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**Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference  
on Chemicals Management  
Third meeting  
Montevideo, 2–4 April 2019**

## **Draft report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third meeting**

### **Addendum**

#### **I. Progress towards the achievement of the 2020 overall objective of the sound management of chemicals**

##### **A. Emerging policy issues and other issues of concern**

###### **1. Chemicals in products**

1. The representative of IOMC outlined the activities of UNEP under its chemicals in products programme and its implementation of a successful GEF-funded project to identify and demonstrate best practices in facilitating access to information on chemicals contained in textile products, which had been executed jointly with the Government of China and leading textile manufacturers. Another recently launched GEF-funded project had a component under the Strategic Approach on the theme “Life-cycle management of chemicals present in products”, and involved action by Governments and value chain actors in the building, electronics and toys sectors to track and manage chemicals of concern in their products. Through its “Better Work Programme” and various country projects, ILO had been actively promoting chemical safety and proper waste management in the garments and textile industry across the supply chain, and the World Bank had established a multi-donor trust fund called PROBLUE, which had a dedicated window for marine litter management and plastics and provided grants and co-financing of investments for detoxifying plastic products and promoting their recycling. In addition, the Bank was establishing a new trust fund on the circular economy that would promote the minimization of toxic waste production, as well as recycling and reuse of all sorts of products.

2. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives welcomed the progress achieved on chemicals in products and thanked those who had contributed to the chemicals in products programme, including through awareness-raising, capacity-building and information-sharing, with one stressing that the type of information exchange envisioned by the programme could be beneficial for stakeholders and should continue.

3. One representative said that the responsible management of chemicals in products was linked to the global push for a circular economy and waste reduction, which could not be achieved without better knowledge of the chemical composition of products. Data on product ingredients in global commodity markets was necessary for risk assessment and management, to support innovations in safer products chemistries, and to improve citizen access to credible information. It was important, therefore, to promote supply chain transparency of substances in products.

4. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that a circular economy could only be sustainable if the circulation of hazardous chemicals was prevented, and she encouraged lead organizations, countries and stakeholders to enhance their efforts in that area. She drew attention to a new database on chemicals in articles that would soon be publicly available.

5. Several representatives outlined their countries' efforts to deal with toxic and hazardous materials in products, including through legislative and regulatory efforts, innovation and information exchange.

6. Three representatives of three non-governmental organizations emphasized the need to ensure the full disclosure of health and safety information and the identification of all chemical ingredients in products throughout the life cycles of individual products, prioritizing chemicals identified in line with the Strategic Approach criteria, premised on hazard and risk reduction. One of the representatives said that this could be achieved through a harmonization of rules on chemicals in products, stressing that the largest obstacle to achieving the goals of the chemicals in products programme had been that the private sector did not publicly disclose information on chemicals of concern in products, including in personal care and children's products, and it did not provide information on all chemical ingredients found in products or on their possible health effects or ways of reducing exposure to them.

## **2. Hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products**

7. A representative of ILO introduced the sub-item on behalf of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which led the work on the emerging policy issue in collaboration with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the International Environmental Technology Centre. She outlined the relevant activities undertaken by UNIDO under its workplan for the period 2016–2020. Although financing for many activities under the plan had failed to materialize, further work was leading up to 2020 on promoting green purchasing, design for environment and the tracking of substances within the manufacturing process along the product life cycle. At the same time, other Strategic Approach stakeholders, such as WHO, the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP and ILO, were also addressing hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products in various aspects of their work.

8. In the ensuing discussion, one representative supported the IOMC workplan because it focused on what she described as the potential areas of added value of the Strategic Approach: management activities in the upstream life cycle stages, such as design, manufacture and purchasing of electrical and electronic products, and capacity-building for the sound management of electronic products other than waste. Thus, it did not duplicate efforts under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. A representative of a non-governmental organization also called for an approach that emphasized upstream management, in order to minimize downstream and end-of-life hazards, with extended producer responsibility used to address downstream issues.

9. Another representative stressed the need for strong government commitment and the transposition of signed conventions into a national legal framework for the management of electrical and electronic waste. In his region, it was also essential to regulate the informal sector that often managed such waste and to create decent, "green" jobs.

## **3. Nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials**

10. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of UNITAR, also speaking on behalf of OECD, provided an overview of activities carried out by the two entities and their partners in relation to nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials, as more fully described in document SAICM/OEWG.3/6. Good progress had been made to date, but much remained to be done. For UNITAR, future work included the organization of additional regional workshops to share further information on nanosafety and continue networking among regional experts and stakeholders, while OECD would focus on the development of additional test guidelines and methodologies for assessing consumer and environmental exposure. Both entities remained committed to working on what they considered a significant policy issue into 2020 and beyond.

