

ICCM5 Highlights: Monday, 25 September 2023

The invocation of the “Bonn Spirit” of compromise optimistically expressed by President Anita Breyer at the opening of the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), appeared to inspire delegates, who proceeded to diligently organize for a busy week ahead that should culminate in the adoption of an ambitious international framework on the sound management of chemicals and waste.

Opening

The Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Coordinator Pierre Quiblier opened ICCM5.

Steffi Lemke, Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Germany, observed chemicals management is a global problem which cannot be addressed through national measures alone. She said that bringing together all the elements to achieve effective chemicals management is no small feat and requires balancing diverse interests and bringing all stakeholders working together as equals. Lemke called on all ICCM5 delegates to bear this in mind as they worked toward consensus and urged the Conference to send a clear message to the world that “we are ready to tackle the pollution crisis.”

Noting his region is the heart of German chemicals production and thus very experienced in managing chemical risks to soil, air and water, Oliver Krischer, State Minister for Environment, Nature Protection, and Transport, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, emphasized the importance of a successful ICCM5.

Saying Bonn is Germany’s UN city and a center of sustainability, Katja Dörner, Lord Mayor, Bonn, welcomed delegates and wished them fruitful negotiations during ICCM5.

Noting chemical pollution is directly responsible for more than two million deaths a year, Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), speaking on behalf of Executive Director Inger Andersen, said without decisive action on a post-2020 framework many more will die “and this will be on us.” She urged delegates to, *inter alia*: provide clear guidance on what governments as well as industry and their financial backers should do; create an inclusive platform; and repurpose incentives and subsidies to create a chemicals industry “that has a positive balance sheet for people and planet.”

Anita Breyer, President, ICCM5, expressed confidence that the Conference would generate broad and high-level political commitment to adopt an ambitious and long-term international framework.

Organizational Matters

Adoption of the Agenda: Delegates adopted the agenda ([SAICM/ICCM5/1](#) and [Add.1](#)) and agreed to the order of work proposed by the President.

Organization of Work: Delegates agreed to establish an informal, open-ended and high-level Friends of the President group to work on the High-Level Declaration, co-facilitated by Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan) and Eva Kracht (Germany). President Breyer said the groups’ discussions would be guided by her [zero draft of the Declaration](#). She requested regional groups and other stakeholder communities to nominate a small number of representatives to facilitate the group’s work.

Delegates agreed to establish a Committee of the Whole (CoW), co-chaired by Reggie Hernaus (Netherlands) and Keima Gardiner (Trinidad and Tobago), to work on the substantive content and text of the recommended framework instrument as transmitted by the intersessional process.

Election of Officers: President Breyer reviewed the current composition of the Bureau and announced Madgalena Frydrych (Poland) would serve as ICCM5 rapporteur. She invited regional groups and non-governmental participants from the health, industry, trade union and public interest groups to continue consultations to nominate their representatives for the next Bureau, noting elections would be held on Thursday 28 September. President Breyer further noted that in accordance with the rules of procedure, regional focal points as well as the chair of the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOMC) are also invited to participate in the work of the Bureau.

The INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC) reported the nomination of Rory O’Neill as trade union representative.

Representation, Credentials and Accreditation: President Breyer reminded delegates that credentials and accreditation must be submitted to the Secretariat no later than 24 hours after the opening of the session. She requested the Bureau, acting as the Credentials Committee, to provide a report to plenary on Thursday 28 September.

Opening Statements

North Macedonia for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE) highlighted that with support from the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, CEE countries made great progress on their capacity building in line with international agreements and are dedicated to the sound management of chemicals.

Argentina for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) called for the mainstreaming of health in all aspects of the new instrument. They expressed their deep concern for the lack of financial resources for the new instrument and urged for public and private financing in the form of a multilateral dedicated fund for implementation.

The EU reiterated findings from the Global Chemicals Outlook that business as usual is not an acceptable way forward, and called for a strong, visionary framework with a solid enabling foundation.

Lesotho for the AFRICAN GROUP reiterated their region is on the receiving end of the illegal trafficking of chemicals and waste, and underlined the need for the new instrument to include funding so that it does not fail to respond to the challenges of their region.

Iran, on behalf of ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, outlined a number of issues requiring further negotiations that are a priority for their region, particularly capacity building, and finance.

HEALTHCARE WITHOUT HARM (HCWH) recalled a train accident which released vinyl chloride intended for medical uses that caused environmental problems and urged those in healthcare to lead the way.

The INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) recommended a commitment to continue working on issues of concern and a path to mobilization of new and predictable funding.

The INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS (IOMC) pointed to documents it has submitted which provide recommendations that support the implementation of the new framework instrument.

ITUC underscored the need to address the damage towards workers and their families from highly hazardous chemicals.

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHEMICAL ASSOCIATIONS (ICCA) suggested three ambitions to be achieved by 2030: provide access to data on safety and sustainability of chemical products; support countries in implementation; and provide product portfolios towards sustainable solutions.

