IPEN Submission in response to the Fourth request for electronic feedback in the Virtual working group on targets, indicators and milestones
25 January 2021

Key points
- The indicators must be quantifiable and provide a meaningful measure of progress to ensure that they clearly support an assessment of advancement to reach the targets. This will make support and engagement by stakeholders much more likely.
- Indicators and milestones must be clearly linked to the SDGs to emphasize the need for high political priority and should include items that reflect key measures from SAICM emerging policy issues and issues of concern.
- Option 3 is the only way forward that ensures equal participation in the process and necessary engagement and commitment from a broad range of governments and stakeholders from all regions, given the various concerns that have come to light regarding limitation connectivity issues and limited discussions during virtual meetings.

Introduction
This submission is in response to a call for stakeholder submissions by the Co-facilitators of the Targets, Indicators and Milestones VWG on the set of recommendations for a process to establish indicators and milestones for finalized targets as part of the Virtual Working Group (VWG) on this topic in the Beyond 2020 process. Input is provided both as track changes to the text under consideration for the submission, as well as additional comments from IPEN.

This submission includes the following sections:
- Key points
- Introduction
- General considerations
- Review of recommended options for a process to establish indicators and milestones for finalized targets
- Set of recommendations for a process to establish indicators and milestones for finalized targets
- General considerations:
  1. There was general agreement that there was considerable progress in meeting the mandate of the
VWG1. However, additional work is needed before decisions on targets, indicators and milestones can be made:

2. Indicators should be meaningful, quantifiable and support an easily interpreted assessment of the progress towards the deadline of the timebound targets. That is, they should provide a realistic picture of the effectiveness of the monitored measures with regard to achievement over time of the Strategic Objectives and Targets.

3. Indicators should be limited in number to make the review manageable and ensure compact and easy to communicate reporting outcomes, while still providing a meaningful, quantifiable, effective measure of progress.

4. The indicators should be easily quantifiable to support a monitoring effort should be as simple and affordable as possible without challenging the significance of the review process. It should therefore be referenced to Indicators that are monitored already should be utilized, as far as possible, taking into account existing reporting schemes and data custodians outside the health and environment sectors as well;

5. Regarding the indicators process, UNEP and UNECE have expressed willingness to support the development of an inventory on indicators.

**IPEN input**

Additional considerations:

- It is crucial that the indicators clearly support SMART target as agreed by IP3, i.e. they should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. However, the term achievable should not lead to lack ambition due to arbitrary determinations of what is achievable or realistic but be seen in the light of what progress needs to be achieved to meet the 2030 SDGs.

- An agreement with a broad scope requires clear indicators and targets that tangibly prevent and reduce harm so that efforts can be sufficiently focused and the public understands and supports the objectives. The challenges associated with chemicals and waste management are vast and complex and therefore the targets must be SMART enough to contribute to concrete change at the national level, with clear links to the 2030 Agenda. This fulfill the Beyond 2020 obligation to “develop recommendations regarding measurable objectives in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

- Indicators should include items that reflect key measures from SAICM emerging policy issues and issues of concern.

**Rationale**

SAICM’s broad scope covers many chemical exposures that lie outside the framework of current chemicals conventions. In many cases, the harms to human health and/or the environment caused by these other sources can be just as serious as harms caused by persistent organic pollutants, ozone depleting substances or mercury. These sources of toxic chemical exposure frequently disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples and people and environments in low- and middle-income countries. In the absence of SAICM, no international framework would exist for addressing the majority of the world’s most pressing, chemical safety concerns.

Therefore, SAICM objectives, targets and indicators should track closely with the framework’s goals and its timeless vision, be ambitious and allow for clear assessments of progress.
Review of recommended options for a process to establish indicators and milestones for finalized targets

Table 1. VWG1 recommended options for a process to establish indicators and milestones for finalized targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy expert group</td>
<td>Policy expert group + Technical expert subgroup (data experts/statisticians)</td>
<td>No more work until IP4 and/or ICCM5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td>Fully virtual</td>
<td>Fully virtual with feedback from the technical expert subgroup to the policy expert group</td>
<td>TBC IP4 and/or ICCM5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Present to IP4 and/or ICCM5</td>
<td>Present to IP4 and/or ICCM5</td>
<td>July 2021¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Open participation + electronic feedback by all participants</td>
<td>Open participation + electronic feedback by all participants</td>
<td>ICCM5 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IPEN’s view
IPEN appreciates the efforts made to keep the Intersessional Process moving forward and all the hard work by everyone involved in the Virtual Working Groups. However, it is also clear by now that there have been significant challenges for participants to engage as described further below.

Therefore, IPEN sees Option 3 as the only way forward that would allow for equal participation in the process and ensure necessary engagement and commitment from a broad range of governments and stakeholders from all regions.

Rationale
After five months of online meetings related to the chemicals and waste multilateral environmental agreements, it is clear that there are many concerns around the ability of stakeholders from all regions to participate in an equal way.

The virtual modality of the online meetings proposed under options 1 and 2, while understandable because of the pandemic, is very problematic. We have seen from our experience in the past months in the various Virtual Working Groups (VWGs) meetings that participation have been a challenge because of connectivity and technical issues even though participants intend to fully engage in the discussions. There are many examples where participants have been unable to hear the discussions and/or been unable

¹ Pending decision of the Bureau on dates for IP4/ICCM5.
to speak. This is the experience both from the SAICM process as well as e.g. the online meetings related to the BRS Convention.

Many people are also working from home, which means both juggling a range of work obligations and online meetings while still trying to manage their everyday life. This problem is exacerbated due to the time zone issues where many meetings take place in mornings and evenings, making it hard to participate fully due to family obligations. This seems to especially impact the ability for women to participate since they have the main family responsibilities in many countries. Working from home has also meant that some participants even struggle with finding a space quiet enough to be able to participate in the meetings. Due to the time zone issue, discussions also become limited due to time constraints.

While there have been opportunities of submitting electronic input in the VWG process there has also been a tendency to discuss these views in the electronic meetings in a way that resembles text negotiations. When stakeholders have been unable to participate due to the various difficulties described above, these submissions have received less or no regard. There are also examples of submissions that have not been included to begin with.

It is important to engage a broad range of governments and other stakeholders in the development and finalization of each component in order to make the new framework successful and to ensure engagement, commitment and progress on identified issues of concern. The challenges in participation that have been seen in the virtual working groups and other online meetings underscores the need for a face-to-face setting of IP4/ICCM5 to make meaningful progress towards the new framework.