Invited the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to further develop and implement the plan of work for the cooperative actions set out in the progress report in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, and requested all interested stakeholders to support those efforts.

53. To advance work on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, UNEP organized two meetings back-to-back with the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. They included a consultative meeting on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, held on 20 and 21 April 2017, followed by the fourth meeting of the UNEP Advisory Group on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals, held on 21 April 2017.

54. The consultative meeting on endocrine-disrupting chemicals was an important milestone in the discussions and work under preparation. Specific objectives of the meeting included:

(a) Finalizing the three UNEP reports under development on the following topics:

(i) Worldwide initiatives to identify endocrine-disrupting chemicals and potential endocrine-disrupting chemicals;

(ii) Review of existing national, regional and global regulatory frameworks that address endocrine-disrupting chemicals;

¹³ See

[http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=env/jm/mono\(2017\)32&doclanguage=en](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=env/jm/mono(2017)32&doclanguage=en).

¹⁴ See www.oecd.org/env/nanosafety.

¹⁵ The International Council of Chemical Associations, CropLife International and the United States Council for International Business wish to note that the methodology and conclusions of the report remain contentious among certain scientific groups.

- (iii) Overview of the current knowledge on chemicals identified as endocrine-disrupting chemicals and selected potential endocrine-disrupting chemicals;

(b) Sharing reports that contain information and reflect perspectives on recent advances in science and their implications. The reports are posted on the UNEP website.

55. In May 2017, GEF approved a full-sized project to promote best practices on emerging policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach and agreed to support a medium-sized project proposal on the theme “Global best practices on emerging chemical policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management”, with a focus on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants and highly hazardous pesticides and with the objective of accelerating and measuring the adoption of national activities to control emerging policy issues to achieve the implementation by 2020 of the Strategic Approach goal and to support early planning for chemicals management in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The GEF medium-sized project is under development in consultation among FAO, UNEP and WHO.

56. OECD is developing test guidelines, guidance documents and conceptual frameworks and strategies for identifying endocrine-disrupting chemicals. In 2018, OECD published its *Revised Guidance Document 150 on Standardized Test Guidelines for Evaluating Chemicals for Endocrine Disruption*. The publication is intended to provide guidance in evaluating chemicals through the use of standardized test guidelines. Specific objectives include providing a description of the OECD conceptual framework for evaluating chemicals for endocrine disruption, background on the standardized test methods used, and guidance for interpreting the outcome of individual tests.

57. WHO has been pursuing work on endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the context of its broader project on avoidable early life environmental exposure. At the first meeting on avoidable early-life environmental exposure, held in June 2016, a road map was developed to prioritize action by the health sector. A second meeting took place in November 2017 to plan the implementation of the advocacy and training aspects of the road map. Draft materials were reviewed at a meeting in October 2018. At present, key messages for obstetricians and gynaecologists, paediatricians, medical schools and their faculty members, and local health practitioners are being finalized, along with plans for their dissemination through medical professional societies and other health sector networks.

G. Environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants

58. In its resolution IV/2, the Conference agreed that international cooperation on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants was crucial to building awareness and to understanding and promoting action on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants as an emerging policy issue. Furthermore, in that resolution, the Conference:

(a) Agreed that international cooperation was crucial to building awareness and understanding and to promoting action on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants as an emerging policy issue;

(b) Considered that information dissemination and activities to raise awareness on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants were particularly relevant and that improving the availability of and access to information on such chemicals was a priority;

(c) Recognized the current knowledge gaps on exposure to and the effects of environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants;

(d) Decided to implement cooperative action on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants with the overall objective of increasing awareness and understanding among policymakers and other stakeholders;

(e) Invited Governments and other stakeholders to generate and share information to fill the identified knowledge gaps;

(f) Invited relevant participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, within their respective mandates and as part of their programmes of work, to lead and facilitate cooperative action and to develop a workplan on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants in an open, transparent and inclusive manner;

(g) Requested all interested stakeholders and organizations to provide support, including expertise and financial and in-kind resources, on a voluntary basis, for such cooperative action, including by participating in developing and making available relevant information and guidance;

(h) Invited relevant participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and other Strategic Approach stakeholders to report on the cooperative action on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants to the Conference at its fifth or any other session as decided upon by the Conference.

59. UNEP, as part of its agenda on environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants, has prepared a mapping and scoping report on gaps and identified several aspects of concern, including how biological activity may directly adversely affect non-target organisms, such as wildlife. The adverse effects of pharmaceutical compounds include the development of resistance in microorganisms, genotoxicity, endocrine disruption, and changes in the behaviour of biota. Significant soil contamination and biomagnification are aspects to be considered, especially given that they can be prevented. In this regard, work by UNEP will focus on better understanding and assessing options to address these issues. UNEP is developing a page on its website to showcase findings, gaps and other relevant information.

