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

Second meeting

Geneva, 15–17 December 2014

Item 2 of the provisional agenda**

Organizational matters

Scenario note by the Chair

1. The second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group is being convened pursuant to resolution II/6, by which the International Conference on Chemicals Management established the Working Group as a subsidiary body that would meet a few months prior to sessions of the Conference. By its resolution III/5, the International Conference confirmed the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group of the and requested the secretariat to convene the second meeting of the Working Group in 2014.

2. The present scenario note, which I have prepared in consultation with the Bureau, sets out our plans and general expectations for the second meeting of the Working Group. The purpose of the note is to assist Strategic Approach stakeholders in preparing for the meeting in such a way as to enable us to reach a successful conclusion, with the necessary work completed in a timely manner as we move forward towards the fourth session of the Conference. Further guidance for the Working Group can be found in the annotations to the provisional agenda (SAICM/OEWG.2/1/Add.1).

3. A significant part of the meeting will be devoted to discussing progress towards achieving the 2020 goal of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and contributing to the overall orientation and guidance, which is the expected strategic policy outcome of the fourth session of the Conference. As part of this discussion, the Working Group will consider issues raised at the third session of the Conference, held in Nairobi from 17 to 21 September 2012, and will review progress in the overall implementation of the Strategic Approach, regional achievements and the implementation of the health sector strategy.

4. The Working Group will also discuss issues related to sustainable development goals and the sound management of chemicals beyond 2020. The Group is expected to review progress on emerging policy issues and other issues of concern, examine a proposal for the inclusion of a new emerging policy issue and review the proposed activities and draft budget for the secretariat.

5. The Working Group will consider the arrangements for the fourth session of the Conference, tentatively scheduled for late 2015. This will include identifying priority issues for inclusion on its agenda.

Timing and format of the second meeting

6. The second meeting of the Working Group will be opened at 10 a.m. on Monday, 15 December 2014, and close at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 17 December 2014. Two plenary meetings will be held per day, which we anticipate will allow sufficient time for plenary discussions. We do not believe that an evening meeting of the plenary will be required.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 1 December 2014.

** SAICM/OEWG.2/1.

7. A technical briefing session will be held on Sunday, 14 December 2014, and time will be allotted for regional and other group meetings on the same day. The technical briefing programme includes discussions related to the following: (a) the future we want for the sound management of chemicals, introduction to the overall orientation and guidance, and an analysis of work done to implement the Strategic Approach global plan of action by the Inter-organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals; (b) highly hazardous pesticides; and (c) environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants, the new proposed emerging policy issue.

8. Pursuant to resolution III/5, the Bureau decided to request the secretariat to keep the length of the meeting as short as possible. With that in mind, and given the many issues to discuss, we need to be both efficient and effective. I therefore discourage opening remarks of a general nature so that we can turn swiftly to the substance of our work. Any opening remarks should be delivered on a regional basis or by umbrella organizations rather than by individual Governments or organizations. I will impose strict time limits on any opening remarks. I encourage you to prepare any complementary information that you would like to share on relevant Strategic Approach implementation activities in writing and submit it to the secretariat to have it posted on the Strategic Approach website or the intranet during the meeting.

9. In structuring our discussions, my intention is to take up the issues in the order in which they are presented in the provisional agenda. It may be necessary, however, after consultation with the Bureau, to discuss specific issues in another order, for example when it is considered useful to establish small groups at an early stage to ensure progress during the meeting. My intention is to undertake a complete first review of the issues in plenary sessions, where the views of all can be heard. As we identify areas that prove challenging to discuss in plenary sessions, it may be beneficial to establish small groups to discuss such issues in detail. The results of such discussions would, of course, be presented for consideration in plenary session. Furthermore, I propose to give such groups narrow mandates and to limit the time for their work to ensure that the Working Group can continue to move forward in plenary session with other issues, taking into account the results of any such small-group discussions.

