
6th EU-JUSSCANNZ regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
Paris, France, 9 February 2018.

Report of the 6th EU-JUSSCANNZ regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The 6th EU-JUSSCANNZ regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) started at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 9 February 2018 at the Conference Centre of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris. The session began with opening remarks from the President of the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) and the Strategic Approach Regional Focal Point for Western European and Others Group.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, and the European Union.

3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations and regional organizations also attended: UN Environment Programme, OECD, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat, World Health Organization, and United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

4. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following organizations: Centre for International Environmental Law, Health Environment Justice Support, Health and Environment Alliance, International Council of Chemical Associations, Adelphi Research, Women Engage for a Common Future, Japan Chemical Industry Association, Water Academy of France, and CropLife International.

2. Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda of the meeting was as follows:
1. Opening of the meeting
 2. Organizational matters
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda

3. Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
 - (a) Secretariat updates on activities
 - (b) Updates from member countries, other SAICM participants as desired
 - (c) Update 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 its implementation
 - (d) Update on the Global Chemicals Outlook by UN Environment Programme
 4. SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020
 - (a) Update on the Independent Evaluation for 2006-2015
 - (b) Dialogue on regional perspectives
 - (i) Updates from the co-chairs on the second meeting of the intersessional process
 - (ii) Vision, policy principles, objectives and milestones and linkages to the 2030 Agenda
 - (iii) Implementation, role of IOMC organisations, financing, governance and high level political commitment
 5. Preparations for the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group
 6. Other matters
 7. Closure of the meeting
6. The Regional Focal Point suggested agenda item 4 to be discussed before agenda item 3.

4. SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

7. The fourth session of the International Conference, through resolution IV/4, initiated an intersessional process to prepare recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. The second meeting of the intersessional process will take place from 13 to 15 March 2018 in Stockholm.
8. The task of the intersessional process is to provide recommendations to the Conference at its fifth session, enabling the Conference to take an informed decision on future arrangements for the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

(b) Dialogue on regional perspectives

(i) Updates from the co-chairs on the second meeting of the intersessional process

9. One of the co-chairs, Mr. David Morin, proposed plan for the second meeting, including a brief introduction to the overview paper prepared by the co-chairs. He highlighted the importance of regional input to the process.

(ii) Vision, policy principles, objectives and milestones and linkages to the 2030 Agenda

10. Participants engaged in discussion groups to reflect on vision, scope, priorities, policy principles, objectives, milestones and linkages to the 2030 Agenda. Details of the questions and summary of discussions are provided in the Annex to this report.

(iii) Implementation, role of IOMC organisations, financing, governance and high level political commitment

14. The regional focal point opened the floor for discussion under this agenda item. One participant suggested that the intersessional meeting should consider how different stakeholders will contribute to the same goal. It was suggested that the discussion could consider the capacities and current levels of engagement of each stakeholder, including instruments available to them and areas for improvement.

15. One delegate emphasized the need to focus on the development of measurable targets and identification of gaps in implementation. A suggestion was raised for the establishment of a future implementation framework which includes legally binding elements. One participant commented that the identification of priority areas for multisectoral involvement of stakeholders is necessary. The issue of disagreement concerning the harmfulness of chemicals was raised, noting the need to ensure, when possible, that discussions are grounded in scientific consensus.

16. One delegate commented that there has not been sufficient progress regarding illegal trafficking of chemicals and that this should be part of the beyond 2020 vision.

17. Upon the request of the Regional Focal Point, the secretariat detailed the structure and flow of the second intersessional meeting. Participants expressed their support of this structure.

(a) Update on the Independent Evaluation for 2006-2015

11. The fourth session of the International Conference, through resolution IV/4, mandated the independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach. The independent evaluator, Mr. Robert Nurick, presented the draft results of the evaluation.

12. Following the presentation, the representative from the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat requested that multilateral environment agreements be considered a separate stakeholder group.