CHINA suggested four ways to advance progress: streamlining content to focus on hazardous impacts to health and the environment; strengthening support to developing countries; focusing on the voluntary nature of the rules; and seeking measures that are implementable.

The PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK INTERNATIONAL (PAN) called on all stakeholders to support the proposal of the African countries to establish a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION cautioned against setting “unrealistically ambitious goals.” He urged bridging the gap in chemicals management between developing and developed countries and improving technology access.

The GLOBAL ALLIANCE ON HEALTH AND POLLUTION (GAHP) called on chemicals industries to provide much more

funding for the sound management of chemicals and waste and suggested the industry CEOs scheduled to attend ICCM5 form a “coalition of the willing” to start momentum in this direction.

The CHEMICALS AND WASTE YOUTH PLATFORM called for ICCM5 to deliver a future framework featuring the highest levels of protection for environment and human health.

President Breyer invited other delegations wishing to make statements to submit them by email, to be posted on the Conference website.

***Recommendations from the Intersessional Process
Considering the Strategic Approach and Sound
Management of Chemicals and Waste Beyond 2020***

IP Co-Chair Kay Williams (UK) reported on the work undertaken by the IP, stating that they successfully submitted a package of recommendations, but noting that the sections on financial considerations, capacity building, and targets still require further attention.

Delegates agreed to two streams of work going forward: the CoW to finish work on the elements of the framework, and a contact group, co-chaired by Kay Williams and Judith Torres (Uruguay), to work on resolutions enabling the framework to become fully operational.

President Breyer invited proponents to introduce their conference room papers (CRPs) offering Conference resolutions. The IOMC introduced its proposal for a resolution (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.2) on implementation programmes to help the framework’s strategic objectives.

UNEP presented its proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.3) on potential areas of collaboration and cooperation in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the new chemicals and waste framework.

ICCA outlined their proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.7) for an online capacity-building hub. They explained that ICCA will support this hub—financially and otherwise—until the first conference of the new framework is held.

GRULAC and many co-sponsors introduced their proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.4) on mainstreaming a gender perspective and promoting gender equality and all women’s and girls’ empowerment in chemicals and waste management. GRULAC also introduced a proposal on a health surveillance system to support the monitoring process of adverse effects from chemicals on human health.

The EU presented their proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.5) for text linking SAICM’s Overall Orientation and Guidance (OOG) with the strategic objectives of the new framework.

The AFRICAN GROUP introduced their proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.9) on a draft resolution on financial considerations for implementation of the new framework. They also presented their proposal (SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.6) on guidelines for national focal points.

The plenary referred all proposals except those on OOG and the capacity building hub to the contact group for discussion; the OOG proposal was referred to the CoW and the capacity building hub proposal was referred in parts to both the CoW and contact group.

CoW: The CoW opened by reviewing its mandate, including the consideration of two draft resolutions. The CoW Co-Chairs

invited views on their suggestion to use breakout groups or informal consultation groups to tackle specific topics, with each breakout group to be given a clear and time-bound mandate. Co-Chair Gardiner proposed groups on finance, targets, and capacity building, beginning with finance with a focus on the section on dedicated external financing.

IPEN and KENYA sought to add vision and scope to the list to be tasked to contact groups. PAN cautioned against including scope given its connections to many targets no longer under discussion. SAUDI ARABIA proposed adding strategic objectives to the list of considerations. The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) further proposed adding principles.

Following the sharing of views, the committee's work was suspended for the day.

Contact Group: Co-Chairs Williams and Torres kicked off the group's work with a proposal to loosely group the 18 draft resolution texts into six thematic clusters to facilitate their review. Williams invited the group to offer initial views on the first cluster of four resolutions on: a Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs); a code of conduct on pesticides management; gender mainstreaming; and health surveillance.

The first two draft resolutions elicited the most comments, with some delegates expressing concern about prescriptive elements and pointing to possible overlaps with discussions on targets. However, many delegates also underscored the seriousness of these issues, pointing to the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint as a useful model, and exhorting source countries of HHPs to demonstrate solidarity with countries that have borne the brunt of unsustainable chemical use.

Following this initial exchange of views, Co-Chair Williams invited the respective proponents to initiate informal consultations to develop compromise language on operative paragraphs for consideration by the contact group on Tuesday.

Progress Towards the Achievement of the 2020 Goal of Sound Chemicals Management

Regional and Sectoral Achievements in the Context of Working Towards the Objectives of the Strategic Approach and Overall Orientation and Guidance on the 2020 Goal:

The Secretariat introduced its report on the progress in Strategic Approach implementation for 2017–2022 ([SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/02](#)).

The AFRICAN GROUP said that to some extent SAICM has achieved success, mainly attributed to its voluntary governance structure and holistic approach, such as the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint. The EU said national and regional implementation is crucial for achieving the strategic approach and gave examples of their regulations and policy saying, “we do not limit our ambition and action at national level—we go global.”

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted national policies protecting the population and the environment from hazardous chemicals. IOMC, HCWH and IPEN highlighted their activities addressing chemicals and waste. JAPAN noted their contributions to the work of the intersessional process. PAKISTAN presented a project to strengthen legislation and institutional capacity to implement the Basel, Minamata and Stockholm Conventions.