10. While we should strive to achieve a consensus view on our submissions to the Conference at its fourth session, given the short duration of the meeting, I should like to avoid extensive and lengthy discussions if it appears that consensus cannot be reached on a given issue. In that event I suggest that we come to an agreement on whether there is a need for some further action on the issue before the fourth session of the Conference or on how to proceed to reach a successful outcome at that session. Drawing on working practices that have previously proved effective, I propose that for contentious issues we request the secretariat or a relevant lead agency to prepare draft text reflecting the outcomes of the discussions in plenary sessions to support our discussions at the fourth session of the Conference.

Preparing for the second meeting

11. Following on from organizational matters, if agreed by the Working Group, we will turn to agenda item 3: progress and gaps towards the achievement of the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management. As we all are very aware, we have a looming target, only six years away, of attaining the goal agreed upon at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development of ensuring that, by 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. We need to confirm that the actions that we are taking will indeed lead us to the attainment of that goal, meaning that we need to determine what we have achieved to date and what we can do to ensure that progress is made on the several programmes and projects on which we have embarked.

12. I will invite regional representatives to provide succinct oral reports summarizing achievements, strengths and challenges in the context of working towards the 2020 goal. Regarding progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategic Approach Overarching Policy Strategy, we may examine the report on progress on Strategic Approach implementation for 2011–2013 developed by the secretariat, which provides comparable information on progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach by a wide group of stakeholders. Following on related discussions, we might wish to request the secretariat to undertake a further comparative reporting activity using the 20 identified indicators of progress and propose a time frame for such reporting for the consideration of the fourth session of the Conference.

13. As you may recall, at its third session the Conference adopted the health sector strategy, thereby strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach. The health sector strategy continues to be an essential component to reach our 2020 goal. It will be useful for stakeholders to review the report on health sector engagement with the Strategic

Approach for the period 2011–2013 and identify any lessons learned in developing the strategy so that these lessons learned may be applied to achieve fuller engagement of representatives of other economic sectors in Strategic Approach meetings, projects and initiatives, thereby promoting the development of a broader ownership base that is essential to achieving successful and durable outcomes in pursuit of the 2020 goal.

14. As noted, a key issue for discussion during our meeting is the overall orientation and guidance on the 2020 goal, which is our expected strategic policy outcome from the fourth session of the Conference. The document we will review is the result of extensive consultation among all stakeholders and all regions and embodies the views expressed during the high-level segment at the third session of the Conference in 2012. Taking into account the progress made to date and the gaps and challenges that have been identified, the overall orientation and guidance should assist Strategic Approach stakeholders in achieving the objectives set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy. With a view to requesting the secretariat to finalize the document for consideration at the fourth session of the Conference, the Working Group may wish to consider the six core activity areas identified within the overall orientation and guidance as well as the associated proposed actions.

Desired outcome of the second meeting

15. The desired outcome of the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group is agreement on a number of issues that will be submitted for consideration by the Conference at its fourth session. Input from the Open-ended Working Group on priorities and policy direction for the overall orientation and guidance on the 2020 goal will be critical to its finalization in early 2015 by the Bureau, in preparation for the fourth session of the Conference.

16. In addition, there should be concrete proposals for the agenda of the Conference and agreement on how the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 and its linkages with the sustainable development goals might be considered by the Conference at its fourth session, as well as a positive message on financing for the Conference, for implementation of the Strategic Approach and for the operation of the Strategic Approach secretariat.

17. Coordination, collaboration and cooperation among relevant stakeholders on the emerging policy issues should be encouraged towards achieving the 2020 goal. Proposed recommendations should be relayed to the the fourth session of the Conference regarding the proposed new emerging policy issue, environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants.

18. The Bureau and I are confident that the Working Group will meet the goal that we set ourselves in terms of our preparation for the Conference at its fourth session to develop a roadmap to achieving, by 2020, the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and of hazardous wastes in ways that lead to minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

19. Commitment, cooperation, awareness and ownership among all stakeholders will be a key to achieving the future we want for the sound management of chemicals. In conclusion, I urge all delegates to prepare themselves to conclude our work in such a spirit. I very much look forward to working with you all at the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group in December 2014.

Richard Lesiyampe
President of the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management