13. In response to a question on the structure of the report, Mr. Nurick confirmed that the report will follow the same format as the interim report (Reference: SAICM/IP.1/5 – Interim report of the independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach for 2006 – 2015). He clarified that the report will not provide recommendations, but will instead have a section on lessons learned which may be used in the future discussions.

3. Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

(a) Secretariat updates on activities

18. In the interest of time, the secretariat was requested to share the presentation on updates of activities with all the participants in lieu of a verbal presentation. The secretariat presentation is made available and can be downloaded from the following link:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/chzw8mk4sonfowz/AADr_YzwzESuD9RnKBhnPSYqa?dl=0

(b) Updates from member countries, other SAICM participants as desired

19. A representative of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions presented an overview of the conventions' contributions to the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

20. A representative from the UN Environment Programme outlined key decisions of the Third meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

(c) Update on the World Health Organization (WHO) “Road map to enhance health sector engagement in the strategic approach to international chemicals management towards the 2020 goal and beyond” and its implementation

21. A presentation was made by a representative of WHO, providing an overview of the “Road map to enhance health sector engagement in the strategic approach to international chemicals management towards the 2020 goal and beyond”.

(d) Update on the Global Chemicals Outlook by UN Environment Programme

22. A representative of the UN Environment Programme presented the latest developments on the Global Chemicals Outlook II. Participants thanked UN Environment Programme for the update, noting the importance of the Global Chemicals Outlook II in considering the Strategic Approach and

the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. One participant stressed the importance of involving academia in the process of developing the report. The UN Environment Programme representative assured participants of appropriate involvement and engagement by academia in the development of the report.

5. Preparations for the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group

23. At its fourth session, the Conference confirmed the third Open-ended Working Group, in accordance with resolution II/6, to prepare for the fifth session of the Conference in 2020 and requested the secretariat to organize the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group.

24. The representative of the secretariat provided a brief update on the preparations for the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group. In doing so, he indicated that the meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2019.

25. The secretariat invited all stakeholders in a position to do so to make financial contributions early in support of this meeting, and invited interested offers to host the third meeting of the Working Group.

6. Other matters

26. It was agreed that the SAICM secretariat will prepare a summary of the discussions that had taken place in the breakout groups. With the input from the rapporteurs, the discussion of the breakout groups will be collected in the annex to the report. All the presentations delivered during the meeting can be downloaded from the link below:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/chzw8mk4sonfowz/AADr_YzwzESuD9RnKBhnPSYqa?dl=0

27. Participants were asked to evaluate the meeting and provide input to the secretariat via an online survey sent to them after the meeting.

28. A delegate from the European Commission provided a brief update on the activities related to sound management of chemicals and waste.

7. Closure of the meeting

29. The Strategic Approach Regional Focal Point for EU-JUSSCANNZ closed the meeting, thanking participants for their active engagement in the meeting, the secretariat for their support, and the Conference President for her presence.

30. The meeting concluded at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, 9 February 2018.

ANNEX

Discussions in the break out groups

The EU-JUSSCANZ meeting breakout group sessions considered the following key questions for the beyond 2020 chemicals and waste agenda:

Vision

1. What is the future vision post 2020? What elements of the UNEA resolution 1/5 and the SDG goal 12.4 could be incorporated into a vision for the future?

Scope and Priorities

1. What are the priorities to be addressed beyond 2020? What do we do with existing emerging policy issues?
2. What should be the relationship between the beyond 2020 platform and the multilateral environmental agreements? How will the future platform incorporate and address waste?

Policy Principles

1. How can we best use the Dubai Declaration, Overarching Policy Strategy, the list of “fundamental and basic elements annexed to decision UNEA 1/5” and the 11 basic elements identified in the Overall Orientation and Guidance to establish key policy principles for beyond 2020?
2. Is anything more needed to incorporate the precautionary and polluter-pays principle? How should life cycle, green and sustainable chemistry and circular economy principles be incorporated?

Objectives and milestones and linkages to the 2030 Agenda

1. The SAICM secretariat has been requested to develop a proposal for objectives in support of the 2030 Agenda and related milestones. How could we build from this document to establish objectives and milestones for our work beyond 2020? How should we measure our progress in achieving these objectives? How can issues of concern be linked to measurable objectives and milestones?