## **4. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals**

11. The representative of OECD introduced the sub-item, which was covered in more detail in document SAICM/OEWG.3/6. Noting that UNEP, WHO and OECD led the activities related to the emerging issue of endocrine-disrupting chemicals, he highlighted the recent publication of three reports by UNEP on the identification of endocrine-disrupting chemicals and existing national, regional and global regulatory frameworks to address them, of OECD flagship guidance on identifying endocrine-disrupting chemicals using standardized test methods and of a WHO road map for

prioritizing action by the health sector. Action on endocrine-disrupting chemicals was also a focus of the GEF medium-sized project on global best practices on emerging chemical policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach.

12. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives, one of whom spoke on behalf of a non-governmental organization, welcomed the UNEP reports and stressed the importance of the work done by OECD. One of them emphasized the importance of continuing awareness-raising efforts and suggested that the inclusion of criteria in the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for endocrine-disrupting chemicals would lead to the identification of such chemicals at a global scale, with the system's labelling requirement acting as an effective tool in hazard communication. The representative speaking on behalf of a non-governmental organization noted that the Strategic Approach was the only international forum addressing the issue of endocrine-disrupting chemicals from the perspective of human health and the environment, adding that the OECD work should be rolled out to non-OECD member countries.

13. A third representative said that continued work on endocrine-disrupting chemicals after 2020 would require governance by all IOMC bodies with expertise in the science involved, meaning at least OECD, UNEP and WHO.

#### **5. Environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants**

14. A representative of WHO introduced the sub-item on behalf of IOMC. Noting that resistance to antibiotics was recognized at the highest political levels as one of the most serious health and development challenges, affecting all countries regardless of their stage of development, she summarized the information more fully described in document SAICM/OEWG.3/6. She also reminded delegates that a side event on policy options for reducing the release of environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants would take place during the current meeting.

15. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries described a strategic approach to pharmaceutical pollutants adopted by those countries and its key elements, which included identifying actions to be taken or investigations to address potential risk from pharmaceutical residues in the environment; encouraging innovation to address risk and promote a circular economy by facilitating the recycling of resources; identifying knowledge gaps and possible ways to bridge them; and ensuring that actions taken to address risk did not jeopardize access to key pharmaceuticals for humans and animals.

16. Three representatives speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations also spoke on the issue. One said that her organization was preparing a paper on the issue for presentation to the Conference at its fifth session, while another raised the issue of neurotoxins in used water, which could be linked to brain degenerative diseases and required the attention of experts. The third recommended that the Conference at its fifth session consider the development of a road map that matched the compiled prevention management and control resources with the sectors responsible, so that parties would have a better understanding of what agencies within and outside of the Strategic Approach were doing, and tools and activities that included policy options across the life cycle to effectively address the issue of pharmaceutical pollutants.

#### **6. Perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives**

17. A representative of OECD introduced the sub-item, providing an overview of some of the activities carried out by the Global Perfluorinated Chemicals Group for the management of perfluorinated chemicals, as more fully described in document SAICM/OEWG.3/6. In particular, the Group had published an updated list of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances; given the high number of such substances, perfluorinated chemicals must be addressed as a class rather than individually. Work on those substances was clearly of interest and would continue beyond 2020. The Group also encouraged stakeholders that were not yet members to join.

18. One representative expressed appreciation for the work of the Global Perfluorinated Chemicals Group and called for increased efforts to make the transition to safer alternatives in the light of evidence of bioaccumulation and long-range transport of the substances and high remediation costs.

19. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a non-governmental organization, echoed the need to address perfluorinated chemicals as a class rather than individually, noting that despite efforts to list such compounds under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, their number was high and growing fast. The post-2020 framework should therefore set time-bound goals and targets to eliminate all non-essential uses and provide a way forward towards a legally-binding instrument for the substances.

