

**VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP ON ISSUES OF CONCERNS**  
**Report of the 2nd Virtual Meeting on Issues of Concerns**  
**Date: Monday 18 January 2021**

Co-facilitators: Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) and Sverre Thomas Jahre (Norway)

**1) Welcoming remarks**

Welcome remarks were given by co-facilitator Sam Adu-Kumi. There was a total of 101 participants on the call.

**2) Update on progress made under VWG1 regarding the targets for Strategic Objective C**

Ms. Silvija Nora Kalnins, one of the co-facilitators from VWG1, provided an overview of the targets process for Strategic Objective C on issues of concern:

- In summary, in-depth discussion on target formulations under Strategic Objective C will be conducted after results of VWG3 deliberations on Issues of Concern are completed.
- Participants in VWG1 are favouring less process-oriented formulation of targets, flexible enough to encompass future decisions made on Issues of Concern by the Conference.
- The process-oriented side of Issues of Concern (work plans, legislation) may be well suited to several of the other Strategic Objectives. However, it is proposed that Issues of Concern indicators would be only related to one target under Strategic Objective C, where indicators for each issue of concern are incorporated by reference under Strategic Objective C once adopted by the Conference.

**3) Overview of the co-facilitators' proposal on the process for issues of concern (released on 11 January 2021)**

Sverre Thomas Jahre provided an overview of the co-facilitators' proposal. He reminded participants that the mandate of the VWG is to propose a process for issues of concern, reviewing Annex B of SAICM/IP.4/2 as a starting point. The draft proposal was released on 11 January 2021 and is available on the SAICM web-site.

The proposal was developed by the co-facilitators, based on the submissions received from SAICM stakeholders. He reminded participants that the focus of the discussion would be on section III of the document.

**4) Discussion on the proposal**

**a. Document Outline and Process**

General support was expressed for the proposed outline set out by the co-facilitators. Many indicated that it was a significant improvement from the original Annex B text.

One participant noted that the proposal is very detailed and procedural and that the process should be adopted by a Conference resolution, rather than including it in the new instrument.

## **b. Title**

The group continued to express different views on the title. 'Broader issues for common action' was proposed as an alternative title and received some support from other participants. One stakeholder reiterated the proposal for 'issues of interest'.

## **c. Definition**

Participants generally expressed that the definition that is now proposed from ICCM resolution II/4 was simpler and a good starting point for the Definition.

A number of participants indicated the need to include the word 'waste' in the definition.

There was a request to delete the word 'significant' by two participants, another participant opposed this deletion indicating it would help with prioritization. Another participant suggested moving up the words 'adverse effects' earlier in the definition.

One government participant requested to simplify the definition further. Another government requested referencing the word innovative in the definition.

## **d. Submission of information**

There was general support for the text under 'B. Submission of Information'.

Some text edits were proposed and the co-facilitators welcomed written submissions on this.

## **e. Nomination, selection & adoption process**

There were a number of participants that raised concerns with the six-month timeline for nominations, indicating that more time was needed to scrutinize the nominations. Some indicated that a more detailed timeline was required to support the process overall.

Some participants requested more text to be included to support the Conference to prioritize nominations.

One government participant on behalf of a region requested that clarity be inserted in the text in relation to the role of the Conference.

There were a number of comments on the multi-stakeholder committees proposed under part iii, Decision-making and adoption:

- Some participants questioned the role and formation of the committees, noting they need to be multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral.
- One government participant noted on behalf of a region that it would be preferable to have one broader scientific body to support this over multi-stakeholder committees.
- Another government participant asked whether these committees would be subsidiary bodies.
- One participant questioned the feasibility of the committees and how they would relate to existing committees for the existing emerging policy issues, such as the Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint.

## **f. Mechanisms for implementation**

Some participants noted that tracking progress is already proposed as part of the instrument and that it may be duplicative. Another government participant noted that it is a secretariat role to coordinate reporting.

Some comments were raised regarding the need to ensure funding for implementation of workplans.

Some participants raised how this process would interact with a possible future OEWG.

## **5) Linkages to the existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern**

Sverre Thomas Jahre outlined an updated process for existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern based on the inputs received at the last meeting and the follow-up written submissions.

The proposal is for the adoption of a resolution at ICCM5 on the existing SAICM EPIs & other issues of concern that:

- i. Recognizes the efforts and progress;
- ii. Welcomes the Assessment Report on Issues of Concern made by UNEP following resolution UNEA 4/8;
- iii. States the intention to determine and set the path forward on the existing SAICM EPIs and other issues of concern in the beyond 2020 instrument at its next session [ICCM6];
- iv. Highlights any immediate and specific priority actions to ensure that efforts and momentum continue where appropriate;
- v. Requests the responsible IOMC organizations, in consultation with stakeholders, to propose a draft work plan with clear timelines and milestones to ICCM6, including: (a) an assessment on how they contribute to achieving the Strategic Objective(s) and Targets of the new instrument; and (b) proposing additional indicators as needed for relevant targets;
- vi. From [ICCM6] onwards, notes that any existing EPIs and other issues of concern that continue under the new instrument would follow procedures that are established for 'issues of [international] concern' under the beyond 2020 instrument.

Due to time limitations, there was no substantive discussion on this proposed text. Instead, written submissions on this proposal were invited by 22 January 2021.

## **6) Next steps**

In closing, the Sam Adu-Kumi reminded participants of next steps.

- Final electronic input invited on the co-facilitators' proposal until 22 January 2021.
- Final meeting of the group: Tuesday 2 February 2021 from 14:00 - 16:30 (CET). The purpose of the meeting is to finalize the outcome document for VWG3.