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

Second meeting

Geneva, 15–17 December 2014

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Progress and gaps towards the achievement of the 2020
goal of sound chemicals management**

**Summary of the outcomes of the Strategic Approach 2013–2014
regional priority-setting workshops and resolutions adopted at
the regional meetings**

Note by the secretariat

1. Regional meetings of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management were held in each of the five United Nations regions between August 2013 and March 2014. Each regional meeting included a regional priority-setting workshop component focused on a series of consultation questions. Participants at some of the regional meetings also adopted resolutions on selected emerging policy issues and other topics.
2. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, a summary of the common outcomes of these regional priority-setting workshops as well as a summary of the resolutions adopted at the regional meetings.
3. Regarding the regional priority-setting workshop outcomes, the summary highlights the achievements of the Strategic Approach commonly identified in the regions and draws out a set of 11 basic elements required for the sound management of chemicals that emerged from across the regions.
4. The summary also provides an overview of subjects on which resolutions were adopted at two or more regional meetings, namely: endocrine-disrupting chemicals; financing the Strategic Approach; highly hazardous pesticides; and lead in paint. Individual resolutions are available in the reports of the regional meetings at which they were adopted.
5. In preparing for the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, the Open-ended Working Group may wish to reflect on and take into consideration the outcomes of the regional priority-setting workshops and the regional meetings, including their relevance in the further development of the overall orientation and guidance towards the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management (see SAICM/OEWG.2/4).

* SAICM/OEWG.2/1.

Annex

Summary of the outcomes of the Strategic Approach 2013–2014 regional priority-setting workshops and resolutions adopted at the regional meetings

I. Introduction

1. Paragraph 26 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach states that “it will be essential that implementation of the Strategic Approach continue effectively between meetings of the Conference, building on its open, multi-stakeholder and multisectoral methods”. In paragraph 26 (a) of the Strategy, the significant role played by regional meetings in the development of the Strategic Approach is highlighted, and it is stated that “regional meetings will facilitate input on Strategic Approach activities, preparation for future meetings of the Conference and exchange of regional expertise and exchange of information”.
2. Since the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, regional meetings of the Strategic Approach have been held in all the regions, as follows:
 - (a) Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico City, 19–23 August 2013;
 - (b) Central and Eastern Europe: Skopje, 23–27 September 2013;
 - (c) Africa: Pretoria, 18–22 November 2013;
 - (d) EU-JUSSCANNZ:^a Paris, 14 February 2014;
 - (e) Asia-Pacific: Kuala Lumpur, 23–27 March 2014.

II. Outcomes of the regional priority-setting workshops of the Strategic Approach

3. Each of the regional meetings included a regional priority-setting workshop component. The workshops were guided by a series of consultation questions outlined in a common “Consultation framework document” provided to meeting participants. The questions were designed to stimulate discussion and inform the development of the overall orientation and guidance towards the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management. Areas of discussion included the achievements of the Strategic Approach to date, basic elements of sound chemicals management at the national level, and gaps and priority actions in moving forward.
4. The present summary provides an outline of the common themes that emerged from the regional priority-setting workshops across the five regions.
5. Notable achievements of the Strategic Approach that were common to three or more regions were as follows:
 - (a) Four of the regions highlighted progress related to governance, “to enhance cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels”, consistent with paragraph 16 (n) of the Overarching Policy Strategy. In this context, specific reference was made to enhanced regional collaboration, collaborative relationships between government and industry, strengthened inter-agency cooperation and the collaborative development of tools to support national implementation by participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals;
 - (b) Three regions noted progress related to:
 - (i) Strengthened global and regional capacity and mechanisms that support sound chemicals management;
 - (ii) Measures to integrate chemicals management into strategies for development assistance, sustainable development and poverty reduction papers;

^a European Union, Japan, the United States of America, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand.

- (iii) Development of national profiles and implementation of action plans for sound chemicals management;
- (iv) Strengthened policy, law and regulatory frameworks and promotion of compliance and enforcement;
- (v) Promoting and supporting meaningful and active participation by all sectors of civil society, particularly women, workers and indigenous communities, in regulatory and other decision-making processes that relate to chemical safety;
- (vi) Strengthened knowledge and information, in particular improved education, training and awareness-raising activities.