**7. Highly hazardous pesticides**

20. The representative of FAO introduced the sub-item. Noting that the FAO strategy focused on regional and national programmes to reduce the risks of highly hazardous pesticides for human health and the environment and promote sustainable agriculture intensification while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, she described the work done by the agency in collaboration with its partners and other stakeholders, particularly in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, as more fully described in document SAICM/OEWG.3/6. Possible future action on the issue included the development of a knowledge hub on highly hazardous pesticides and the organization of an international meeting by FAO together with the secretariat of the Strategic Approach.
21. Following the introduction, one representative stressed the importance that his Government attached to highly hazardous pesticides and spoke briefly about national measures being taken in that regard, including the adoption of legislation on the quality and safety of agricultural products.
22. Four representatives of non-governmental organizations spoke on the issue. One reiterated an earlier concern regarding the lack of a clear road map for action on industrial organic chemicals. In the case of highly hazardous pesticides, there was widespread agreement regarding the associated risks yet no specific goals or recommendations for action, demonstrating the inherent weakness of the Strategic Approach process. Another representative speaking on behalf of a non-governmental organization said that the pervasive use of highly hazardous pesticides in homes, gardens and schools in his region, including products that were banned in developed countries, showed that there was a double standard at play.
23. A third representative speaking on behalf of a non-governmental organization said that although stakeholders clearly intended to solve the problems associated with chemicals, good intentions were insufficient. Radical action was needed to ensure that future generations could enjoy good food, good health and a toxin-free environment. Transparent information on chemicals needed to be included in school curricula and children's interests should be considered when legislation was being drafted.
24. A fourth representative speaking on behalf of a non-governmental organization spoke about the high use of pesticides in his country, including highly hazardous pesticides, and the importance of awareness-raising and the promotion of agroecology in communities.
25. Following the discussion, the President noted that two side events had taken place on the issue during the week, led by CropLife and the Pesticides Action Network, and that regional meetings in Côte d'Ivoire and Thailand in 2018 had indicated the need for deeper action and the promotion of national legislation on highly hazardous pesticides and support for the transition to agroecological alternatives. She encouraged stakeholders to deepen their coordination on highly hazardous pesticides in order to protect communities, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

**B. Implementation of the health sector strategy**

26. Introducing the sub-item, the President drew attention to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the WHO "Road map to enhance health sector engagement in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management towards the 2020 goal and beyond" and the global chemicals and health network (SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/10). The WHO chemicals road map had been approved by the World Health Assembly at its seventieth session, in May 2017, and had proved a useful tool in supporting implementation of the health sector strategy.
27. The representative of WHO delivered a statement on the WHO chemicals road map and the global chemicals and health network.
28. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries welcomed the road map and the support given by WHO to the implementation of the health sector strategy, and encouraged the further development and implementation of the strategy. Several representatives stressed the important role played by the health sector in the sound management of chemicals and waste, and protecting human health from the possible harmful effects of chemicals. Relevant roles of the health sector included gathering evidence, undertaking chemicals risk assessment, informing the public, and preventing and managing chemicals emergencies. One representative said that the global chemicals and health network had the potential to facilitate collaboration in chemicals and waste management, while the road map was a useful tool in assisting countries in the development of their own implementation plans for the sound management of chemicals. One representative highlighted the value of building capacity in the sector and raising awareness of chemical hazards in the workplace to ensure that health workers were healthy and productive, and had the knowledge to deal with patients affected by chemical exposure. Some

representatives alluded to areas of the health sector strategy that offered scope for improvement. While considerable progress had been made, more needed to be done to ensure health sector engagement, especially in developing countries.

29. Regarding the role of WHO, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled paragraph 21 of resolution 1/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in which the Assembly had invited the Director-General of the World Health Organization to assume a leading role in the Strategic Approach and to provide appropriate staff and other resources to its secretariat. There was potential for WHO to expand that role, for example by focusing available resources on activities that assisted developing countries in the implementation of the Strategic Approach, and ensuring that the implementation of the chemicals road map received appropriate budgetary allocation in the WHO programme of work for the period 2020–2021, to be agreed at the seventy-second session of the World Health Assembly in May 2019. In response, the representative of WHO said that the WHO Executive Board, at its 144th session in January 2019, had recommended the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal target 3.9, on hazardous chemicals, in the programmatic targets of the WHO programme budget for 2021.

30. Following the discussion, the President said that it would be useful to similarly raise the profile of chemicals and waste management in other sectors, such as labour and agriculture, supported by government or agency champions, as had proved effective in the health sector.

31. The Working Group took note of the report of WHO on the implementation of the health sector strategy.

### **C. Financing of the Strategic Approach**

32. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a report by the secretariat on the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund (SAICM/OEWG.3/7), a report of the Executive Director on evaluation of the integrated approach on financing for the sound management of chemicals and waste (SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/11), a report on the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/12), and a report of the Global Environment Facility (SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/13).

33. The President first thanked all donors who had generously contributed to the Quick Start Programme over the years. At her invitation, the representative of UNEP and the representative of GEF introduced their respective organizations' reports.