The key discussion points are summarized below:

Group One Dialogue Summary

Proposed Vision Statement: *‘Working together to prevent pollution and protect health’*

The Group emphasized the links between human health and the environment, and the importance of working together to achieve this goal.

The group acknowledged that the language of the existing resolution can be difficult to communicate to the public, and therefore a more ‘catchy’ and relatable vision statement is required.

The group drew upon existing initiatives and policies. They noted that the ideas of green chemistry, sustainable chemistry and circular economy are not in fact ‘principles’, while the concepts of ‘polluter pays’ and ‘precautionary principle’ are already widely agreed. They suggested reinforcing the principles that are already widely acknowledged, but also emphasized the notion that ‘original elements’ are still valued.

It considered whether they are wanting to describe a broader, timeless, aspirational vision, for example ‘pollution-free planet’. They noted the importance of linking the vision to the Sustainable Development Goals, while remaining mindful not to limit the vision to these goals.

In terms of implementation, the group raised several questions:

- How can we incentivize reporting (both qualitative and quantitative)? Would identifying targeted streams of work help?
- Is it valuable to have ‘themes’ such as certain products (e.g. plastics or textiles) within the goals?
- How can we both keep the objectives broad, but at the same time enable prioritization and focus?
- Would having a date in the vision statement facilitate action?
- How can we develop a process to align with other overlapping international activities (such as programs on climate change)?

Group Two Dialogue Summary

Proposed Vision Statement: *‘Achieve proactive SMOC throughout their lifecycle (and waste) in ways that prevent or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment.’*

This group focused on incorporating a wide definition of ‘health’ in an ambitious, wide-ranging vision with strong links to the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), and with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The social impact of chemicals and health was considered a priority, noting the importance to recognize gender equity, ‘cultural wellbeing’, social equity, closing the gap between developed and developing states, and intergenerational equity.

The group considered the value of emphasizing the idea of ‘maximizing the benefits of chemistry’, with linkages to sustainable development, the green economy, and ‘eco-innovation’.

In terms of specific objectives, the group felt the five existing SAICM objectives were an appropriate starting point. They suggested starting with a limited number of objectives, and incorporating more specific ‘milestones’ or targets under each objective. They noted the importance of having access to the more relevant data in order to properly assess progress, and this knowledge gap is critical.

One suggestion raised was of a ‘bundle’ of two objectives which covers a wide range of related activities:

1. Minimize the adverse impacts of chemicals on environmental and human health (prevention)
2. Enhance the benefits of chemicals for humans through green chemistry, sustainable development, and innovation (consideration of social, cultural, health issues here) (promotion)

They noted that ‘implementation’ needs to be considered within this bundle (e.g. capacity building, knowledge creation). This could be considered a third branch within this bundle, or incorporated into the first two points.

SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) targets should be developed. For example, ‘By 20XX phase out lead in paint and varnishes in all countries’.

Group Three Dialogue Summary

Proposed Vision Statement: *‘Healthier people and planet through improved management of chemicals and waste throughout their lifecycle.’*

Group 3 engaged in discussions focused on the necessity of working together with a wide range of stakeholders to craft an action-oriented vision statement that focuses on SAICM’s core objective, which can be easily communicated to the wider public. At the same time, the vision should be all-inclusive and

remain within the SAICM spirit of multi-stakeholder approach. Therefore, a possible vision of “Non-Toxic Environment” would not be considered appropriate. The vision should also contain a reference to SAICMs core business.

One participant proposed a possible vision that meets the above criteria would be “manage chemicals responsibly for a safer future”. It was noted the need to distinguish the motto from the vision, as the latter should encompass not only chemicals but also (hazardous) waste.

The group debated the value in remaining cautious and remaining focused on the ‘basics’, that is, enhancing chemicals management in developing countries, as opposed to a broader vision which encompasses chemical alternatives, plastics issue, health, employment, economic development.

