



Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4)
Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

IPEN Perspectives for IP4: towards a new instrument on chemicals and waste beyond 2020

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the document entitled “*IPEN Perspectives for IP4: towards a new instrument on chemicals and waste beyond 2020*”. The document presented in the annex has been developed and submitted by the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN) and has not been formally edited.

IPEN Perspectives for IP4: towards a new instrument on chemicals and waste beyond 2020

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) addresses significant health and environmental harms caused by chemical exposure and makes a global political commitment to reform how chemicals are produced and used to minimize those harms. SAICM is the only international agreement that addresses the full range of known and newly discovered health and environmental concerns associated with the production and use of chemicals. IPEN has been committed to its success since the start of its negotiations in 2003.

While this international chemicals management agreement is not legally binding, its original texts represent a consensus of Ministers within Environment Ministers, Health and other delegates from more than one hundred governments who attended the first International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1), held in Dubai in February 2006.

The 2006 decision that established SAICM expired in 2020 without having achieved its objectives. Despite some progress, environmental and health concerns persist, and the future instrument should be negotiated with the ambition to remove all obstacles and achieve a safe management of chemicals and wastes.

Given the failure to achieve the original 2020 SAICM goal, and with the expectation that chemical production will increase in the future, for success in the Beyond 2020 process it will be vital to establish a stronger and more ambitious instrument. This will also be critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including fighting poverty, protecting vulnerable groups, and advancing public health and human security.

It is also vital for a meaningful new framework to have strong buy-in from all regions and all stakeholders. This can only be achieved if the multi-stakeholder nature of the instrument is maintained. Robust, meaningful, and inclusive participation must be maintained while being mindful of the timelines leading to ICCM5.

The IPEN network is committed to a successful negotiation to achieve a strong framework that will be able to fulfill the vision of the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle .

IPEN's vision is for a world where chemicals and wastes are no longer a source of harm, where all people have the right to a safe and healthy environment that will be sustained to protect future generation.

IP3 outcomes, virtual working groups, and text for negotiation

IPEN recognises that a considerable amount of work has gone into the Virtual Working Groups during the pandemic, including full engagement from the IPEN network that contributed through participation and written submission throughout the process. However, the imbalance in access to a reliable internet connection, the broad range of time zones, and the different impacts that the pandemic has had in various countries and the capacity of civil servants to follow the process has undermined the inclusiveness of such process and its outcomes could not be considered as negotiated text. Therefore, we strongly support the SAICM Bureau decision and the regional views that the compilation of recommendations from IP3 should be considered as the starting point of the IP4 negotiations. Any text from the VWG proposed by any stakeholder should be considered as a bracketed proposal.

BEYOND 2020: CHEMICAL SAFETY and the SDGs

SAICM is relevant to 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. As such, a successful SAICM framework that would help in achieving the SDGs must include strategic objectives, targets, and indicators that are concordant with the SDGs. Chemicals are relevant to the SDGs in the following ways:

- **SDG #1: [No Poverty](#)**
 - People living in toxic environments are at greater risk for a wide variety of health problems and therefore have a higher risk of losing income. IPEN's work to [eliminate lead from paint](#) is one example of how we work to reduce potential toxic exposures, including among workers who may suffer occupational exposures.
- **SDG #2: [Zero Hunger](#)**
 - Research has shown that continuous use of pesticides and insecticides can lead to resistance by the pest(s) being targeted. Studies have shown that organic, agroecological farming can produce safe food without toxic pesticides and provide a basis for the sustainable rural economies and self-reliant local food systems that we need to achieve a zero-hunger goal. IPEN's [country situation reports on highly hazardous pesticides](#) demonstrate the dangers from pesticides and encourage safe farming practices.
- **SDG #3: [Good Health and Well-Being](#)**
 - Since IPEN's beginnings, we have focused strongly on work related to the [Stockholm Convention](#) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are

substances that remain intact for exceptionally long periods of time (many years); become widely distributed throughout the environment because of natural processes involving soil, water and, most notably, air; accumulate in living organisms including humans, and are found at higher concentrations at higher levels in the food chain; and are toxic to both humans and wildlife. POPs particularly affect vulnerable communities and eliminating POPs will be vital for better health. Whenever Adding POPs to the Stockholm Convention for elimination results in phasing-out extremely toxic chemicals, providing an opportunity for a healthier global environment. IPEN has participated in every relevant Stockholm Convention meeting since its development, creates awareness-raising and capacity-building [materials](#) about POPs, and participates on numerous Stockholm Convention-related expert groups, including the [POPRC](#).