34. She then invited comments on the Quick Start Programme and on financing of the Strategic Approach more generally.

35. General support was expressed for use of the integrated approach as the basis for the discussion on financing beyond 2020.

36. The representative of Argentina, speaking on behalf of the group of African States, the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Oman, Thailand and Tuvalu, introduced a conference room paper on financial considerations, which was intended as an input to the financing-related deliberations of the contact group mandated, under agenda item 3 (b) (i), to develop recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session. She said that it was vital to establish a mechanism that would provide, in the long term, financing that was sustainable, timely, predictable, sufficient and accessible to all interested stakeholders and that was accompanied by appropriate technical assistance for developing countries.

37. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, highlighted the particular importance of two of the three components of the integrated approach: those relating to mainstreaming the sound management of chemicals and waste into development planning and to industry involvement. Another representative expressed concern that, according to the report of the Executive Director, there was insufficient information to evaluate those components; he proposed that the intersessional process consider recommended action 2 of that report on preparing updated guidance on the integrated approach in recognition of it being an evolving idea, and recommended action 8 on the review of reporting requirements and strengthening of existing monitoring, evaluation and learning strategies and approaches. The President drew attention to recommended action 7 on assessment of the possibility of the Strategic Approach secretariat being a key broker in the integrated approach. She expressed the view, however, that the Strategic Approach was underfinanced and that greater efforts

should be made to prioritize the limited financial resources available. Two representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, agreed that the issue of sufficient funding for the secretariat needed to be addressed on the discussions about the future, with the one speaking on behalf of a group of countries mentioning not only GEF and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management as possible sources, but also other potential opportunities such as the fifth Programme on the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo V).

38. A number of other proposals were made during the discussion about areas of focus in terms of financing. These included devising innovative financing or a financial mobilization strategy; enhancing the involvement of regional financial institutions such as regional development banks; generating financing by imposing levies on the chemical industry; the issuing of a formal request by UNEP that donors fund chemical and waste management in order to highlight its importance thereby enabling donors to make the issue a priority; finding ways, in the interests of multisectoralism, to ensure that GEF funding did not go solely to stakeholders from the environmental sphere; exploring ways of ensuring that civil society organizations could access funding from the Special Programme; and enhancing the role of the private sector in providing capacity-building and technical and financial assistance to address the reduction in number of countries and organizations providing resources in that regard.

39. One representative stressed the importance of technical assistance, financial support and technology transfer as well as the importance of ensuring that cooperation with GEF was based on technical criteria without being tainted by political considerations.

40. Following the discussion, the Working Group referred the matter to the contact group mandated under agenda item 3 (b) (i) to develop recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session. The President requested the contact group to take into consideration the conference room paper presented and the comments made during the plenary.

41. *[To be completed]*

## **II. Planned activities and draft budget of the secretariat for the period 2019–2020**

42. Introducing the item, the President drew attention to a report by the secretariat on activities, staffing and budget of the secretariat for 2019–2020 (SAICM/OEWG.3/8). She recalled that the International Conference on Chemicals Management, at its fourth session, had directed the Working Group to consider possible changes in budget priorities and, if necessary, to increase the size of the budget until 2020, and had also requested the secretariat to report to its fifth session on secretariat activities, staffing and budget. The secretariat had had to take on considerable extra work to meet the demands arising from the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, as well as the preparations for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

43. The representative of the secretariat said that, in view of the increased workload of the secretariat, the draft budget included provision for a temporary associate programme officer at the P-2 level to the end of 2020, and a possible fourth meeting in 2020 of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

44. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked, in the context of the Environment Assembly resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste, in which the Assembly had requested the Executive Director of UNEP to strengthen the secretariat of the Strategic Approach, whether WHO could take action to support the reinstatement of the position, discontinued in 2012, in the secretariat in line with its obligation under the Overarching Policy Strategy.

45. One representative, in supporting the secretariat staffing proposals, encouraged all stakeholders to make further voluntary contributions to support the work of the Strategic Approach, and said that funding of a fourth meeting of the intersessional process should aim to ensure the development of a firm proposal for consideration by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session.

46. The Working Group agreed to approve the revised budget for 2019–2020, subject to the availability of resources. The budget is set out in annex XX to the present report.

**III. Preparations for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management**

47. *[to be completed]*

**IV. Other matters**

48. *[to be completed]*

**V. Adoption of the report of the meeting**

49. *[to be completed]*

**VI. Closure of the meeting**

50. *[to be completed]*

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