6. Participants also identified basic elements for the sound management of chemicals at the national level in relation to which further efforts are required in order to achieve the 2020 goal. A common set of 11 basic elements emerged (each identified by at least four of the regions), namely:

- (a) Strengthened capacity to deal with chemicals accidents, including poisonings (risk reduction);
- (b) Chemical risk assessment through use of best practices (risk reduction and strengthening of knowledge and information);
- (c) Collection and systems for the sharing of data and information among all relevant stakeholders using a life-cycle approach (strengthening knowledge and information);
- (d) Implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (strengthening knowledge and information);
- (e) Monitoring and assessing the impact of chemicals on health and the environment (strengthening knowledge and information);
- (f) Legal frameworks that address the life cycle of chemicals and waste (governance);
- (g) National, subregional and regional enforcement and compliance mechanisms (governance);
- (h) Implementation of relevant international conventions (governance);
- (i) Strong institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms among relevant stakeholders (governance);
- (j) Industry participation and responsibility, including cost recovery policies and systems as well as the incorporation of sound chemicals management into corporate policies and practices (cross-cutting);
- (k) Inclusion of chemicals in national budgeting, processes and development plans (capacity-building and technical cooperation).

7. The identification of these 11 basic elements raises the possibility that attaining them at the national level could serve as a measure of national progress in achieving the 2020 goal. Further consideration and assessment of these 11 basic elements would be required to consider such an approach in moving forward.

8. Participants further identified gaps and priority actions in moving forward on the basic elements of sound chemicals management. The gaps, each identified by more than one region, are set out in the table, below.

9. Except for the Central and Eastern European region, the regions did not prioritize actions at the regional priority-setting workshops, mainly owing to a lack of time. Proposed actions per region are available in the compilation of regional chemicals challenges (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF/3) and are not reviewed in the present summary.

Gaps identified by two or more regions at the regional priority-setting workshops

<i>Basic elements</i>	<i>Overarching Policy Strategy objective</i>	<i>Gaps identified (by two or more regions)</i>
1. Strengthened capacity to deal with chemicals accidents, including poisonings	Risk reduction	Lack of access to poisons control centres Existing centres not always fully functional or lack capacity. Lack of follow-up
2. Chemical risk assessment through use of best practices	Risk reduction and strengthening of knowledge and information	Lack of understanding of risk assessment methodologies, applications and evaluations for decision-making as they relate to new emerging issues Lack of guidelines and methodologies for risk assessment
3. Collection and systems for the sharing of data and information among all relevant stakeholders using a life-cycle approach	Strengthening knowledge and information	Limited knowledge of and access to existing hubs and databases containing information on the sound management of chemicals Lack of adequate in-country information management, such as out-of-date databases, and lack of sharing among all stakeholders using a life-cycle approach Information not available, in particular for chemicals in products Lack of knowledge and training on existing databases and how to use them Lack of harmonization of information Lack of reliable databases
4. Implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals	Strengthening knowledge and information	Lack of awareness and understanding of the use of the Globally Harmonized System by key stakeholders, in particular customs and border control agencies and trade ministries and organizations Differing implementation capacity across the region
5. Monitoring and assessing the impacts of chemicals on health and the environment	Strengthening knowledge and information	Lack of budget Lack of a well-developed collaborative regional network to support region-wide monitoring and research. Information is not shared
6. Legal frameworks that address the life cycle of chemicals and waste	Governance	Basic legislation and regulatory frameworks missing, not comprehensive
7. National, subregional and regional enforcement and compliance mechanisms	Governance	Basic legislation and regulatory frameworks missing, not comprehensive
8. Implementation of relevant international conventions	Governance	Lack of coordination, particularly at the national level Lack of implementation of the implementation plans Lack of ratification
9. Strong institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms among all stakeholders	Governance	Need to formally create or strengthen national intersectoral, multidisciplinary committees Limited multi-sectoral engagement Need for further improvement of the involvement of, cooperation with and coordination between all relevant actors
10. Industry participation and responsibility	Cross-cutting	Limited use of economic instruments
11. Inclusion of chemicals in national budgeting, processes and development plans	Capacity-building and technical cooperation	Lack of awareness of the scale of the problem and the cost of inaction Lack of political will Lack of inclusion and integration of sound chemicals management into development planning and policies as well as sustainable development plans

III. Summary of resolutions adopted at the regional meetings

10. Resolutions were adopted on the following topics at two or more of the regional meetings:

- (a) Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia-Pacific);
- (b) Financing the Strategic Approach (Africa and Asia-Pacific);
- (c) Highly hazardous pesticides (Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa);
- (d) Lead paint (Africa and Asia-Pacific).