Some participants stressed that SAICMs limited resources should be focused on its core objective which is to establish the basic capacity to manage chemicals safely globally. Others added that while the focus should be on addressing the core, there should also be platform to discuss issues, for example, on lead, while acknowledging that the limited resources should be allocated to SAICM’s core objective, and not emerging policy issues. One participant noted that SAICM currently is primarily focused on environmental issues and stressed that a greater focus should be placed on health, and proposed a vision statement: “toxic free environment for a healthier life”.

It was acknowledged that good practices and policy principles already exist, and that the actual challenge lies in applying those principles. The importance of measuring progress was mentioned, and reference made to the Montreal Protocol, noting that its success lay in the identification of priorities and role of significant follow-up efforts. The development of tangible indicators for measuring progress on sound chemicals management was supported by the group, who agreed the proposal put forward by the co-chairs to define potential actions for each OOG element by various stakeholders is suitable.

Considering the relationship between the beyond 2020 platform and the multilateral environmental agreements, one participant stressed the importance of keeping the MEA as a stand-alone goal.

On the question of how future platforms will incorporate and address waste, it was suggested that SAICM should play a role in (hazardous) waste management. Some participants referred to the circular economy approach being applied on a global scale.

One participant stressed the need to ensure that hazardous substances need to be avoided when recycling, and the need for greater education surrounding proper disposal of waste. One participant referred to the need to increase the percentage of production made from recycled raw materials.

Group Four Dialogue Summary

Proposed Vision Statement: *Together for a chemistry without adverse impacts/harm*

The group actively discussed the elements for a vision statement beyond 2020. The group agreed that the vision statement should be short, simple, clear, and aspirational, but also achievable and easy to understand. The group discussed the goal of the vision: to raise political and public awareness to trigger action.

For a vision statement the group was very much in favour of seeing the work ‘Together’ in the statement. The three most supported options were:

- Together for chemistry without adverse impacts on health and environment (alternatively: without harm)
- Together for sustainable chemistry for a healthy future
- Together for chemistry for a sustainable future

The group agreed that the vision statement should be followed by 5-6 concise and strategic goals that are challenging but realistic to achieve. The group considered this as a more productive approach rather than having a long list of items to work on. The targets should be also easy to communicate.

The group was also in favour of a statement that highlights not only the ‘togetherness’ but also the aspect of ‘not leaving anybody behind.’ The group felt it was important to keep the basics in mind: countries must be able to carry out the objectives. Goals and objectives should be designed to make it possible to progress on chemical management also with limited resources and capacity.

The group considered a term to describe the future chemical management program, including ‘platform’ or ‘alliance’ or ‘center.’

The group discussed if ‘waste’ should be mentioned or if it is included in chemical life cycle management. Some member of the group were in favor to keep language that was already adopted in other agreements, i.e. mentioning ‘chemicals’ and ‘waste’ separately.

Furthermore the group collected words and ideas that members of the group would like to see in the vision statement, goals or actions:

- Prevention
- Life cycle
- Ensure benefits to humanity
- Sustainable consumption
- No harm
- Non-toxic
- Toxic-free environment
- Promote
- Innovate

Three elements were identified by some members of the group that could be translated into priorities:

- Promoting safer chemicals
- Preventing release of harmful chemicals
- Addressing legacy issues

Some members of the group suggested that additional stakeholders should be involved in the chemicals management process to cover the aspects on education, enforcement (re illegal trade) and finance.

The group talked about the role of the public in sustainability and need for education, leading to a discussion about collective responsibility. While some participants focused on producer responsibility, others argued that everyone has a role to play—governments, businesses, and the public. One participant elaborated on a vision where producers cannot bring a product to market unless it has put in place a plan to manage the product at the end of its life. Some conversation about the practicalities of this vision ensued.

Some participants expressed an interest in a principle on sustainable chemistry. Another recommended focusing such a principle on enabling and promoting innovation.

The group discussed models for objectives/milestones, with one participant expressing a strong preference for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and another for the Overall Orientation and Guidance. Several participants expressed interest in a post-2020 SAICM that addresses legacy issues.