60. The development of the GEF medium-sized project under the Strategic Approach has been finalized. As foreseen, the project has a component on emerging scientific issues, including endocrine-disrupting chemicals and environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants. The project components include as outputs the development of a global toolkit on pharmaceutical residues in the environment, which will be managed by WHO and undertaken in conjunction with efforts by UNEP and national monitoring bodies to confirm related emissions pathways from manufacturing and wastewater.

61. Some antimicrobial agents or their breakdown products can persist in the environment when released either from pharmaceutical industry production, after being applied as crop agents or after passing through humans and animals treated with such agents. Therefore, both work specifically addressing environmental pollution by antimicrobial agents, as well as actions aimed at decreasing overall use, are relevant. Antimicrobial resistance is one of the world's most complex and serious health and development challenges in that it affects all countries and poses growing threats to human and animal health, food production and food security, the environment and economic development.

62. In 2016, the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance (General Assembly resolution 71/3), represented a landmark in the world's commitment to tackling antimicrobial resistance and reflected the call for greater urgency and action in response to the challenges it posed. The Secretary-General, in consultation with FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health and WHO, convened the Inter-agency Coordinating Group on Antimicrobial Resistance,¹⁶ which was co-chaired by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and WHO and comprised high-level representatives of relevant United Nations agencies, other international organizations and individual experts across different sectors. Several Strategic Approach stakeholders are members, including UNEP. The objective of the Group is to provide practical guidance on approaches needed to ensure sustained effective global action to address antimicrobial resistance, including options for improving coordination, taking into account the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance. It will produce a report of the Secretary-General on the topic, which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, in 2019. Since the adoption of the 2016 political declaration, the tripartite collaboration among FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health and WHO has helped to raise awareness and spur collective action. In 2018, the three agencies signed a new memorandum of understanding to strengthen their work at the human-animal-environment interface. The three organizations have worked jointly and in collaboration with UNEP to develop a two-year work plan for its implementation.

63. At the third session of United Nations Environment Assembly, in 2017, member States adopted resolution 3/4, on environment and health, in which they emphasized the importance of joint efforts and actions by all relevant United Nations entities and stakeholders to fight pollution. As part of this broad effort to address pollution challenges, the Executive Director was requested to prepare by the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, in 2021, a report on the environmental impacts of antimicrobial resistance and the causes for the development and spread of resistance in the environment, including the gaps in understanding of those impacts and causes. They requested the Executive Director to do so in collaboration with WHO, FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the Strategic Approach and the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance.

64. UNEP is finalizing a document on the theme "Antimicrobial resistance and environment". That document is intended to serve as input for the above-mentioned report. It includes an extensive,

¹⁶ See www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/en/.

although not exhaustive, literature review that outlines the state of the art and deepens knowledge of the impact of antimicrobial resistance in the environment. It contains preliminary identification of the most significant environmental factors and reviews related policies that have been developed at the international level. The document is in a draft stage and under review and will be presented to a group of experts for further input.

65. In 2015, WHO issued the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, in recognition of the risks posed by the systematic misuse and overuse of antimicrobial drugs in human medicine and food production.¹⁷

66. The WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, which guided the development of the Global Action Plan, continues to meet regularly to provide advice to the Director General of WHO on progress and challenges in its implementation. This is supported by a country self-assessment survey on the status of actions taken to implement the Global Action Plan.¹⁸ In November 2017, WHO released guidelines on the use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals, recommending that farmers and the food industry stop using antibiotics routinely to promote growth and prevent disease in healthy animals. These guidelines aim to help to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics that are important for human medicine by reducing their use in animals.¹⁹

67. WHO coordinates World Antibiotics Awareness Week, which is held in November of each year, with the aim of increasing global awareness of antibiotic resistance and encouraging best practices among the general public, health workers and policymakers in order to avoid the further emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance.

68. In February 2018, OECD organized a workshop on managing contaminants of emerging concern in surface waters, focusing on pharmaceuticals. Following the outcome of the workshop, OECD is developing a report that sets out policy responses for managing contaminants of emerging concern in freshwaters, with a focus on pharmaceuticals. The report is scheduled to be published in early 2019.

H. Managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives

69. With regard to managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives, in its resolution III/3, the Conference:

- (a) Noted that a significant need remained for additional work to support the implementation of resolution II/5;
- (b) Invited the Global PFC Group to broaden participation beyond the member countries of OECD as an important mechanism for achieving further progress;
- (c) Also invited the Global PFC Group to collaborate closely with the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and UNIDO.

70. The work related to managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives is managed by the Global PFC Group.

71. In July 2017, the Group released a new version of its web portal,²⁰ which serves to facilitate the exchange of information on per- and polyfluorinated chemicals, focusing specifically on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. In order to support a global transition towards safer alternatives, the portal provides information on the following areas:

- (a) Characteristics of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances;
- (b) Risk reduction approaches across countries;
- (c) Information on alternatives;
- (d) Production and emissions;
- (e) Information from countries.