11. The individual resolutions are available in the reports of the regional meetings at which they were adopted.

12. The resolutions on endocrine-disrupting chemicals adopted by the Latin American and the Caribbean, African and the Asia-Pacific regions reinforce section F, on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, of resolution III/2, on emerging policy issues, of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. Among other things, the resolutions invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), subject to the availability of resources, to: (a) draft a report on endocrine-disrupting chemicals with regional input that is targeted to the situation and needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and (b) recommend a series of robust awareness-raising activities on endocrine-disrupting chemicals to be undertaken. A similar draft resolution on endocrine-disrupting chemicals was proposed for consideration at the Central and Eastern European regional meeting. While the participants at the meeting did not adopt the resolution, they did acknowledge that the elements of the draft resolution were important to the region.

13. In all the regions, participants emphasized that stable and predictable financing, at both the national and global levels, was necessary in order to achieve the mandate and goal of the Strategic Approach in moving forward to 2020. The African and Asia-Pacific regions adopted specific resolutions on financing the Strategic Approach in which participants expressed concern with regard to the lack of financial resources available to implement the Strategic Approach, encouraging Governments to mainstream chemicals management in national development plans. With a marked shift in the production of chemicals into the Asia-Pacific region specifically, the need for the stronger engagement of industry through partnerships was highlighted as a means to gain expertise and financing for initiatives in the region, including the internalization of costs associated with chemicals management. The African region also encouraged the inclusion of cost-recovery mechanisms in national legislation. In addition, the African region resolution encouraged the enhancement of funding from other sources, such as the African Development Bank and the West African Development Bank.

14. The resolutions on highly hazardous pesticides, adopted by the Latin American and the Caribbean and African regions, invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop an information paper on safer alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides targeted to the situations and needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. They also encouraged countries to carry out surveys of highly hazardous pesticides and recommended that the respective coordination committees utilize the highly hazardous pesticides surveys to present successful cases of intersectoral cooperation in tackling highly hazardous pesticides phase-outs. The resolutions also encouraged the development of an online clearing house of highly hazardous pesticides registrations, restrictions and prohibitions in the respective regions. Similar draft resolutions were proposed in the Asia-Pacific and the Central and Eastern European regions. While participants in the two regions did not adopt the resolutions, they did acknowledge the importance of taking action on the issue. Furthermore, in their meeting report, the participants in the Asia-Pacific regional meeting invited countries to carry out surveys of highly hazardous pesticides and encouraged information exchange.

15. The participants in the African, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern European and Latin American and the Caribbean regional meetings all encouraged regional awareness-raising and training workshops as part of the overall efforts on lead paint. The participants in the African and Asia-Pacific regional meetings adopted resolutions on lead paint. In so doing, both regions supported promoting the introduction of regulatory frameworks to halt the manufacture, import, export, sale and use of lead-based paints; testing of paint for toxicity; and increased capacity for data collection. In addition, the African region called for paint manufacturers, importers and vendors to discontinue the manufacture, import, export, sale and use of lead paint.

IV. Concluding summary

16. In conclusion, the present summary highlights the achievements of the Strategic Approach commonly identified by the regions. In addition, it draws out a set of 11 basic elements for the sound management of chemicals with associated gaps and priority actions. It provides a general sense of progress and priorities in the implementation of the Strategic Approach and is contributing to the development of the overall orientation and guidance towards the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals (see SAICM/OEWG.2/4). It is intended to provide support for decision-making by Strategic Approach stakeholders by identifying and highlighting common themes that emerged across the regions.