- **SDG #4: [Quality Education](#)**
 - As mentioned above, IPEN works to eliminate lead from paint. Even low levels of lead exposure to a child can adversely affect IQ, the ability to pay attention and focus, and a child's academic achievement. In addition to IPEN's work on lead paint in the home, IPEN has also focused its research on lead paint at children's [playgrounds](#).
- **SDG #5: [Gender Equality](#)**
 - [Women and chemicals](#) is a priority topic for IPEN. Women are differently susceptible to chemical exposures and adverse health outcomes because of their physiology, different types of occupational exposures, and differential exposures to chemicals in personal care and household products. To ensure realization of the goal of gender equality, in 2017 IPEN developed a Gender Initiative to empower women in our work to achieve a toxics-free future. Through our Initiative, IPEN continues to ensure that women are equally represented within IPEN's leadership (including in its [Steering Committee](#), [Executive Committee](#) and [Co-Chairs](#)), as well as at international policy meetings that undertake significant chemicals-related decisions.
- **SDG #6: [Clean Water and Sanitation](#)**
 - IPEN works to improve water quality by reducing pollution from pesticide use, POPs, mercury use, incineration, plastics, and other pollutants. IPEN's [Ocean Pollutants Guide](#) raises awareness about the major threats to water quality from inadequate treatment of both municipal and industrial wastewater; how microplastic contamination has been found in 83% of tap water samples tested around the world; and how the use of PFOS contributes to contamination of drinking water supplies and has important human health impacts, among other concerns.
- **SDG #7: [Affordable and Clean Energy](#)**
 - IPEN continues to work on so-called "waste-to-energy" issues (as in our report "[Plastic Waste Poisons Indonesia's Food Chain](#)") and raise the alarm about the

multiple dangers of [hydraulic fracking](#). In addition, IPEN's priority issues include a focus on [Toxic Pollutants and the Fossil Fuel Cycle](#).

- **SDG #8: [Decent Work and Economic Growth](#)**
 - Toxic chemical exposures in the workplace make for unhealthy and often dangerous conditions for workers. IPEN's work to eliminate toxic chemicals aims for healthier working conditions and economic growth through innovation for safer materials. IPEN's work on the toxic harms linked to the production of electronics relates to this Goal. This work includes, among other activities, screenings of the important film [Stories from the Clean Room](#) and a report about [Women Workers in Vietnam's Electronics Industry](#).
- **SDG #12: [Responsible Consumption and Production](#)**
 - IPEN has [analyzed](#) hundreds of toys and other consumer products to determine whether they contain toxic metals or chemicals that would be harmful to children's and adult's health. With this analysis, IPEN has, for example, educated policy-makers about how recycling plastic e-waste that contains toxic flame retardant chemicals results in [contamination of new plastic children's toys](#) and related products, and should not be part of sustainable production practices or a circular economy.
- **SDG #13: [Climate Action](#)**
 - IPEN's work addressing this SDG includes raising awareness of the [health impacts of plastics](#) (a material that originates from fossil fuels) and the dangers of [incinerating plastic waste](#), which releases greenhouse gases.
- **SDG #14: [Life Below Water](#)**
 - In addition to the points mentioned under SDG #6, IPEN [research](#) has demonstrated the impact of mercury pollution in waters of the Asia Pacific region, and IPEN's [work on new POPs](#) through the Stockholm Convention POPs Review Committee has highlighted the increasing detection of new POPs such as PFOS and PBDEs in the marine environment. We participated in the recent [UN Oceans Conference](#) in June, co-hosting two side events on chemical threats to ocean ecology.
- **SDG #15: [Life on Land](#)**
 - IPEN supports this Goal through our work to eliminate [POPs](#), which adversely affect biodiversity, as well as our work to phase-out highly hazardous [pesticides](#), which threaten pollinators and other species.
- **SDG #16: [Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions](#)**
 - The [IPEN network](#) comprises over 500 non-profit organizations from all over the world, in every continent except Antarctica. IPEN works continuously on movement-building, creating a strong civil society working for a toxics-free future. Through participation at legally binding fora including the Stockholm Convention on POPs, IPEN also promotes the rule of law at the international level.
- **SDG #17: [Partnerships](#)**

- IPEN reinforces this goal through work with our hundreds of partners in developing countries. This work includes capacity-building trainings on organizational financial management; promoting information about environmentally sound technologies (such as alternatives to incineration); and providing scientific data (for example, on [mercury levels in hair](#)) via joint biomonitoring activities and [product ingredient](#) analyses. IPEN additionally raises funds for project implementation by our partners in developing countries. Finally, IPEN seeks scientific and academic collaborators outside our Network to build civil society partnerships, jointly reach results, and complement each other's skills