¹⁷ Available at www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/publications/global-action-plan/en/.

¹⁸ See www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/global-action-plan/database/en/.

¹⁹ Available at www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/antimicrobial-resistance/cia_guidelines/en/.

²⁰ www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/portal-perfluorinated-chemicals/.

72. The Group has also held a series of webinars with the goal of gathering and sharing information on the status of the development and use of alternatives to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances worldwide. In 2017 and 2018, webinars in the series have included the following topics:

- (a) Activities under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions towards per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance risk reduction and guidance developed by the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee on alternatives to perfluorooctane sulfonate and related chemicals;
- (b) Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances groupings for the Inventory Multi-tiered Assessment and Prioritization Framework (Australia);
- (c) Best environmental practices in textiles;
- (d) Conclusions from a project to mitigate the environmental impact of durable water and oil repellents.²¹

73. In May 2018, the Group published a new list of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances based on a comprehensive analysis of information available in the public domain. In total, 4,730 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance-related Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) registry numbers have been identified and categorized in this study, including several new groups of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances that fulfil the common definition of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (i.e., they contain at least one perfluoroalkyl moiety) but have not yet been commonly regarded as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. The list is an update to a list published by OECD in 2007.

74. The Group has currently three projects under way, on the following topics:

(a) Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and alternatives - commercial availability and current uses. The project aims to provide information on current uses of alternatives to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in the production of products and articles in three industry sectors: textiles (including shoes), firefighting foam, and food packaging. A questionnaire was prepared to collect information from stakeholders on alternatives and their use(s), performance and related costs, uptake/market penetration, and challenges to their development. Twelve responses to the questionnaire were received from countries and industry;

(b) Expanding current per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances terminology. The goal of this project is to provide guidance to all stakeholders so that they use the same language when communicating on topics relating to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. More specifically, this project aims to systematically expand the current terminology on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances to solve existing issues with the current terminology and to accommodate newly identified per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. The group is currently working on scoping the project further;

(c) Risk reduction approaches across countries.²² Information on the OECD web portal on approaches across countries to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance risk reduction is being updated. Countries are in the process of providing updated information through a questionnaire.

I. Highly hazardous pesticides

75. In its resolution IV/3, the Conference recognized that highly hazardous pesticides caused adverse human health and environmental effects in many countries, in particular in low-income and middle-income countries. Furthermore, in that resolution, the Conference:

(a) Supported concerted action to address highly hazardous pesticides in the context of the Strategic Approach and welcomed with appreciation the strategy set out in part II of the proposal on highly hazardous pesticides (SAICM/ICCM.4/8);

(b) Encouraged relevant stakeholders to undertake concerted efforts to implement the strategy at the local, national, regional and international levels, with emphasis on promoting agroecologically-based alternatives and strengthening national regulatory capacity to conduct risk assessment and risk management, including the availability of necessary information, mindful of the responsibility of national and multinational enterprises;

(c) Welcomed the offer of FAO, UNEP and WHO to develop modalities for international coordination in the context of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals;

²¹ See www.midwor-life.eu.

²² See www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/.

(d) Invited appropriate organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to facilitate collaboration, cooperation and contributions of stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy;

(e) Invited Strategic Approach stakeholders to report, through the secretariat, on progress in implementing the strategy to the Open-ended Working Group at its third session and to the Conference at its fifth session.

76. Countries in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific region continue to make significant progress in identifying highly hazardous pesticides, assessing their risks under actual conditions of use and exploring risk-reduction measures, including as follows:

(a) Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have shortlisted nationally registered, highly hazardous pesticides for which immediate risk mitigation measures are required. The need for action has been established through field surveys that have revealed the actual conditions of use in several agricultural areas in each country. National strategies to reduce risks have been developed and already endorsed by the competent authorities, e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture of Botswana. Several priority highly hazardous pesticides are, however, emerging as being common to the region, which reinforces the need for a regional approach;

(b) China and the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are in the process of reviewing the registration of highly hazardous pesticides, ceasing the production and importation of specific products, and investing in the introduction of alternative low-risk products. China is committed to phasing out highly hazardous pesticides in the coming years. Myanmar has recently identified highly hazardous pesticides that are still registered and used in the country and is now focusing on measures to reduce the risks associated with their use.