Delegates welcomed the Secretariat report and updates from stakeholders.

Quick Start Programme (QSP): President Breyer noted the QSP contributed substantially to building and strengthening capacity in developing countries and countries with economies in transition by providing seed money for specific activities towards attaining the objectives of the Strategic Approach. The Secretariat presented the report ([SAICM/OEWG.3/7](#)) on the creation, functioning and closure date for the QSP. Delegates noted the QSP Trust Fund was operational until 31 December 2019 and thanked all donors.

Independent Evaluation of the Strategic Approach for the Period 2006–2015: The Secretariat introduced the final evaluation report for the period 2006–2015 ([SAICM/ICCM.5/INF.01](#)) and invited delegates to consider how this information might be used in the finalization of the new framework and in deciding on any further intersessional activities. Delegates welcomed the report.

Emerging Policy Issues and Other Issues of Concern: President Breyer recalled that one of the functions of the Conference is to focus attention and call for appropriate action on emerging policy issues as they arise and to forge consensus on priorities for cooperative action. The IOMC introduced its reports on Emerging Policy Issues (EPIs) and Issues of Concern (IOCs) ([SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/16](#)). Delegates welcomed the report. The IOMC also presented their proposal for a resolution on EPIs and IOCs ([SAICM/ICCM.5/CRP.1](#)), which was referred to the resolutions contact group for detailed discussion.

Planned Activities and Draft Budget of the Secretariat for the Period 2024–2026

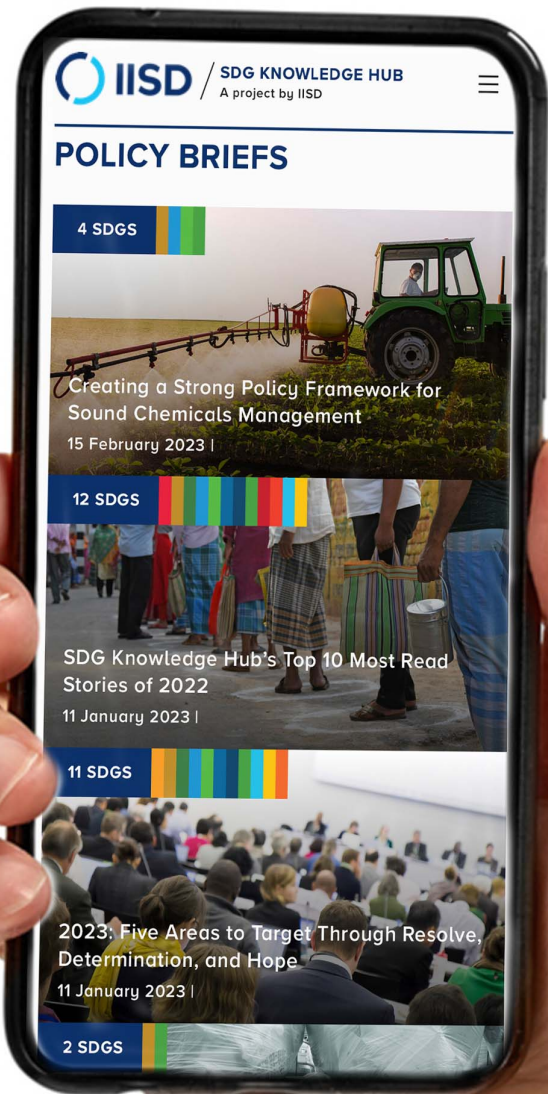
Breyer stated that as stipulated in resolution ICCM4/5, the Secretariat is to report ([SAICM/ICCM.5/3/Rev.1](#)) to the Conference on the activities of the Secretariat from July 2015 to June 2023, including the proposed draft budget for 2024–2026 to continue the work of the new framework. Delegates agreed to establish a contact group, co-chaired by Přemysl Štěpánek (Czechia) and Olubunmi Olusanya (Nigeria), to coordinate closely with other groups on necessary work, activities and their cost implications proposed in the period for 2024–2026.

In the Corridors

ICCM5 opened with a stirring performance of Beethoven's 5th Symphony by the Bonn Youth Symphony Orchestra, inspiring one delegate to quip “let's hope the ‘Victory Symphony’ is fitting for this 5th ICCM!”

With a heavy workload allotted to both the CoW and contact group dealing with no less than 18 draft resolution texts, Co-Chairs and delegates had to hit the ground running in the afternoon. Perhaps heeding an opening exhortation by ICCM5 President Breyer for delegates to practice the “Bonn Spirit,” by being willing to “live and let live,” the resolutions contact group quickly agreed with Co-Chairs' proposal to cluster resolutions along thematic lines to allow for a faster treatment. Similarly, CoW Co-Chair Hernaus stressed the need for flexibility by all parties in negotiating solutions to the outstanding framework issues, leading one delegate to privately express the hope that negotiators would show a true spirit of compromise. “Let's hope the Bonn Spirit continues to shine at ICCM5.”

For those who read on-the-go



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