Financing chemicals and waste

- The GEF replenishment was a major milestone in the financing of the chemicals and waste cluster as it brought the biggest replenishment ever.
- However, despite the \$64 million USD allocated for SAICM implementation, the GEF is unable to cover the full range of impacts from hazardous chemicals and waste.
- Private sector financing is poorly implemented in the integrated approach. The UNEP evaluation of the integrated approach noted that, "The use of the integrated approach to trigger new financial and in-kind participation of industry is not strongly evidenced."
- Adequate, predictable, and sustainable financing that includes internalization of costs of chemical producing industries at the global level is needed.
- A small contribution from the chemical industry turnover would produce billions per year for implementation of chemical safety measures and be consistent with Rio Principle 16, as the chemical industry profits over costs associated with health and environmental harms that are currently borne by taxpayers' money.
- Finally, The UNEP evaluation note that, "Civil society has lost out from the closure of the Quick Start Program (QSP) to which civil society could apply for funding."
- The Special Programme does not consider CSOs as an institution for implementation and this has generated concerns among civil society organizations and considering that at UNEA5.2 the Special Programme was re-financed for 5 years, CSO should be granted access to this funding.

Major developments relevant to SAICM since IP3

Since IP3 there have been major developments that should further drive a stronger SAICM beyond 2020.

ILO recognizes the right to healthy and safe working environment

ILO recognized the right to a healthy and safe working environment in ILO [convention 155 \(hazardous exposures\)](#). It adds the right to a healthy and safe working environment to the four rights adopted in 1998 by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This recognition creates further legal basis

Right to a healthy environment declared a human right

In October 2021, the Human Rights Council with resolution 48/13 declared the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a right that is important for the enjoyment of human rights. The Council called on States around the world to work together, and with other partners, to implement this newly recognised right.

UNEA Chemicals and Waste resolution

In calling for a successful conclusion of the intersessional process UNEA Resolution 5/7 of 2 March 2022:

- Invited Governments and all stakeholders involved in the “Beyond 2020” process to put in place an ambitious, improved enabling framework for the beyond 2020 process, reflecting a life-cycle approach.
- Expresses concern about increasing levels of illegal transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes.
- Urged Member States and invited other stakeholders to take further action to reduce or eliminate the risks associated with Issues of Concern.

Advances in scientific knowledge on chemicals: reasons for concern

- A landmark study by a team of researchers showed that the safe operating space of the planetary boundary of novel entities (i.e. chemicals and plastics) is exceeded since annual production and releases are increasing at a pace that outstrips the global capacity for assessment and monitoring.¹

Summary of IPEN views on IP4 outcome

A successful IP4 outcome will be demonstrated by an instrument with a scope that includes:

- Chemicals and all wastes throughout their lifecycle.
- Financial means, addressing the means of implementation of the framework.

¹ Linn Persson, Bethanie M. Carney Almroth, Christopher D. Collins, Sarah Cornell, Cynthia A. de Wit, Miriam L. Diamond, Peter Fantke, Martin Hassellöv, Matthew MacLeod, Morten W. Ryberg, Peter Søgaard Jørgensen, Patricia Villarrubia-Gómez, Zhanyun Wang, and Michael Zwicky Hauschild
Environmental Science & Technology 2022 56 (3), 1510-1521
DOI: 10.1021/acs.est.1c04158

- A universal periodic review method for reporting.
- Sufficient ambitious objectives with targets that have specific dates and provide measurable contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- A timeless vision with measurable, time-bound, targets, indicators, and milestones.
- A priority on prevention and precaution to protect human health and the environment.
- Targets, indicators, and milestones that mainly focus on harm minimization rather than being process oriented
- Effective engagement of all IOMC organizations and convention secretariats.
- Full implementation of the chemical safety contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Links to funded, obligatory national action plans for agreements in the framework.
- Open, inclusive, and transparent multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participation.
- Automatic carry-over of existing issues of concern to the new instrument (over 170 governments have already agreed to them).

In addition to the beyond 2020 instrument, further work on an enabling framework that includes all chemicals-related multilateral agreements under one high-level umbrella should be conducted, respecting the legal autonomy of each agreement.

Supporting Documents

[IPEN Dubai Declaration for a Toxics-Free Future \(with translations in all UN languages\)](#)
[IPEN Beyond 2020 Perspectives \(with translations in all UN languages\)](#)