77. A strong political will to mitigate the impact of highly hazardous pesticides has been built in Africa and in the Asia and Pacific region. A significant step forward in respect of the regional strategies has been made by determining key objectives, elements and expected benefits, and discussing regional approaches in the context of the following three large regional consultations held in 2018:

(a) East African Community. A workshop jointly organized by the East African Community and FAO was held in Kigali from 19 to 21 March 2018. Six country representatives, regional stakeholders and a private sector representative (CropLife International) revised the first draft of a regional strategy. In accordance with the standard procedure for the issuance of regional guidelines, the strategy will undergo a process of national multi-stakeholder validation by each of the member countries of the East African Community before submission for ministerial approval;

(b) Southern African Development Community (SADC). A workshop as part of the Southern African Pesticide Regulation Forum on a regional strategy to address highly hazardous pesticides and capacity-building on pesticide risk assessment in SADC member countries was held from 5 to 9 March 2018. The event was co-organized by the University of Cape Town, the Swedish Chemicals Agency and the secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention. The SADC regional strategy has been elaborated, and subsequent validations will be conducted and approvals issued once resources are available;

(c) Pacific region. A multi-sector and multi-stakeholder workshop on highly hazardous pesticides in Pacific islands, held in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, from 5 to 8 March 2018, brought together representatives of five Pacific islands to discuss common pesticide threats to their fragile island ecosystems. The countries agreed to continue the assessment of highly hazardous pesticides under the technical guidance of FAO and the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. The Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific facilitated information-sharing sessions on alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides.

78. FAO has also worked at mainstreaming the issue of highly hazardous pesticides into regional programmes for food security in Africa and Asia to ensure that sound chemicals management is an integral part of sustainable agriculture intensification. During the reporting period, FAO has provided catalytic and complementary resources for its technical cooperation programme to address highly hazardous pesticides through a subregional project involving Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project was approved in 2018 and will be launched in February 2019. Additional resources for countries in Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific regions are expected to be made available by the European Union in 2019 as part of its programme on multilateral environmental agreements.

79. The following are examples of multi-stakeholder collaboration on the ground and information exchange:

(a) Countries taking action on highly hazardous pesticides have been guided by the FAO pesticide registration toolkit²³ and specific guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides jointly developed by FAO and WHO. The content of the toolkit is continuously updated by FAO and WHO to provide ongoing guidance to pesticide registrars;

(b) FAO is facilitating fruitful, hands-on collaboration between national and international organizations, academia and civil society with the aims of building capacity and dialogue among countries and moving from local to global action on highly hazardous pesticides. It has recently organized a webinar with engagement of other partners to share the lessons learned in the first three years of implementation of the FAO/WHO guidelines.

80. Pursuant to resolution 3/4 of the Environment Assembly, a first consultative meeting regarding the report on the environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers and ways of minimizing them was held at FAO headquarters, in Rome, on 12 October 2018. The aim of the meeting was to engage experts and key stakeholders in relevant fields on the main elements to be considered in the development of the report. It will address, among other areas, aspects of highly hazardous pesticides, including the risks to and impacts on soil pollution, health, the environment and food security. The meeting was organized by the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch, in close cooperation with FAO and WHO. It was held back-to-back with the meeting of the joint FAO/WHO meeting on pesticide management, which brought together key stakeholders involved in pesticide regulation, distribution and management. Additional experts on fertilizers and pesticides from Governments, the private sector, United Nations agencies, entities that are party to multilateral environmental agreements, research institutes and civil society were also invited.

81. Addressing highly hazardous pesticides is a key issue in the sound management of chemicals, and FAO is interested in scaling up efforts to address highly hazardous pesticides globally, in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP, WHO and others. With a view to future action, FAO proposes the following:

(a) The development of a global project on pesticide management, including highly hazardous pesticides, in consultation with the Strategic Approach secretariat, UNDP and WHO, to access funding from the seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund and to scale up efforts to address highly hazardous pesticides at the national and regional levels;

(b) The development of a policy brief on highly hazardous pesticides to educate and raise awareness among policymakers and high-level officials on the need to take action in that regard;

(c) The design of a knowledge hub or platform on highly hazardous pesticides. The knowledge hub would contain a policy and legislation database, data and technical information on highly hazardous pesticides, ongoing initiatives and important events, information provided by countries on their work to address highly hazardous pesticides, and a forum for the exchange of experiences, expertise, information, tools and methodology for the identification and assessment of risks in respect of highly hazardous pesticides;

(d) The development of a proposal for an international coordination meeting, to be jointly organized by FAO, the Strategic Approach secretariat and WHO and held at FAO headquarters, in Rome in 2019 or 2020 (pending the confirmation of funding from GEF). The meeting would engage United Nations agencies, representatives from regional economic organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, the donor community and producer organizations. The main objectives would be:

- (i) To enhance cross-agency linkages and overall collaboration and coordination mechanisms to build synergies between existing programmes and initiatives;
- (ii) To set targets for reducing the use and risks of highly hazardous pesticides beyond 2020;
- (iii) To forge private-public partnerships to increase the viability of low-risk alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides.

²³ Available at www.fao.org/pesticide-registration-toolkit/tool/home/.